

**ECOSYSTEM OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
LEARNING: A STUDY OF ANXIETY AMONG  
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN PAKISTAN**

**BY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Thesis Title: Ecosystem of English Language Learning: A Study of Anxiety among University Students in Pakistan**

English language learning anxiety is an extensively researched area in ESL. However, the multifaceted nature of language learning anxiety has not been sufficiently explored from the perspective of ecology in Pakistan, a framework suitable for exploring complex systems. Exploration of English language learning as an ecosystem is likely to shed more light on the issue and consequently can provide better understanding and thereby help provide better solutions to the problem. This study takes advantage of the Nested Ecosystem Model based on Ecological Systems Theory (1979; 1993) to explore classroom anxiety among university students in Pakistan. The additional perspective of the Engestrom model of Activity theory (1999) has been employed to enrich the analytical power of this model. For the sample, the study uses purposive sampling to take two universities from Islamabad and two universities from Faisalabad. The students in these universities are administered with the help of Horwitz et al. (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale to reach the required sample i.e., the highly anxious students. To explore the reasons for anxiety among these students, the study uses the tools of interviews based on the Mwanza Model Activity Theory, Diary writing, and taking the teacher's perspective. The data is coded and analyzed with the help of NVivo 11 software. The findings of the study indicate that a constellation of factors from all four levels of the environment contributes to the language learning anxiety of the students. At the micro level, cognitive, affective, linguistic factors and classroom environment emerged as important anxiety-causing factors. At the meso-level, previous language learning experience, social and academic background, and extracurricular activities; at the exo-level, the institutional policies and environment were found responsible for anxiety, whereas, at the macro-level, the societal norms, provincial educational policies, and global challenges, such as COVID-19, contribute to the language anxiety of the students. The research emphasizes the need to consider the multifaceted nature of language learning anxiety in dealing with this issue.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

LL	Language learning
ELL	English language learning
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
SLA	Second language acquisition
LLA	Language learning anxiety
FLA	Foreign language anxiety
FLCAS	Foreign language classroom anxiety scale
INTVW	Interview

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## **DEDICATION**

*This thesis is dedicated to my beloved father and mother*

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

English Language Learning Anxiety (LLA) is one of the most extensively researched areas of second language acquisition (SLA). Several research works have been conducted on the issue but since language learning is a permanent feature of life, therefore, with passing time new problems occur continuously. Therefore, there is a continuous need to deal with these problems regularly with emerging practices. The researchers in Pakistan have not sufficiently dealt with the issue from a new and changed perspective. The current research aims to investigate the issue of LLA from an ecological perspective to cope with the current challenges faced by SLA.

### 1.1. Background of the Study

The advent of information technology and social media has transformed the world into a global village. The increasing number of multi-lingual societies and the global economy have given rise to the need for a global language. English has changed its status from a foreign language to a global one during the last half of the previous century (Shah et al., 2013). English is a language that is used profusely around the globe to share knowledge and information (Paranuwat, 2011). It is because of English that people can convey their ideas and thoughts and execute their businesses globally. To compete in the globalized world, there is a need to have a good command of this global language, English. Acknowledging the need of the hour, countries have taken measures to equip their masses with English language proficiency. Despite all the measures taken by different governments such as the declaration of English as the first or second official language and compulsion of its teaching from grade 1 in the curricula, the real situation remained in stark contrast to the prescribed goal i.e., to be communicative in English.

Failure in the attainment of required language proficiency opened the door to research on the causes of failure in English language learning. Several studies have been conducted to investigate the causes of the inability to attain proficiency in the

English language. Krashen's work in 1977 provided the foundation for future studies in language-learning anxiety. According to Krashen (1977), the main factor that prevents learners from using a language is the affective filter. He observed that the students needed to lower their affective filter to learn the language in all its true spirit. In other words, there is a need to be in a situation of anxiety-free relaxation. Following Krashen (1977), many studies explored the causes of failure and came up with the view that the affective filter i.e., anxiety can be a hindrance that prevents learners from using the language competently.

Anxiety is defined as a feeling of tension, apprehension, and worry associated with the arousal of the automatic nervous system (Spielberger, 1983). Researchers, however, defined it according to the requirements of their disciplines like education, anthropology, and linguistics, and came up with classifications like trait, state, and situation-specific anxiety. Whereas trait anxiety is a tendency to be worried in a wide range of situations, state anxiety is the feeling of apprehension at a specific moment in a particular situation. Situation-specific anxiety is a form of anxiety, which is characterized by self-centered thoughts. LLA took its place in situation-specific anxiety by the researchers because of being characterized by self-centered thoughts and fear of failure in a situation (Bhatti, 2016).

The identification of LLA as a form of situation-specific anxiety ended the confusion of researchers such as Scovel (1978) who had found fault with the definition and measurement of anxiety. He was even doubtful about the concept of language learning anxiety as he thought it premature to apply any such concept when its standing is uncertain (MacIntyre, 2017, p.11). The conformity of the presence of anxiety with language diverted the attention of the researchers from theoretical to methodological debate. Horwitz et al. (1986) came up with the idea that the concept and measurement of LLA need to be reoriented (MacIntyre, 2017). Horwitz et al. (1986) defined language-learning anxiety as a feeling of apprehension that develops because of the uniqueness of the language-learning process and came up with the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), a 33-item questionnaire. He devised this new scale with the conception that language-learning anxiety is a unique construct that cannot be gauged with the tools available in psychology. This approach to conceptualizing and measuring language learning anxiety was termed situation

specific. With this new conceptualization of anxiety, research in this domain began to flourish. From theoretical discussions on anxiety and its measures, researchers turned their attention towards the exploration of the reasons for anxiety. The researchers conducted several descriptive and correlational research which were mostly quantitative with a few exceptions of qualitative. The research on language-learning anxiety continued to flourish but the problem persisted. Therefore, the researchers continued to use novel and contemporary methods to deal with the issue effectively in its entirety.

For decades, the researchers explored the reasons for LLA quantitatively, following the pattern set by Horwitz et al (1986). Recently a shift has been observed in the research trend i.e., a ‘person in context’ view of learner (Gkonou, 2017). The context here means the range of external factors that influence individual differences. According to Ushioda (2015), this relationship between the learner and the context is not unidirectional but rather dynamic. Such a dynamic and mutually constitutive relationship can be explored with the help of an ecological approach.

The key concept in the ecological approach is ‘Holism’, which means that parts of a whole are so intimately interconnected that cannot exist independently. Parts do not make sense in the absence of the whole and the whole is comprehensible in the social and cultural environment in which it exists. When applied to language, holism means language cannot be studied as an isolated system. Complete natural surroundings need to be considered for a fuller understanding of the phenomenon. This natural setting consists of personal, situational, cultural, and societal factors that are responsible for the production and evolution of that language (Kramersch & Stefensen, 2008, p.18). Kramersch (2008) suggested the following features of a holistic approach:

1. A holistic approach to language asks for a contextual investigation of language and communication.
2. It rejects Cartesian dualism and believes in worldview. It considers the point that every part is connected to the whole and all the parts are interconnected too.

3. The holistic approach does not believe in finding generalizations rather it accepts diversity. It gives preference to specific over general.
4. The theories that are compatible with a holistic approach, such as chaos/complexity theory and the dynamic theory, take language as a mediator between cultural and natural ecosystems.
5. The holistic approach adopts a dialogical point of view on language.

Einar Haugen (1906-1994) identified the relationship between language and ecology for the very first time in 1972. He defined language ecology as the study of the relationship between a language and its environment. This concept was a reaction to the idea of language as something abstract and the ideas propagated by Chomsky that took language as an entity, which was static and de-contextualized. The concept believes that human beings are a part of an ecological system, and so their behaviors, attitudes, and actions can be studied from an ecological perspective. There emerged two systems from the work of Haugen: eco-linguistics and ecology of language. Where eco-linguistics study the environment from a linguistic perspective, ecology studies it from a sociocultural perspective (Nazari, 2017).

An ecosystem is a community of living organisms, interacting with each other and their physical environment. These interactions form a complex network of relationships, creating a system that supports life and maintains balance within the environment. If the concept is applied to English language learning, it means the interconnected network of elements, and stakeholders involved in the process of teaching and learning the English language. This ecosystem comprises various components that interact with each other and thus create a dynamic environment for language learning. Key elements in the ecosystem of English language learning are learners, teachers, educational institutes, curriculum and syllabi, learning material and resources, assessment and evaluation, policies and regulations, community support, and cultural network.

The concept of ecosystem was adopted in the field of English language learning to provide a holistic and integrated perspective on how language is learned and used. Just as an ecosystem encompasses all living and non-living components of the environment, the ecosystem of English language learning includes all elements that

influence the language learning process. This holistic view considers not only the teacher and the students but also tools, rules, community, context, and all those factors that affect language learning.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Anxiety, being closely associated with the environment or the context of an individual, calls for an ecological solution, which aims at investigating the context in which the learners are to uproot the problem. In the Pakistani context, the research on

LLA is still standing at the second phase i.e., ‘specialized phase’. For this reason, the issue is still persistent with the same intensity. Therefore, the need of the hour is to apply a ‘person in context’ approach to bring new perspectives to the fore. Keeping this in view, the present study takes English language learning as an ecosystem and intends to explore English language anxiety from an ecological perspective. The anxiety associated with English language learning will be investigated to know the factors that contribute to the poor performance of the students and the factors that hinder their language learning. The current research is ecological as it takes English language learning as an ecosystem and aims at studying certain environmental factors that contribute to English language learners’ anxiety at micro, meso, exo, and macro levels.

## **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

The present study aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. To determine the type and level of anxiety amongst English language learners at the undergraduate level in Pakistani universities
2. To explore the ecological factors that contribute to the English language learning anxiety among university students in Pakistan
3. To ascertain the appropriateness of the ecological approach in identifying the causes of language learning anxiety

## **1.4. Research Questions**

The study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the level of language learning anxiety among undergraduate university students in Pakistan?
2. What are the factors in the ecosystem of English language learning that contribute to anxiety among university students in Pakistan?
3. How can an ecological approach to English language learning contribute to resolving the issue of English language learning anxiety among undergraduates in the selected universities?

## **1.5. Theoretical Framework**

The core framework for the present research is Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested ecosystem model based on his bio-ecological theory of human development. This theory provides an in-depth understanding of the context or the environment in which the individual is operating. Understanding context is a hallmark of the dynamic approach to LLA; an approach that created space for ecology in LLA research. The present research is ecological; therefore, Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystem model is compatible with the research design.

Another influential framework to investigate an activity in context is Engestrom's model of Activity theory which was chosen to add an extra perspective to the research. This model provides an understanding of the myriad factors at different levels of activity. Engestrom's model of activity theory provides an analytical lens for this study.

### **1.5.1. Bronfenbrenner's Nested Ecosystem**

Bronfenbrenner (1979) came up with the 'Nested Ecosystem Model' based on ecological systems theory which is multidisciplinary (Lier, 2004). The preliminary roots of the theory are in biology, later, it was used in different disciplines to delve deep into the matter. In language studies, however, Lier (2004) came up with the practical implementation of the theory for second language learning research. He believed that the sociocultural perspective of language could be studied

with the implementation of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Nested Ecosystem Model. He presented the second language education system as an ecosystem with multiple layers where every layer is nested into the other. The hierarchy of the second language ecosystem was divided into micro, meso, exo, and macro levels. These levels provide the researcher with an opportunity to delve deep into the matter. The very basic level of the ecosystem is the micro-system which is characterized by patterns of activities, interpersonal relationships, and the immediate surroundings in which a learner interacts (Rani, 2020). In short, everything that is related to classroom proceedings comes under the umbrella of a micro-system. The next system is the meso system which is outside the classroom but contains the developing person i.e., the learner. Previous learning experiences, extracurricular activities, or anything that is in the immediate environment are all part of this system. The third system is the exo-system which considers a link between two settings, one of which does not contain the developing person. Factors such as parental workplace stress, social class, and practices of the learning institute can be considered at this level. The last and final layer is that of the macro system, an overarching system that consists of social and cultural beliefs. According to Lier (2004), the relationship between different layers of a system is termed activity. Therefore, according to Nazari (2017), the purpose of an ecological study with a model such as Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Nested ecosystem is to accept the dynamism of the activity system. Lier (2004) suggested that Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystem model should be used to delve deep into language-related issues.

### **1.5.2. Engestrom's Model of Activity Theory**

The activity theory was instigated by Vygotsky with the thought that the growth of the mind is dependent on its interaction with the context in which it is operational. Vygotsky (1978) believed that humans use artifacts that work as mediating means to attain higher mental functions and human activity is mediated by social, cultural, and historical factors. Haught (2006, p.93), talked about the same in these words, "Activity theory views learning as a complex social practice, acquired through dialogic communication with cultural and historical context." Engestrom and Miettinen (1999), however, found fault with Vygotsky's concept of mediation because it relied heavily on "individual's actions in the world of the



object.” They believed that “individuals act in collective practices and communities and such collective practices cannot be equated to the sums of individual’s actions.” Therefore, Engestrom (1987) came up with a collective model of activity that divided the activity into subject, object, and outcome. As activity is conducted in a culture, special consideration should be given to the tools, rules of that culture, the community itself, and division (Shirvan, 2016, p. 65). To understand human activity in context, activity theory strikingly helps.

Now the question arises concerning its applicability to the education sector. In an educational setting, the participants are the learners and if they are in the form of a group, they can be called a community. Object, which is sometimes termed as objective, refers to the learning outcomes or goals of education. Tools can be taken as techniques used to attain learning outcomes whereas rules are the norms and standards of the class either set by the teacher or by the institutional policies. The division of tasks during the classroom proceedings is equivalent to the division of labor. To practically apply these seven dimensions to a context, Mwanza (2002) devised an eight-step model that was used in this study to gain an in-depth understanding of the issue.

## **1.6. Research Methodology**

The study uses mixed-method research which is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The research is sequential exploratory as it uses the quantitative data gathered from the first phase. In the qualitative phase, the study uses interviews, diary writing, and interviews with the teachers as tools to explore the reasons for anxiety among university students. Analytical and descriptive measures were taken during the research. First, a Horwitz et.al (1986) questionnaire was adopted to determine the level of anxiety of the students. Certain adapted versions are available; however, the study has used the original scale as the required results could be attained with it.

In the second phase, to dig out the reasons for anxiety, first, students (with the highest level of anxiety) were interviewed based on the Eight Step Mwanza model (2002). They were asked to keep diaries and note down the points of being anxious and that of being relaxed in English class. After finishing the diary reading,

the students were interviewed to make sense of whatever went vague during the reading. In the end, the perspectives of English teachers, teaching anxious students were sought to take their point of view on student's causes of LL anxiety.

The students of two universities from the Faisalabad division, and two universities from the capital territory Islamabad, with one from the public sector and one from the private sector from each, form the population of this study. These universities are selected in line with convenience sampling. Moreover, the selection of provincial and federal universities gives a representation of data. The students of these universities are evaluated with FLCAS by Horwitz et al (1986). Highly anxious students in all these four universities are taken up as samples. The reason for taking up a small sample lies in the requirement of qualitative research.

NVivo 11 is used to facilitate the analytical procedure. The nested ecosystem model, suggested by Bronfenbrenner (1979), was used to analyze and categorize the anxiety levels of learners in Pakistani universities.

## **1.7. Delimitation**

The study is delimited to the following:

### **1.7.1. Theoretical Delimitation**

The study is delimited to two theoretical frameworks i.e., Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested ecosystem model and Engestrom's (1987) model of activity theory. The data gathered from the research tools was interpreted with the help of these theories. Though the theories are quite old in terms of biology, their usage in language learning anxiety is a dimension recently established and explored (Lier, 2004; Gkonou, 2017).

### **1.7.2. Methodological Delimitation**

The current research is limited to the following research tools:

1. *Horwitz et al. (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)*. Many scales are available to assess the English LLA of the learners such

as the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), Anxiety towards in Class Activity Questionnaire (ATIAQ), Self-Perceived Proficiency Scale, and Anxiety towards Test Types Evaluation. This research uses FLCAS to measure the anxiety level of the students. The reasons for the selection of this tool are: it is most widely used; the results obtained through this test are reliable.

**2. *Interview Questions based on the Eight-Step Mwanza Model (2002).***

Activity theory is a theoretical framework to make sense of human interaction through the use of tools and artifacts. Mwanza (2002) provides the applicability of activity theory by offering a model called the Mwanza model of Activity theory. Another model, modified from Mwanza's, Learning Activity Analysis Tool (LAAT) is also available. This research has, however, used the Mwanza Model (2002) as its reliability and validity were established by Mwanza (2002) and it has been used in language anxiety research projects (Nazari, 2017; Farnia, 2020).

**3. *Diary Writing.*** The diary is used to take an insider's perspective on an issue. The students are told to keep diaries to note down the anxious and relaxing points during their English classes. It is not free writing; students are provided with prompts. Since the students have a different number of interactions with the teacher in a week in different universities, therefore, they provide different numbers of entries. At NTU and TUF there are 2 meetups weekly against 3 credit hours courses whereas there is one meet-up per week at NUML and Riphah International.

### **1.7.3. Population Delimitation**

The population for this study includes only undergraduate students of general English courses from the following universities:

1. National Textile University, (NTU) Faisalabad (Public sector)
2. University of Faisalabad (TUF) (Private sector)
3. National University of Modern Languages (NUML) (Public sector)
4. Riphah International University, Islamabad. (Private sector)

The population is further delimited to the following departments of these universities for uniformity. These two departments were available in all the universities under consideration.

1. Computer Sciences Department
2. Management Sciences Department

For sampling, the study was delimited to highly anxious students, those who had scored 123+ on FLCAS.

### **1.8. Significance of the Study**

The application of ecological system theory and activity theory to map out the reasons for anxiety in the Pakistani context will reshape language-learning anxiety research. Ecological system theory is the most suitable theory for research that focuses on the two-way relationship between the people and the world (Saghafi, 2017). The theory takes emergence, quality, value, diversity, variability, and activity into account and in turn, brings forth covert reasons (reasons to which researchers shut their eyes) of language-learning anxiety. In the absence of an ecological approach, these factors will always remain enshrouded. Thus, an ecological approach to language learning anxiety can provide us with a brand-new understanding of the issue.

From Larsen-Freeman's (2016) point of view, a complete understanding of teaching and learning can be attained only by focusing on the context in which the activity is embedded. In her own words, "In the case of classroom ecology, the components are not only the teacher and the students (and all of their accompanying thoughts, action, emotions, behaviors, dispositions, identities, social capital, etc.), but they also include the physical and temporal environment such as language learning." The application of this theory brings forth both human and non-human factors that play a pivotal role in the emergence of LLA. In the previous research works on LLA, the only human factor was considered. Therefore, the application of the theory will broaden the horizon of LLA, and a more comprehensive understanding of the issue will be possible.

Language is a system of systems and patterns of patterns as it is made up of linguistic units that are independent of each other; therefore, it requires focusing on multiple systems and patterns for a complete understanding of an issue that is related to it. An ecological theory will help in understanding the haphazard patterns of LLA. This diversity was impossible in the absence of ecological theory.

The previous studies on LLA have tried to find out universals whereas modern approaches to language learning emphasize the significance of applying different treatments for different individuals. The ecological system theory believes in the concept of variability i.e., equal treatment to all the learners is a doubtful pedagogical practice; every learner is a different individual and should be treated as such (Lier, 2004). This research highlights the importance of individual differences among the learners and future researchers will consider this perspective. This study on LLA from a new perspective will make it apparent that the phenomenon is intricate and should be explored at myriad levels. The researchers in Pakistan will realize with this raised awareness that learning trajectory is shaped by myriad factors and the idea of exclusive consideration to an individual learner to explore the complexity is fallacious. In the words of Stivaros (2007), “It behooves researchers and policymakers alike to look beyond explanations of learning by considering direct and indirect factors embedded in a child’s world.”

Different levels of the educational ecosystem can benefit from this study. No doubt, many studies in Pakistan have explored the reasons for LLA but they are broad brushed. Since this research has dealt with the issue meticulously, the issue is considered on a broad canvas. At the micro-level, the research can help the teachers and the students. Since no research is available in the Pakistani context on LLA from the perspective of ecology, the work can be a help for the teachers of languages in making the environment of their classrooms better. The study encourages English language teachers to consider ecological factors so that may help the students in learning the material easily.

The current research will also help in reshaping the existing standards for the assessment of language learning. The ecological theory believes that standard and quality are two different things. A high standard does not always lead to high quality. If the students are getting good grades in an exam, it does not mean that they are

proficient in the language. Too much focus on assessment and setting high standards for English does not lead to language proficiency. Language proficiency depends on other factors as well that are away from the confines of a classroom, and available in the other spheres of their lives. Therefore, the students should not be overloaded with work rather they should be provided with time for other activities that may cater to the needs of their language learning.

Educational institutes may get dual benefits from the research; they can reconsider the institutional environment that creates hindrances in students' learning a language, leading the institute towards a good reputation; an improvement in the microsystem can automatically make the overall learning environment pleasant. Moreover, the relationship between teachers and students can be enhanced through an understanding of ecological factors that may affect the students' learning. In short, the study can prove to be helpful both at the micro-level of classrooms and the macro-level of the institutions, for lowering the English LLA of the students.

### **1.9. Relevance of this Research in Pakistan**

Since English is taught as a compulsory subject in Pakistan from primary to graduate level, it can be said that proficiency in the English language is deemed necessary for success in both academic and professional spheres. Therefore, understanding factors that hinder the language learning process in any way is very important. Many studies have been conducted in Pakistan to deal with the issue of LLA in the past few decades, but all these studies are either quantitative or correctional. As a result, the research on LLA has dealt only with limited issues and could not solve the real problems faced by the learners. This research has considered the issue with an ecological approach that can bring the multiple layers of the issue into the limelight. This research will help the language teachers, parents of the learners, administration of institutes offering language courses, curriculum planners, and policymakers as the ecological approach to research takes into consideration all these variables. The purpose of the current research is not to change the whole of the education system but to improve the condition of language learners by making the process of language learning riveting and less perturbed.

## 1.10. Structure of Dissertation

The research is divided into six chapters:

1. **Introduction.** This is the first chapter of the thesis that provides the background and objectives of the study. The research questions are introduced, and the methodology adopted to attain the answers to the questions is briefly discussed. The importance of the current research amid so many research works on anxiety in English language learning is also presented. In the end, a chapter break for the research is presented.
2. **Literature Review.** This chapter presents the theoretical and research background of the study. First, the concept of anxiety with all its pros and cons is discussed, and then at the theoretical level, ecological systems theory and activity theory are introduced. The research background is divided into two parts: the first part presents a detailed review of the research done on foreign LLA around the globe; the second discusses the research done in Pakistan.
3. **Research Methodology.** The third chapter explains in detail the methodology used in the present study to achieve the required results. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the nature of the research and discusses the research plan. The second part discusses the sampling method and rationale for the sample. The third part discusses all the tools used in the research.
4. **Data Analysis.** The results obtained from data analysis are presented in this chapter. The chapter is divided into six different parts: the first part analyses the data obtained from FLCAS to reach the required sample. The second part discusses the data obtained from the students of NTU whereas the third one discusses that of TUF. The fourth and fifth parts discuss the data obtained from the universities of Islamabad i.e., NUML and Riphah International. The last part compares and contrasts the data obtained from all four universities.
5. **Discussion.** This chapter discusses the results of the study and compares them with the previous works done in the field that were mentioned in the literature review.
6. **Conclusion and Recommendations.** This chapter presents the conclusions drawn and recommends its implications for future researchers.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature about English LLA from an ecological perspective to understand the factors at different levels that affect the learning of the English language in a non-native context. The chapter consists of three different sections: the first section discusses anxiety, its types, the levels, LLA, and the causes and effects of LLA. The second section comprises a discussion on ecology, its implications for the classroom, and the rationale for the selection of ecology as a theoretical framework for the current research. The last part reviews the literature concerning language-learning anxiety at the international level as well as in the Pakistani context.

#### 2.1. Anxiety and its Types

Anxiety is a psychological construct, which is defined differently by different psychologists. Freud (1856-1939), the founding father of psychology and a distinguished psychoanalyst of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has defined anxiety as an impending danger (Hall, 1955). Adler (1870-1937) a psychotherapist and the founder of the school of individual psychology defines it as a symptom of a strong feeling of fear related to all creatures (Kluetz, 2015). Spielberger (1983) defines it as a subjective feeling of tension and nervousness associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system.

In recent times too, many psychologists have delved into the subject to clarify the concept further. Pappamihiel (2002) puts anxiety as an intricate concept, which depends not only on one's feelings but also on threats inherent in a situation. Mazumdar (2013) maintained that stress in students is an undeniable and unavoidable phenomenon, which affects students' academic performance negatively. All these definitions were at the individual level while at the organizational level American psychologist Association describes anxiety as an emotion, which is characterized by a feeling of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes like blood pressure. From the above-mentioned description of the phenomenon, it can be



derived that anxiety is a subjective feeling, that is caused by the anticipation of a threatening event, and it is different from fear.

Anxiety is a worry about the future event while fear is a reaction to the current situation.

The myriad definitions brought forward different forms of anxiety. From the perspective of psychologists, anxiety is of three different types: state, trait, and situation-specific anxiety. Trait anxiety is becoming anxious in a situation by an individual. As it is a permanent trait of a person, the person can be anxious in several situations. State anxiety unlike trait anxiety is not a permanent characteristic of a person's personality. An individual experiences this type of anxiety at a particular moment in time. It is a temporary emotional state, so it is transient. The third type, situation-specific anxiety is a form of anxiety, that occurs repeatedly, but in a specific situation or an event over time. Situation-specific anxiety is just like trait anxiety; the difference is only that of scope. Situation-specific anxiety is limited to a particular situation (Huang, 2012).

These three types of anxiety are categorized as general anxiety and academic anxiety. Some theorists have classified anxiety in another way as social anxiety and academic anxiety. Trait and state anxieties are forms of social anxiety, in which a person develops a fear of society. Persons suffering from social anxiety fear the negative evaluation by the people. Physical symptoms of social anxiety are feelings of nausea, excessive sweating, trembling, and stammering. The ultimate causes of anxiety are yet to be explored; however, genetics and social experiences are considered important factors in developing social anxiety (Cuncic, 2018).

Academic anxiety, according to Cassady (2010), is test anxiety, subject anxiety, or any type of institution-related anxiety. Academic anxiety causes academic difficulties through irrelevant thoughts and fears. Seven characteristics of academically anxious students have been identified that are: misdirected attention, physiological and emotional distress, inappropriate behavior, maladaptive coping choices, negative interpretation of events, special personal meanings attached to academics, and anxiety-engendering mental activity (Ottens, 1991). In light of these characteristics, it is easy to identify the nature of academic anxiety. Anxiety in a language class falls into the category of academic anxiety.

## 2.2. Language Learning Anxiety (LLA)

Both in psychology and second language learning, anxiety is viewed as an emotion negative enough to inhibit the acquisition of language (Gkonou, 2017). Horwitz et al. (1986), in their seminal research on foreign language classroom anxiety, introduced the concept of language anxiety for the very first time. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), language learning anxiety is a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors that are related to language classrooms, and it arises because of the uniqueness of the LL process.

Foreign language anxiety is an apprehension, which occurs when a person tries to perform in a foreign or second language classroom. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), the manifestation of foreign language anxiety is in listening and speaking activities, in having certain beliefs, or in test situations. Foreign language anxiety can be of communication, test, or negative evaluation. Communication anxiety is the fear of communicating with other people in a foreign language.

According to He (2018), language-learning anxiety affects the process of learning both directly and indirectly. Directly it affects the participation of the students in class while indirectly it occupies their minds in the form of worries and cares. In the language-learning process anxiety is a persuasive force (He, 2018). Anxiety affects all three stages (input, retrieval, and output) of the process of language learning (Oda, 2011). At the input stage, anxiety creates a hindrance in the reception process and blocks concentration. Learners get unsure of themselves and as a result, they are not able to pick the things which are presented for the very first time. At the retrieval stage, anxiety lessens the efficiency of the learners, and the process of storage gets affected. According to Oda (2011), high levels of anxiety may lead to the total inability of the learner to save new information. At the output, stage anxiety interferes with previous learning experiences and worries the learners when they are about to demonstrate their previously learned language experiences. High levels of anxiety may lead to an inability to speak or write in a foreign language. However, mild anxiety is reported to expedite learning (Oda, 2011). Therefore, anxiety has different levels, and every level affects individuals differently.

Afolayan et al. (2013) have classified anxiety into four levels: mild, moderate, severe, and panic. A mild level of anxiety is healthy and improves the

learning and attentiveness of the learner. The learner feels motivated and alert so that learning and cognition can be achieved at their best. A moderate level of anxiety is not a healthy experience. Perception of the person is narrowed or in other words, a person is inattentive at certain moments. The focus of the person is decreased, and certain automotive movements are observed like tapping feet, moving hands, or playing with pens. The academic achievement of the student depends on how much he can control anxiety. The third level, i.e., the severe level reduces the perceptual field further. The learner feels difficulty at this level of communication. The academic performance at this level depends on the ability of the instructor to recognize the problem of the person and provide him/her with a conducive environment. Since most of the instructors are not able to recognize the problem and provide the students with the required environment, the performance of the students is reduced at this stage. The fourth and last level is that of total disruption of the perceptual field. At this stage, the person is not able to think rationally and consciously. The academic performance at this level is poor as the person is not able to think and remember anything.

### **2.3. History of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) Research**

LLA is an extensively explored area of second language research. According to MacIntyre (2017, p.11), the research literature on LL anxiety can be broken down into three phases: confounded, specialized, and dynamic. The first is called confounded anxiety, its effects on LL were adopted from various sources, and the meanings of anxiety for language learners were not specified. The second phase identified, defined, explained, and studied LL anxiety. The recent Dynamic phase studies LL anxiety “in connection with a complex web of language experiences” (MacIntyre, 2017).

The first phase is confounded and the most prominent work in this phase is the review of Scovel (1978) on language anxiety. In Kráľová’s (2016) view, his work is considered a turning point in the development of LLA research. He found that the research on LL anxiety had produced mixed and confusing results because anxiety is neither a simple nor well-understood concept even in psychology. Scovel’s (1978) work “The Effect of Affect on Foreign Language Research: A Review of Anxiety

Research” brought this inconsistency to the fore for the very first time. Moreover, he doubted the relevance of LL with anxiety as he said, “It is premature to attempt to relate it to the global and comprehensive task of language acquisition” (Scovel, 1978). The major issue in the confounded phase according to Scovel (1978) was defining and measuring anxiety. He noted that LL anxiety researchers used two measures of physiological observation and a self-reported structured questionnaire. These tools were borrowed from psychology without considering their relevance to LL. Horwitz et al. (1986) were the first who capture this issue that scales adapted from psychology had little relevance for language studies as “it seems unlikely that insect anxiety has anything to do with one’s response to or ultimate success in language learning.”

This misapplication of the scales borrowed from psychology to LL brought inconsistent results. To ameliorate the situation, Scovel (1978) differentiated between debilitating and facilitating anxiety. He also noticed the distinction between trait and state anxiety (Scovel, 1978). Whereas the distinction between trait and state anxiety provided a solid ground for future research, facilitating and debilitating anxiety caused methodological confusion for them. The concepts of facilitating and debilitating anxiety were originally introduced by Alpert and Haber in 1960 (MacIntyre, 2017) and they believed these two concepts can be uncorrelated. Therefore, they suggested using two different scales to measure both. Ignoring their recommendations, the researchers took them as two ends of the continuum that produced confusing and mixed results.

In 1981, Krashen hypothesized that there is a link between affective factors like motivation, anxiety confidence, and academic achievement. According to Krashen (1981), learners who are equipped with high motivation, confidence, and extroversion are better able to learn a language. On the other hand, low motivation, low self-esteem, and introversion raise the affective filter, which in turn forms a mental block for comprehensible input, and subsequently obstructs the language-learning process.

Since the input hypothesis, many pieces of research have focused on the correlation between language-learning achievement and anxiety (Rani, 2020). Sarason’s (1978) work on “The Test Anxiety Scale: Concept and Research” introduced the “Cognitive Interference Questionnaire” for the assessment of anxiety.

The Questionnaire consisted of 37 items related to test anxiety to identify the cognitive events that influence overt behavior. Bailey first introduced learners-oriented language-learning anxiety in 1983 (MacIntyre, 2017). His work “Competitiveness and Anxiety in Adult Second Language Learning: Looking at and Through the Diary Studies” found that students’ anxiety increases when they compare themselves with others and as they start perceiving themselves better, anxiety decreases. Gardner (1985) hypothesized that language learning anxiety is related to language achievement and came up with the “Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB)” to measure affective factors like motivation and anxiety.

Amid this confused state, the work of Gardner (1985) seeded for the specialized phase. In Gardner’s point of view, anxiety interferes with motivation and hinders the LL process. Gardner’s theory (1985) of integrated motivation was specific language-related and it was not devised for or borrowed from any other field (MacIntyre, 2017). Since integrated motivation had considered the uniqueness of the LL process, therefore its application generated consistent results. Consistency in the result leads to the end of the confounded phase and the rise of the specialized phase in LL anxiety research.

The second phase is called the specialized phase where inconsistencies in the results of previous research and Gardner’s socio-educational model made Horwitz et al (1986) think that the concept of anxiety and its measurement needs to be reoriented. They based their results on the students with moderate to severe anxiety, anxiety that is troublesome and needs external help to come out of it. Since Horwitz et al (1986) were highly influenced by Gardner’s work, therefore, following his pattern; they developed their concept of anxiety on students’ description of anxiety-causing aspects of their courses. These students reported such factors as frequent testing, fear of negative evaluation by the teachers and peers, and speaking aloud in front of the class. Keeping in line with the student's report, Horwitz et al (1986) argued that these three features coalesce in LL anxiety (MacIntyre, 2017). Though this concept had received extensive research support, however, researchers misunderstood it. They took anxiety as made up of these three variables instead of taking them as fragments of a bigger picture.

In 1986, Horwitz et al made a significant contribution to the field of LLA. Their contribution is not only in the field of theory but also in the measurement of anxiety.

They introduced the “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” (FLCAS) which consists of 33 questions related to anxiety on a Likert scale. When the scale was tested for its reliability, it reported excellent reliability. This scale is extensively used in language-learning anxiety research and is adapted by the researchers according to their cultural and language requirements. Besides FLCAS and its adaptations, foreign language anxiety is generally measured by observations, students’ self-reports, and behavioral and psychological tests (Kráľová, 2016).

Until then, in LLA research, the focus was on speaking and listening. According to Kráľová (2016) Hillson, for the very first time in his qualitative study, linked anxiety with reading and writing in 1996. Young’s “Affect in the Foreign Language and Second Language Learning: A Practical Guide to Creating a Low Anxiety Classroom Atmosphere”, according to Horwitz (2010), is the most comprehensive guide to LLA research as it has addressed all the aspects of LL (listening, speaking, reading, writing and culture). The exploration of LLA, which started in the 70s as descriptive research, gradually became quantitative correlational using questionnaires and scales as reliable tools to find out the individual differences of learners. By 1990, it became an experimental study where the researchers focused on the causes of foreign language anxiety (Kráľová, 2016). According to Gkonou (2017), early research into language learning anxiety identified the causes of anxiety either as stemming from outer sources (outside the LL process) or from emotional experiences from aspects that are characteristic of LL processes. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, researchers began to realize the inadequacy of the methods employed in LLA research.

The third phase is named as dynamic. In light of the new social turn and the emergence of complexity and chaos theory, an interdisciplinary and socially informed approach to language anxiety research was emphasized (Gkonou, 2017). According to the researchers of recent times language develops under the influence of society (Kovacevic, 2018) so societal perspective must be included in a study of LLA. According to Svedberg (2007), since language is a social practice, it needs to be studied at a broader level. Gardner, & MacIntyre (1993) contend that foreign

language anxiety isn't specific to the situation of the classroom where it is learned but also in the situations where it is used i.e., in the practical context. So, the research must focus on many situations instead of just focusing on the LL classroom. Kráľová (2016) felt the need to study LLA from a holistic perspective. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the focus of research is not the individual differences but the person in a context where context refers to a range of external variables and personal histories. According to Atkinson (2002), language constantly shapes the environment and in return is shaped by it so it cannot be studied in the absence of its context. In the words of Atkinson (2002): "if language is in the world at the same time as it is in the head, then we need to account for its integrated existence, rather than adopt positions that reduce the life – the humanity – out of language." For Ushioda (2015) the relationship between the person and context is not unidirectional but it grows dynamically as each responds and adapts to each other. The emerging interest of the researchers in the context and its mutually constitutive relationship with the learner, calls for a new paradigm that may deal with the contextual factors.

#### **2.4. Rationale for Using Ecological Approach to Language Studies**

Many reasons inform the use of the ecological approach to LLA research.

1. Ecological attendance to FLA research is required to understand the relationship between the world and the people better. The approach can provide a better and more in-depth understanding of the issue. According to Gkonou (2017), "Ecological perspectives on LL have the potential to deal with this mutually constitutive relationship of learners and their context."
2. To get an in-depth understanding of the learning-teaching process, a focus on educational context is required, according to Larsen-Freeman. Therefore, an ecological approach can help in understanding the issue of anxiety from a dynamic perspective.
3. Since language is a system of systems and patterns of patterns, a comprehensive understanding of LLA requires an ecological approach to dig out both human and non-human factors underpinning anxiety.

4. The ecological approach can account for the emergent patterns of anxiety that will not come to the surface with ordinary exploration approaches. Emergence is “the arising of something new or unanticipated.”

5. Modern research calls for an approach that considers individual differences. The application of the ecological approach can account for the variability and diversity, which in turn accounts for individual anxiety patterns (Saghafi, 2017).

## **2.5. Ecology and its Relationship with Language**

Ecology emerged as a scientific discipline around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The roots of ecology can be traced back to Darwin’s work “On the Origin of Species” published in 1859. The main theme discussed in “The Origin” was the reproductive potential of plants and animals that enable them to reach a huge population. This potential according to Darwin is seldom attained because of natural checks and balances. Darwin, however, did not use any term to refer to these natural/environmental factors. Ernst Haeckel, who was highly inspired by Darwin, provided a name for the science that was introduced by Darwin. Haeckel, a German zoologist, in his book “Morphology of Organisms” published in 1866 defined ecology. He used the Greek word “*oekologie*” which is derived from “*oekos*” which means home or place to live. Therefore, ecology is the study of the organism and its environment. This environment includes both the organisms around and the physical environment. In the words of Haeckel "Ecology is the study of all those complex interactions referred to by Darwin as the conditions of the struggle for existence" (Haeckel, 1870).

Sir Arther Tansley (1871-1955), a British ecologist found that ecologists were wrong in their approach of dealing with organisms separately from the environment. In 1935, he coined the term “ecosystem” as an integrated system of organic and inorganic conditions. Soon it became clear that human beings and their effects on the environment should also be considered in an ecological study. Early ecologists worked on wildlife, fisheries, and conservation problems; however, with the focus on environmental problems in the 1970s more and more areas were included, transforming it into a recognized discipline.



As the horizon of ecology broadened, Haugen, who was dissatisfied with the approaches to linguistic description, in 1972 observed that the area of language can also be studied from the perspective of ecology. Linguists, he believed, are so obsessed with a structure that they have left the societal perspective to anthropologists and sociologists. According to Haugen (1972), language is not only a structural system as it is impossible to understand it in the absence of its speakers. Therefore, Haugen subsided the distinction between theoretical and sociolinguistics (Garner, 2005).

Haugen (1972) defined language ecology as ‘the study of the interaction between any language and its environment’. The definition led to the clarification of the word “Environment.” Three views were brought forward by the linguists to decide about the possible environment of a language. First, the referential world to which language provides an index. Secondly, the mind of a language user, and thirdly the society that uses it as one of its codes. Rejecting the first two views, Haugen favored the third one that the true environment of language is the society that uses it (Garner, 2005). According to Haugen (1972), language exists in the minds of its users, and they use it to develop a link between themselves and nature. On the other hand, society uses it as a medium of communication. Hence, the part of ecology is psychological, and the other part is sociological.

However, the linguists could not see the potential inherent in Haugen’s idea of eco-linguistics (Garner, 2005). Even twenty years after its appearance, language ecology could not contribute significantly to the study of multilingualism because of the absence of a theoretical model. Garner (2005) found that the reason for this absence lies within the very details of eco-linguistics provided by Haugen in 1972. Haugen believed that considering language in a metaphorical sense is a norm, but the environment should not be considered in abstract metaphorical terms, as “the true environment of a language is the society that uses it” (Haugen, 1972). If language is a metaphorical entity and the environment is a literal one, then it is nonviable to study any relationship between a literal and abstract entity. This discrepancy in different treatment of language and its environment leads to impracticality in eco-linguistics.

Garner (2005) found that human ecology is a literal application of biological ecology i.e., human beings are organisms, and like all species, they interact with their physical environment. The human environment is not as simple as the environment

of other species as it is complex and dynamic as many factors, human and non-human effects are involved. Moreover, many psychological and cultural factors mediate the interaction between the language and the environment. Therefore, according to Garner (2005), human ecology is not a sensible metaphor.

To apply ecology to language studies, linguists need to go for a non-metaphorical approach. The modern ecological movement believes that the study of ecology has the potential to solve the problems of this world, so biological ecology has become a multidisciplinary approach. In language studies, the requirement is to apply ecological philosophy to the description and interpretation of language (Garner, 2005). Ecological thinking, according to Garner, is concerned with a phenomenon that is holistic, dynamic, interactive, and situated. Language is complex, diverse, context-bound, interactive, and contextual providing the opportunity to study it ecologically. Therefore, language has a relationship with the physical, social, and symbolic environment that makes it amenable to ecological study.

## **2.6. Relationship between Language and the Environment**

Language is linked to the environment in different ways. It is not only linked to physical but also to social/ cultural, linguistic, and learning environments.

### **2.6.1. Language and the Physical Environment.**

According to Lier (2004), “Language is tied to the physical world in many ways.” Some words are the representations of sounds found in the physical world like a cuckoo and flip flop. This feature of language is iconicity. Words sometimes refer directly to the physical world as the look, here, there, that, etc. pronouns refer to places and persons, but they do not refer to the same person or same thing all the time. There are also links between vocabulary choices and the physical world for example Eskimo people have many vocabulary words for snow and people of the Amazon have more for shades of trees. Language is also used to talk about environmental issues. Some morphological investment is not only culturally but also environmentally motivated. Words do not only reflect the world, but they also create it.

### **2.6.2. Relationship between Language and Cultural/ Social Environment.**

Language has a deep connection with the cultural and social environment. This connection brought forward two positions of linguistic determinism and linguistic relativism. Linguistic determinism means to believe that language determines the thought patterns of society while relativism maintains that language and culture influence each other.

Some languages use passive constructions like Latin American, so they receive the action instead of doing it. This fatalistic attitude may be due to the fatalistic nature of language, or the fatalistic nature of the speakers may be a cause of the fatalistic disposition of language. According to Lier (2004), such views are based either on ignorance or on stereotyping. In reality, the views of the dominant and powerful always take their share in language. One such way is that of nominalization which turns processes into nouns. Changing the agency makes the doer less liable to the negative action that in turn defends the cause of the powerful.

### **2.6.3. Relationship Between and Among Languages.**

When a language diminishes, it takes away its culture with it too. For this reason, all societies always fight to preserve their language. Many speech communities have indigenous minorities who try to preserve their language by taking help from national policies. However, the intolerant majority often resist such efforts severely if it costs the language of the majority. Other than indigenous minorities some immigrants bring a new language to a speech community. This new arrival can be seen mostly as a danger to the identity of the nation. Language diversity has a strong influence on society. Muhlhausler analyses the effect of the English language on the other languages of the Pacific region. When a language dominates the economy and education of a country, the local languages are relegated to ever-decreasing status (Lier, 2004).

### **2.6.4. Relationship between learner and the learning context.**

According to Lier (2004), learning means putting things in your head; language learning is internalizing pieces of language. The ecological perspective says that language learning is attained through meaningful participation in human events and this participation involves perception and action. The concept of

affordances is central here which involves an active relationship between the learner and the learning environment.

## 2.7. Characteristics of an Ecological Approach to Research

According to Lier (2010), an ecological approach looks at the learning process not only from the perspective of actions and activities of the teachers and the students but all the elements in the setting and their interdependencies. An ecological approach possesses the following characteristics: Relations, Context, Patterns/ Systems, Emergence, Quality, Value, Critical, Variability, Diversity, and Activity.

1. **Relations.** An ecological approach focuses on the concept of affordance which studies the relationship of an organism with the environment. This environment includes all the physical, social, and symbolic environments that provide ground for activity.
2. **Context.** An ecological approach considers context not only something that is around language but also something, that determines language. An ecological study context is the heart and soul of research.
3. **Patterns/ Systems.** In an ecological approach, language is seen as a pattern of patterns and a system of systems. This pattern and system circumvent the idea of rules and structures that are fixed and constant.
4. **Emergence.** For the ecological approach, language learning is not a gradual acquisition but an emergence. In the process of emergence, simple elements are joined together to form a complex one i.e., higher in order. The new whole is different from its components and has a different pattern of functioning.
5. **Quality.** A central construct of an ecological approach is the concept of quality. Quality and standard are two different constructs, an ecological approach focuses on how quality and standard harmonize in language education.
6. **Value.** The traditional concept of the Cartesian ideal of science is rebuffed by ecological research. Ecological research believes that there should not be any demarcation between science and religion rather science should be a moral enterprise.

Ecological linguistics proclaims that all research should be value-laden.

7. **Critical.** Research is considered critical if it requires a constant evaluation of some happening. Ecological research requires a critical stance on language learning.

8. **Variability.** An ecological approach to LL considers variability. There are differences not only in education systems but also among students in the same class. A good teacher understands this variability at the micro and macro levels.

9. **Diversity.** Diversity is a concept close to variability, but it is different in the sense that whereas variability considers differences, diversity addresses the significance of having different learners. Just like ecology where diversity is necessary, the ecological approach to language learning requires learners to be able to understand diversity.

10. **Activity.** The ecological approach takes learning not as a passive process but as an active one. Students are supposed to learn from activities instead of being just receivers nodding heads without understanding things. Learners are autonomous here and can define the meanings of their acts but the thing to remember is autonomy is not equivalent to independence.

## 2.8. The Need to Switch to an Ecological Approach

According to Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000), cognitivism and behaviorism are preferred choices for most of the institutions offering English as a foreign language around the globe. The world still believes in the metaphors of computationalism and the mind as a container, they say. These approaches, no doubt, provide an easy and simple explanation for how a language is learned and should be preferred in comparison with the complex one like Occam's razor theory (Lier, 2004). According to Souza (2015), these approaches were not conducive to language learning as they took a decontextualized view of the language. Once the social context is removed language becomes devoid of meaning-making capacity as an algorithm of computer software is meaningless when in the form of words on paper because their symbolic representation is missing (Souza, 2015). Souza (2015) believes that language is a social phenomenon so must be treated as a social phenomenon and not like other subjects in school. Kramsch (2008) vied the traditional methods as he believed that cognition occurs first on the social plane and then gets internalized on the psychological plane, so he highlighted the centrality of context in language learning.

Collentine (2004) wrote that Dell Hymes observed for the very first time that the environment outside the school affects the inside environment. According to Collentine (2004), the importance of learning context in the study of second LL has started a debate among researchers. These researchers can be classified into two groups: those who do not favor the study of context and those who believe the best model of second language acquisition is the one that takes into consideration the interaction of social activity and psycholinguistic elements.

Norris & Ortega (2001) believed that in recent times such theories are believed to be suspicious and do not accommodate the learning context along with other variables while Atkinson (2002) is of the view that language constantly shapes the environment and is shaped by it. If it is context-sensitive to such an extent, how it can be studied in the absence of context? Following this point, Atkinson (2002) wrote, "If language is in the world at the same time as it is in the head, then we need to account for its integrated existence, rather than adopt positions that reduce the life – the humanity – out of language."

Collentine (2004) concluded from the data he examined that highly analytical approaches to studying SLA are not sufficient as they obscure the developmental observations. On the other hand, he favors highly context-sensitive sociolinguistic approaches as he considers them beneficial for SLA research. One such approach is put forward by linguistic ecology. It offers three different theoretical frameworks to be used in language studies. These are Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory, Activity theory, and Checkland's systems; however, this research makes use of the Nested ecosystem model of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Activity theory (Engestrom, 1987) as theoretical frameworks because of their widespread adoption.

## **2.9. Research on ELL Anxiety around the Globe**

In this section, the literature concerning LLA research is reviewed. First quantitative research works are reviewed and then qualitative. The last part considers the research projects with ecological theory.

### **2.9.1. Ecological Research on LL Anxiety**

All the research studies until now were based on cognitive approaches where a decontextualized understanding of a learner's anxiety was sufficient to make generalizations. The research works, reviewed above, clearly show that the concern

of the researchers was to examine the general patterns of anxiety and then look at an individual's idiosyncrasies. However, the social turn changed the worldview and LL became a process of socialization. According to Pavlenko (2002) "The seemingly internal and psychological factors such as motivation, attitudes or LL beliefs, therefore, are constructed in social interactions and are in a state of flux, being shaped and reshaped by the contexts in which the learners are engaged." This social turn has turned a learner into an agent whose learning is contextualized. To gain a full understanding of his learning, issues, and behavior a contextualized study is required. Ecological theory promises a contextualized and dynamic understanding of the issue.

The employment of the ecosystem model on foreign LL has gained prominence in recent years. The researchers have explored different areas of LL and teaching from the perspective of ecology. Lier (2003) employed this model for the very first time to investigate the interdependent forces affecting computer technology. Following his establishment, many researchers used the nested ecosystem model in educational as well as non-educational settings.

In the context of language-learning anxiety, the research employing ecological models started at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The researchers have explored different areas of LLA using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested ecosystem model and activity theory.

Many researchers have diverted their attention towards this new dimension to approach LLA. Shirvan, an Iranian scholar has extensively used the ecological model in his studies. From 2016 until the date, he conducted five important studies on LL anxiety.

In 2016, Shirvan et al. explored 'Anxiety in English as a General Course in the light of

Socio-cultural perspective'. In this work, he explored the anxiety of university students in the light of the Vygotskian socio-cultural perspective. 21 students were observed for three months and subsequently were interviewed. The results of the research were categorized into the pedagogical level, individual level, and community level i.e., in line with perspectives of activity theory. The research reported that types of activities and assignments, the behaviors of teachers and peers, and the rules rooted in the "cultural-historical span" are responsible for the anxiety

of the students. The research suggested that teachers should pay attention to the differences among individuals. Moreover, the teachers should try to make the atmosphere of the class positive.

In 2017, Shirvan et al. conducted a study on the ecological understanding of foreign language speaking anxiety. They based their work on the assumption that “LL is an emotionally dynamic process which produces fluctuations in learners’ speaking anxiety (Shirvan et al, 2016). Therefore, they decided to explore ecologically the speaking anxiety of learners with the nested ecosystem model and dynamic system theory. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with four female students for five sessions. The results were discussed first with Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) nested ecosystem model and were divided into micro, meso, exo, and macro levels; Secondly, on the dynamic patterns. The findings of the study proved that an ecological exploration of an issue provides a better and more in-depth understanding.

Another research in the same year was on ‘English as a foreign language learners’ anxiety and the interlocutors’ status and familiarity: An idio-dynamic perspective’. The purpose of the study was to find out the dynamics of English language learners’ anxiety while interacting with different interlocutors. For the study, two female students, from the first year were taken who had enrolled them in speaking and writing courses. Four interlocutors of different statuses and levels of familiarity were interviewed. The interlocutors self-rated their anxiety fluctuations and later on asked for the reasons in follow-up interviews. The results showed a positive correlation between the factors and were discussed in the light of complex dynamic system theory.

The productive skills of LL i.e., speaking and writing remained the focus of interest as they are believed to be more anxiety-causing. Shirvan (2017) explored the causes of foreign language speaking anxiety with Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) nested ecosystem model and dynamic system theory. Four intermediate-level students with an average age of 15 were taken as a sample. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, task moto-meter, and observations. At the micro-system level, learners’ beliefs; cognitive, linguistic, and affective factors, and the environment of the class were reported to be the anxiety-causing factors. At the meso level, previous learning experiences and parents’ pressure were the causes. The curriculum design,



course assessment, and cultural values of Iran were identified as causes of anxiety at the exo- and macro-level respectively.

Another dimension touched by Shirvan in his work was the impact of longitudinal studies on LL anxiety. Two studies conducted by Shirvan in 2018 were longitudinal, one dealing with foreign LL enjoyment and foreign language anxiety in the course of general English and the other with students' self-efficacy and anxiety. The former aimed at exploring to what extent students' foreign language classroom anxiety and English language anxiety change throughout the semester. 367 participants (254 male and 113 female) from the University of Bojnord were selected for the quantitative phase and qualitative 4 volunteers (2 male and 2 females) were taken. Data were collected quantitatively through questionnaires and qualitatively through interviews, observations, and journal writing. The results of the study indicated a negative correlation between foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) which was low in the beginning but turned out to be high at the end of the semester. In the second longitudinal study, the focus was on finding the correlation between self-efficacy and anxiety. The data was collected from 367 undergraduates at four different times during the semester. Data were analyzed with the help of Latent Growth Curve Modelling (LGCM). The results revealed that an increase in self-efficacy decreases anxiety. The study also noticed fluctuations in the correlation between self-efficacy and anxiety; a negative correlation between the variables was low in the beginning but turned out high at the end.

All the works reported above added to the new dimension of LL anxiety. These research studies have provided a practical demonstration of how to use an ecological theory and complex system theory for a deeper understanding of the issue. Moreover, the researcher has enhanced the understanding of the issue by touching on the different perspectives of anxiety. The longitudinal studies have stressed the point that students' assessments in the first sessions should not be taken as ultimate; ongoing monitoring and evaluation are required.

Speaking and writing being productive skills caught more attention of LL anxiety researchers. The same is true for the researchers dealing with ecological systems theory. Kasbi and Shirvan (2017) decided to study language-speaking anxiety with ecological understanding and complex dynamic system theory. They

believed LL to be a dynamic process that causes fluctuations in speaking anxiety (Kasbi & Shirvan, 2017). To dig out the issue ecologically, data was collected from four female students in line with Lier's (2004) assertion that four cases are sufficient for an ecological study. Data were collected with a task moto-meter from January to February 2016, non-participant observation, and semi-structured interviews. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested ecosystem model was used to categorize the results and variation within and between participants was exhibited with the help of complex dynamic systems theory. Application of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model revealed that causes of speaking anxiety belong to all four layers of the ecosystem. The use of CDST, however, brought the important result forward that if one studies anxiety dynamically, a non-linear simple cause-and-effect relationship does not work anymore (Kasbi & Shirvan, 2017). The research has contributed to this new dimension of LL anxiety research with the rejection of the nonlinearity relationship of variables and anxiety.

In the field of LL anxiety research, the book 'New Insights into Language Anxiety Research: Theory, Research, and Educational Implications' by Dewaele (2017) proved a milestone. The emerging trends in LL anxiety were introduced with their empirical investigations. In chapter 8 of the book, "Towards an Ecological Understanding of Language Anxiety", Christina Gkonou (2017) provided theoretical as well as empirical details on the use of the ecological model.

In her empirical study, Gkonou (2017) focused on the causes of English LLA from an ecological perspective among Spanish students. She used a nested ecosystem model as a theoretical framework for data collection and interpretation stages. According to Gkonou (2017), Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model stretches beyond the immediate level and includes all the factors that directly or indirectly influence the developing person. The research aimed at investigating how ecological systems influence language-learning anxiety and how these systems interact with each other. The research was a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods: the first part used the Horwitz al. (1986) questionnaire to identify highly anxious students from a total population of 197; the second part used qualitative methods to explore the causes of anxiety. Variables were selected from all four levels and their presence was checked with the help of diary writing, observations, and interview questions. The results revealed that language learners are influenced by a range of

factors that stretch across all four layers of Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystem model. The Micro-system of the classroom is not only affected by the variables found in the classroom but by the variables of meso, Exo, and macro systems too. The research suggested that Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model is a useful model for studying language-learning anxiety in a broader context and researchers must incorporate this new dimension for a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the issue.

The research is very comprehensive and lucid. The study is also unique in its employment of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model not only as a theoretical framework but also as an analytical one. The majority of the researchers have used it as a theoretical. The study has provided a contextualized understanding of the issue and therefore perfectly fits the requirements of the dynamic approach.

Like speaking, writing also received attention in this new dimension of approaching LL anxiety. Saghafi's (2017) work is an important contribution to the ecological understanding of LL anxiety research. He worked to explore the ecological reasons for writing anxiety in EFL classrooms. Saghafi (2017) provided strong arguments in favor of ecological theory and proved that ecology is the most suitable and reliable method to investigate a two-way relationship. Since language is a system of systems and patterns of patterns, therefore a complete understanding is impossible in the absence of an ecological model. With this strong and firm belief in the ecological model, Saghafi (2017) set out to explore the cause of writing anxiety in EFL classrooms. Learners of intermediate aged 14-18 formed the population of the study. He used observation, questionnaires, journals, and interviews as tools for the research. A nested model of ecology was used for the discussion of the data, and he found that individual and environmental factors interact and affect each other contributing to learners' anxiety. Saghafi (2017) concluded that language-learning anxiety is a socio-cultural construct and demands a holistic approach like ecology. Confirming the results of previous research projects on LLA, the research added that "bottom-up micro-systematic innovations and top-down eco-systematic intervention can fashion a classroom alleviating foreign language writing anxiety."

Another feature of writing anxiety i.e., concept blockage was explored by Nazari (2017). Nazari (2017) was of the view that concept blockage is socio-historical whereas researchers have treated it as a cognitive issue or an effective one.

This socio-historical nature of concept blockage cannot be understood with a limited scope of quantitative research therefore he decided to explore the issue with the ecological model. Even within the ecological model, he deviated from the standard four-layered Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested ecosystem model and used the extended version with the fifth layer of the chrono-system. The purpose of his research was to study the issue from a broader standpoint taking into account all the features of the ecosystem. The study took sophomore students of Farhangian College for men as its population. For the sample, the participants were assessed with the help of sample writing, their introspection, and a writing anxiety inventory checklist. Eight novice EFL teachers and eight expert teachers in the Iranian Ministry of Education were shortlisted as a sample. For the qualitative phase, these participants were interviewed, observed, and asked to keep journals for reporting anxiety during classroom sessions. The results confirmed Nazari's (2017) hypothesis that concept blockage is a socio-cultural construct. Causes of concept blockage were found against all the layers of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecosystem. It also confirmed Horwitz et al. (1986) idea that the discrepancy between mature thoughts and immature language skills causes writing anxiety. The research concluded that improving language can diminish the causes of LLA and suggested the need to understand the complex nature of language-learning anxiety from an ecological perspective. The most important finding of the study is the delineation of reading and writing as interlinked skills. Most of the research studies dealing with LL anxiety have focused on one skill at a time and no interrelatedness between the skills was established; the broad visions of activity theory and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested ecosystem model have made it possible.

The ecological system theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979) is also used in ESP anxiety research. Chen (2016) studied anxiety in 60 junior business students aged from 20 to 23 with 83% of the population from females. For data collection, the students completed the "Business English LLA Scale" modified from the Horwitz et al. (1986) questionnaire of the "English Language Learning Anxiety Scale." The analysis of the data revealed that a harmonious environment is necessary for the creative development of the students whereas an undesirable environment may lead to depression and anxiety according to this research. The research propounded that the cultivation of academic language proficiency, ambiguity tolerance, and an

ecological approach to teaching and ecological multimodal discourse is essential to make the classes anxiety-free.

From the review of the research, it is clear that three research trends are prevalent in LL anxiety research at the international level. In the beginning, the focus was on quantitative methods that later turned into qualitative. The recent sociological turn in LLA appears promising in dealing with the issue of LL anxiety with new insights and a comprehensive ecological model. These works have used quantitative methods; however, the use of ethnography that goes well with ecological studies is scarce in such studies. One such study that uses ethnography to explore the reasons for anxiety among English language learners was conducted by Brown in 2016. She explored the reasons for anxiety among the postgraduate students at the University of South England. All the research participants had a minimum of 6 bands in IELTS but even then, they were unable to feel comfortable with the language. The results found cultural shock to be the real reason for anxiety among the foreign students of English language learning. The study provided a different method to deal with language learning anxiety i.e., ethnography which provides an opportunity to delve deep into the issue and to present an emic perspective of the issue. Lier (2004) finds ethnographic methods to be compatible with ecological studies therefore it was decided to use ethnography to explore language learning anxiety research among Pakistani university students. The next part of the section reviews the research on LL anxiety in Pakistan to find out their standpoint.

### **2.9.2. Qualitative Research on LL Anxiety**

According to Wang (2009, p.27), there are very few studies that have used qualitative methods to explore the causes of LL anxiety. This part reviews the qualitative research conducted in the 21<sup>st</sup> century on the topic. The research works that have contributed something new are considered only.

An important study at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was by Renee von Worde (2003) on Students' perspectives on foreign language anxiety. The purpose of the research was to find out the factors that contribute to anxiety or that reduce it from the perspective of the students. Students from French, German, and Spanish classrooms were interviewed with the help of ten questions set to gather data. These questions asked them to talk about their feelings, emotions, likeness, reactions, or

confidence in performing an activity (Worde, 2003). The results reported non-comprehension, speaking activities, pedagogical and instructional practices, error correction, and participant's concern with native speakers as possible causes of anxiety. On the other hand, a sense of community, a conducive environment, and the supportive role of the teachers can reduce anxiety. An important finding of the work is its manifestation of anxiety in different forms. The research reported that it can manifest itself in physical as well as functional forms. Sometimes the avoidance in performing any task also conveys anxiety. The study stressed that LL anxiety can be reduced by controlling anxiety-causing factors.

Yan and Horwitz (2008), contributed to qualitative research in LL anxiety research. They believed that all the studies on LL anxiety focused on teachers' perspectives and those that considered the learners' perspective, ended up with a conclusion of the researcher's choice. Therefore, they decided to bring pure learners' perspectives to the fore by using qualitative tools. For the study, 21 students were shortlisted from a Chinese university and were categorized into low, average, and high-level anxiety learners. Focus group interviews were conducted with these participants. Thematic analysis of the interviews showed that learners get anxious because of varied factors. Learning strategies, comparison with peers, interest, and motivation were the most immediate factors that affected language learning. The research also highlighted some remote sources of anxiety-like gender, social class, and parental influence, etc. However, they concluded that immediate factors have a greater impact comparatively.

Aydin (2016) was of the view that LL anxiety has not been explored justifiably because of its heavy reliance on quantitative methods. The quantitative methods explored the relationship between anxiety and a limited set of variables; the real story is still buried. Moreover, he found that all these research works revolve around the learning process; the process of teaching remained inattentive. With these thoughts in mind, Aydin (2016) decided to explore foreign language teaching anxiety from a qualitative perspective. To conduct this study, sixty pre-service teachers were selected who were studying English in the Department of Education Faculty of Balıkesir University. They were assessed with pure qualitative methods i.e., the use of background questionnaires, interviews, reflections, and essay papers. The research found that teachers get anxious before, during, and after activities. Perceived

competence, low-level language proficiency, fear of negative evaluation, and time management also emerged as anxiety-causing factors. The research recommended that foreign language anxiety should be introduced in the curricula to make things better (Aydin, 2016).

The analysis of quantitative and qualitative research works demonstrated that the findings of these research projects are almost the same. The factors that were brought to the fore by the quantitative researchers were either confirmed or refuted by the qualitative researcher. Wang (2009) categorized the findings of both qualitative and quantitative types of research into three groups. (1) anxiety due to personal characteristics, (2) anxiety due to the teaching-learning environment, and (3) anxiety due to poor performance. Wang (2009) believed all these research works whether qualitative or quantitative are de-contextualized. The absence of context has delimited the scope of these research studies therefore the researchers started looking towards a contextualized approach. One such approach that considers context is that of ecology. The next part of the review considers the researchers who have utilized ecological theory in their LL anxiety studies.

### **2.9.3. Quantitative Research on LL Anxiety**

Research on LL anxiety started in the 1970s and from that time until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, researchers on language-learning anxiety mostly used quantitative methods to explore the issue. These research studies were mainly correlational where the researchers explored the relationship between anxiety and achievement. Some other researchers focused on the relationship between anxiety and learner's motivation, beliefs, perception, fear of negative evaluation, and self-esteem (Wang, 2009).

Quantitative studies have contributed a lot to LL anxiety research. This is the reason the researcher continued to use quantitative methods even in recent times. The current review focuses on the important research works conducted with quantitative methods on LL anxiety after 2000. Moreover, the study has selected one research against a variable to bring to the fore the contribution of the quantitative research method.

In 2001, Kazu Kitano conducted an important quantitative study on 'anxiety in the college Japanese language classroom'. The research aimed to investigate the

correlation between anxiety and two factors i.e. fear of negative evaluation and self-perceived speaking ability. Data was gathered from 212 students, enrolled in Japanese courses at two American universities. The tool was a multiple-choice survey with 70 items that belonged to four categories i.e., background, fear of negative evaluation, Japanese speaking anxiety, and perception of the self. The study showed a positive correlation between LL anxiety and fear of negative evaluation and a negative correlation between self-perception and LL anxiety.

In 2002, Dewaele set out to explore the psychological and socio-demographic correlates of communicative anxiety. The participants of the study were 100 students (19 males and 51 females), who were in the last year of secondary school. Participants completed two questionnaires of Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQr) and

Socio-demographic Questionnaire. The socio-demographic questionnaire provided information about the gender and social class of the participants. Communicative anxiety was measured with a three-point Likert scale. The research came up with an important finding that LL anxiety is not a permanent trait of one's personality rather it varies in the learning of L2 and L3. The study found that societal and individual factors play an important role in determining anxiety.

Another important study that emerged on the scene was that of Abu Rabia (2004), which investigated FL anxiety and its impact on achievement. Moreover, the role a teacher plays in developing or reducing anxiety was also tested. 67 students from grade seven were selected for the study and they were tested with FLCAS, Hebrew reading comprehension, English reading comprehension, creative writing, and spelling tests. Anxiety was strongly correlated with achievement. Gender and teacher attitude were also found responsible for LL anxiety.

Early research on LL anxiety focused only on speaking skills as speaking being the most prominent of the productive skills received special attention. In recent years, however, the researchers have diverted their attention towards other skills i.e., reading, writing, and listening. The diversion was based on the findings of Horwitz et al. (1986) that anxiety can create problems at the input, processing, and output stages, and MacIntyre's observation (1995) that anxiety can cause problems in all four skills. The current study has also considered the point that all four skills can be



affected in the LL process therefore it tried to dig out the problems of the LL process in general.

In the above-stated context, Cheng et al (2008) made another important contribution. They conducted a qualitative study to make the point that LL anxiety is not only speaking anxiety as is perceived by most of the researchers. They titled their research 'Language anxiety: Differentiating writing and speaking components'. English majors taking speaking and writing classes in four universities in Taiwan were taken as samples. Four hundred and thirty-three students were shortlisted for the research and the majority of them were women. Three questionnaires of FLCAS, SLWAT, and a background questionnaire were used. The results of the research indicated that classroom LL anxiety is a general anxiety about learning a language with strong speaking skills. On the other hand, "writing anxiety is language-skill-specific anxiety" (Cheng et al, 2008).

Many researchers have explored anxiety as a cause of failure in LL, however, a few have attempted to think the other way that it cannot be a cause but an effect. Quantitative researchers have won their spur in this domain too. Argaman and Abu Rabia (2010) researched to find the influence of language anxiety on English reading and writing tasks among Hebrew native speakers. The researchers hypothesized a strong relationship between anxiety and writing skills but no significant relationship between anxiety and reading skills. Sixty-eight students were selected as samples who were learning the English language and had Hebrew as their mother tongue. Contrary to the hypothesis, both the skills had a significant correlation with anxiety, therefore; the researchers concluded that anxiety is not a cause of failure but a consequence of it.

The researchers have also explored the relationship of anxiety with achievement and self-confidence with quantitative methods. Tridinanti (2018) hypothesized those students with low self-confidence and high levels of anxiety face difficulties in developing good speaking skills. To find the correlation of the above-stated variables, all the students of the fifth semester in a private university of Palembang formed the population of the study. Twenty-eight students were selected with non-probability random sampling, and they were checked with speaking tests. After attempting the speaking test activities, they were asked to fill out two questionnaires i.e., a 17-item speaking anxiety questionnaire and a 20-item self-

confidence questionnaire. The results indicated a strong positive relationship between self-confidence and anxiety; and a negligible correlation between speaking anxiety and speaking achievement (Tridinanti, 2018).

The researchers have explored many other features with quantitative methods. However, according to Wang (2009), three limitations of quantitative methods diverted the attention of the researchers towards qualitative ones to deal with the issue of anxiety. First is the over-simplification of complex interrelationships of different variables. The dissociation of the variables to look at their relationship with anxiety independently caused this issue. Secondly, the researchers invented the questions in different scales; therefore, the researcher's bias was possible. Moreover, in open-ended questions, the respondents were unable to express themselves freely. Lastly, researchers interpreted what was happening in a limited and narrow way as they had not considered the context (Wang, 2009). These limitations paved the way for qualitative research design in LL anxiety.

## **2.10. Research on ELL Anxiety in Pakistan**

This part of the literature review discusses the prominent research works conducted in Pakistan on LLA. This review follows chronological order in presenting the gathered data, which was adopted to trace any methodological or theoretical change adopted in the Pakistani research context in all those years.

Pakistan has a complex linguistic landscape with five local languages, sixty dialects, one national, and one official language. The majority of the people speak their local languages and learn Urdu as their first language and English remains a foreign or "language of the others" in such an environment (Rehman, 2002). In Pakistan, the English language has remained a focus and a point of interest for policymakers as English is no more a language but a lingua franca that everyone needs to learn without taking color, creed, and region into consideration (Buriro, 2016). Despite its importance, the English competency of Pakistani learners is distant from the required goal. According to Buriro (2016), the universities in Pakistan have been offering English as a compulsory course for the last seventy years but the proficiency of the graduates produced is hardly satisfactory. Therefore, the researchers directed their attention towards English LLA.

In Pakistan, research on English LLA started in the 21st century and is in a preliminary stage. In these two decades of the century, the researchers followed the same pattern as was adopted by the researchers at the international level. Like the research projects of confounded approach, in the first decade, the researchers explored whether anxiety affects LLA. These studies are also inconsistent in their findings; some researchers found a positive correlation between anxiety and achievement while others insisted on the negative. In the second decade, the researchers diverted their attention towards a specialized approach and explored the factors that cause anxiety in English language learners. Most of the studies have focused either on affective factors to find out the causes of anxiety, a trend that was in vogue in the 70s.

The prominent research works on the relationship between LL and anxiety began to emerge on the canvas of Pakistani research towards the end of the first decade of the 20th century. Shamas (2008) explored the relationship between students' motivation, attitude, anxiety, and English language learning. It is one of the preliminary works in Pakistan available online. The researcher explored how different genders have different levels of motivation, attitudes, and anxiety and how it affects their language learning. It is a quantitative, causal-comparative study that employs Gardner's "Attitude Motivation Test Battery", a scale used by the researchers in the confounded phase. Talking about the importance of the study, Shams (2008) wrote, " the importance of investigating gender-wise students' attitude, motivations and anxiety in Eastern multilingual context, makes this study more significant as the existing literature refers to the studies mostly conducted in the western context; generally, on native speakers or immigrant students" (p.122). Since gender was an important variable therefore 77 students 40 males and 37 females of 8th grade from a private sector school were taken through purposive sampling method. The results demonstrated a positive correlation between motivation, attitude anxiety, and language achievement. The females showed a more positive attitude towards LL as compared to the males. The research also revealed that extrinsic motivation brings greater language achievement as compared to intrinsic one irrespective of gender. Anxiety was found to affect learning by reducing the participation of learners in the class or by creating negligence in their attitude (Shams, 2008). The work focused only on the affective factors, a trend in the early

FLA research, and the holistic view of the issue is compromised. However, towards the end of the research, Shams (2008) accepted the limitations of the study by saying, "the study did not account for other aspects like student's age, results, achievements, parental support, learning environment, etc."(p.138). Mentioning these variables in the limitation conveys that the researcher was familiar with these factors and also had their share in LLA. However, the focus of the study was only affective variables as the research suggested that other affective variables should be explored regarding LLA.

Awan (2010) stated at the very beginning of her paper that language-learning anxiety is relatively a new field of research even after so much work in the field. She asserted that no research had been taken up by that time to deal with the anxiety of English language learners at the undergraduate level in Pakistan. The anxiety of the students at the undergraduate level needs attention as they exhibited poor performance in English exams of different universities (Awan, 2010). To deal with the issue and to fill the research gap, she set out to explore the relationship between foreign language anxiety and students' achievement at the undergraduate level. The variables she considered for her research were gender, background, and parental education. The impact of gender on motivation, attitude, and anxiety had already been explored by Shams; however, the focus on the background and parental education makes it an offshoot of Shams' work (2008).

The study conducted by Awan (2010) relied on the different stages of the LL process put forth by William and Andrade i.e., input, processing, and output; input and processing stages are concerned with worries, thinking, and confusion when called for participation in language class. The output stage is concerned with the actual manifestation of anxiety produced at the input and processing stages. Using this multistage model, Awan (2010) planned to find out the reason for foreign language classroom anxiety and its relation to students' achievement. The researcher focused on three main questions: what the relationship between language anxiety and achievement was; what was the level of anxiety concerning gender, background, and parental education; and what specific classroom situations were anxiety causing? The study was conducted at the University of Sargodha, involving all 25 departments with 149 students. The research used FLCAS by Horwitz et al. (1986), the inventory developed by Williams and Andrade in 2008, and GPA in English to explore the

reasons for anxiety. The research concluded that anxiety is negatively correlated with students' achievement. Gender (male) and rural background were put forward as the possible reasons for poor performance in the language classroom. The research highlighted the need for teachers to be tactful in dealing with anxiety-provoking situations and to maintain a friendly environment in the situation. Moreover, the curriculum designers should devise such activities that may reduce anxiety. The research suggested that teachers should take every measure to facilitate language learners, especially by reducing their English-speaking speed.

Three important works appeared on the surface of LLA research in 2011. One study was conducted by Khattak et.al. (2011) and the other was a rather more comprehensive work: a doctoral dissertation. Whereas Khattak et.al. (2011) explored the causes of English LLA among the students at Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan (AWKUM), Hussain (2011) examined the correlation between the English classroom environment and anxiety. The third work did not explore the issue of LLA in general, but the focus shifted to one of the language skills which means the start of an in-depth study in LLA research.

Khattak et.al. (2011) observed that many learners face interpersonal difficulties in second-language classrooms therefore he decided to find out the factors that cause anxiety among the students of English LL at AWKUM. 62 students were checked with the help of a slightly modified version of Horwitz et al. FLCAS (1986). The sample was equally divided into male and female students. From the anxious students, 10 volunteers were interviewed to find out the reasons for anxiety. The results of the semi-structured interviews showed that students get anxious because of multiple factors. The results of FLCAS revealed that students get anxious because of 20 different reasons. On the other hand, the results of the semi-structured interviews highlighted poor schooling and poor socio-economic status as anxiety-causing factors. This sense of belonging to a poor class brings a sense of marginalization but not so much importance is given to this factor in recommendations. The research concluded that teachers should adopt learners-centered teaching methods and they should practice language inside and outside the classroom. Although the research has found some of the variables from meso (poor educational background) and exo-system (poor socio-economic background), the absence of an ecological model prohibited him from the systemization of the study.

The second important and comprehensive study conducted by Hussain (2011) explored the relationship between classroom environment and LLA and attitude at the secondary level. The education was conducted by the education department therefore the focus was not on using language-related tools to explore the issue. Data was collected from 720 students from six different districts of Punjab; four rural and four urban schools were selected from each district. The sample was divided into two sets, 360 members in each, which was further bifurcated into 180 males and 180 females. Three scales were used to dig out the issue: the Classroom Learning Environment scale, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, and the third developed by the researcher Attitude scale towards the learning of English. The data found a significant correlation between the variables and concluded that girls have a more positive attitude and less anxiety in language classes. Urban students get less anxious in class as compared to students with rural backgrounds. However, the study found a negative correlation between classroom environment and LLA.

Adeel (2011) conducted the third prominent study in the year 2011. It was a study of anxiety among graduate learners of English as a foreign language in Pakistan. The focus of the study was not the whole LL process but speaking skills only. The population of the study was all the students of COMSATS where approximately 5000 students were enrolled at graduation level. Seven non-native English teachers and thirty-four learners (18 male and 16 female) formed the sample. The data was collected with the help of individual interviews where the students were asked about the role of anxiety in English language learning, the situations that triggered anxiety, their beliefs and perceptions, and at the end the possible solutions for the problem. The second tool used was focused group discussions in which fifteen volunteers from every department participated for two weeks.

The study came up with the conclusion that multiple factors contribute to anxiety at the graduate level in Pakistan. The most-reported factor was the strict classroom environment, fear of negative evaluation by the language teacher, subbing of the teacher as well as error correction. Classroom activities were also reported to harm the learners. Impromptu presentations, as well as well-prepared presentations, were anxiety-causing for the students. From the focus group interviews, it was derived that personal beliefs and self-perceptions of the students work as an obstacle to smooth communication. The Study suggests some measures to be taken by the

teachers to improve the situation like providing a congenial environment and adopting a true communicative approach. Moreover, Classroom activities should be creative and fun for the students. The research concluded by presenting the anxiety model of Pakistani learners that has highlighted two of the variables: classroom environment and self-related perceptions. These two variables have multiple branches that consider all the possible reasons for anxiety related to the parental node. All other factors of meso, exo, and macro levels are absent, and the research has presented a micro view of the dynamic issue. An innovative and different thing noticed in the research is the anxiety model for Pakistani students. Since the research focuses only on the micro-level and a limited population, the model can work better for the students of COMSATS.

Sultan (2012) in Bahaudin Zakariya University conducted another study on LLA concerning perceived competence. He based his work on Bandura's theory that says, high competency may make tasks easy to handle even when they are difficult in reality; low competency leads to low proficiency and increased anxiety. To conduct the study, Perceived Competence was taken up as an independent variable while anxiety in the Pakistani context was a dependent one; however, gender was also included as a variable of the study as Sultan (2012) had observed that males and females behaved differently in language classrooms. One hundred and fifty-seven students (88 males and 69 females) were taken from eight different classes of Bahaudin Zakariya University, Multan as a sample of the study. Though the participants were taken from different departments of the university; however, they were homogeneous in terms of educational level and Urdu/Punjabi as their mother tongue. Two tools were used for the collection of data: the perceived competence scale (PCS) developed by William and Deci (1996) and Horwitz et al. FLCAS (1986). PCS is used to assess participant's feeling of competence about a college course, the higher the score, the higher the competence. The study was conducted in two phases: In the first phase, scales were translated, and reverse-translated to check validity and reliability; in the second phase, questionnaires were administered. The study used ANOVA to help the analysis procedure. The results showed that high perceived competence lessens anxiety while gender also played its role as boys were reported to have high-perceived competence, so they had less anxiety as compared to girls. According to the findings, boys did not underestimate their competence,

therefore; they were less anxious as compared to girls. On the other hand, girls had low competency because of the fear of negative evaluation and communication comprehension in mixed-gender classes. The research has a theoretical and methodological difference as it makes use of Bandura's theory as a theoretical framework and PCS as a research tool. This study, however, is a pile-up addition to the already explored domain, i.e., affective filter.

The importance of English language around the globe and the low competency of Pakistani youth compelled Nazir et al (2014) to figure out the anxiety level and the reasons for anxiety among intermediate students. The researcher found that speaking skill is the most neglected skill in the Pakistani learning context therefore he decided to find out the level of speaking anxiety among the students, the relationship between communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation with anxiety, and to provide the solutions to deal with the problem of language anxiety. For conducting this research, a quantitative research method was adopted, and data was gathered by using an adapted version of Horwitz et al. (1986) foreign language classroom anxiety scale. This scale divides questions according to different anxiety-causing factors. Communication apprehension and the fear of negative evaluation are among those factors therefore it was easy to check the correlation of these variables with anxiety with the help of this scale. All 253 intermediate students of different sections in National College, Rawalpindi were taken up as a population while every 5th student was selected forming a sample of 50. Data gathered was analyzed with the help of SPSS, which brought the following results: 75 percent of the students do not feel comfortable with the environment of the college while 85 percent get confused while responding to the questions. Most of the students were anxious when they were asked to perform impromptu communicative activities and they feared that teachers and peers would judge them when speaking. The research closed with the suggestion that communicative activities should be divided into pre-speaking, while-speaking, and post-speaking stages to lower anxiety. ESL classrooms should be friendly, and teachers should select the topic according to the level of the students. The teachers should not highlight the mistakes of the students on the spot; fluency should be the target and not accuracy at this level. The communicative activities should be as realistic as possible, and teachers should give more turns to the learners by reducing their speaking time. The focus of this study



again remained the micro-level of the classroom. Moreover, the quantitative model of the research restricted the scope of the research by highlighting the already explored anxiety-related variables.

Dar & Khan (2015) researched 'Writing Anxiety among public and private sectors in Pakistani undergraduate university students. Four universities were considered for the study: two public sector and two private sector universities from Karachi, Pakistan. 418 participants were taken up from these universities and were then administered with the help of the SLWAI instrument. The analysis revealed that many of the participants exhibited an average level of anxiety. About 20 percent of the students in these universities exhibited high levels of anxiety and about 20 percent had low anxiety. The important finding of the research is that participants from both the universities exhibited similar levels of anxiety which means institutes at the university level matter least in terms of language learning.

Bhatti (2016) conducted a quantitative study on LLA. According to him, previously, the research on foreign LL had explored the issue from the teacher and teaching perspective; the perspectives of the learners were given less weightage. However, the shift from the teacher's perspective to affective factors experienced by the learners has not been explored extensively in Pakistan. Therefore, it was decided to find out the perceptions of learners about anxiety in English classes at public sector colleges in Hyderabad. The population of the data was four colleges of Hyderabad, two girls' colleges, and two boys. One intermediate-level class was selected from each college randomly. The criterion for sample selection was that the students should be non-native speakers and they must have studied the subject minimum for six years. 145 students were short-listed based on this criterion and were evaluated on Horwitz et al. (1986) FLCAS which was translated by the researcher in Urdu and Sindhi.

The study revealed communication apprehension to be the most anxiety-provoking factor in the foreign language classroom. Other factors included consistent evaluation by the teachers and the peers, the face-threatening nature of the activity, and nervousness. However, the researcher concluded that anxiety is multifaceted and requires further exploration. The research emphasized the need to create a learner-supportive environment for the teachers. Moreover, the affective factor should be considered before designing classroom activities. The results of the

study have confirmed the previous research works but the positive side is accepting the phenomenon as multifaceted that needs exploration from varied perspectives. The study ends with a very strong suggestion that teachers should consider the culture and ethnic background of the learners to minimize their anxiety.

Nazeer et al. (2017) found that even after attaining the status of official language and medium of instruction across educational institutes, students get anxious about using this language. Though the problem of English LLA is severe, still it is an under-researched area in Pakistan. Therefore, Nazeer et al. (2017) decided to explore the causes of English language-speaking anxiety among postgraduate students at the University of Balochistan, Pakistan. The research hypothesized that anxiety has a debilitating effect that affects the quality of an individual's communication. The research set two goals for the exploration of the issue: to find out the factors that cause foreign language speaking anxiety and to explore the statistically significant difference in speaking English anxiety between male and female students.

To find out the answers to the above-stated questions, the researchers selected 240 students (120 males and 120 females) from the University of Balochistan. The students were taken from different disciplines and were studying functional English courses that aimed at developing all four language skills. A survey research design was used as this quantitative research procedure describes one or more qualities of a sample. For data collection, an adapted questionnaire of Horwitz et al. (1986) was used, and inferential statistics were used in SPSS. The findings of the t-test revealed that there is no significant difference across genders. However, several factors came to the surface that caused anxiety such as disappointment of the learners in attaining proficient speech, peer pressure, and structure of the target language. Undue importance of grammatical rules, inability to use correct grammatical forms, inability to clarify confusion, and the compulsory nature of the subject also contribute to the anxiety of the students. The research concluded that the inter-language meaning system and inter-language grammar were responsible for the anxiety of students at the postgraduate level at the University of Balochistan. The work suggested studying LLA from different perspectives so that an in-depth understanding of the issue can be developed. Moreover, it stressed that the higher authorities should address such an important issue to help language learners.

Burro (2016), a university teacher, observed that learners get anxious in language classes at the university level even when they have been studying the subject for many years. He found that HEC curriculum objectives want learners to be competent, autonomous, and proficient in the English language and mandate learners to use the English language in the class but the youth in Pakistan is still distant from the desired goals. He also observed in his classes that students want to speak English, but they are unable to help themselves out. To help the students come out of this dilemma and to remove this discrepancy between the set goals of HEC and the real achievements, Burro (2016) set out to investigate the learners' beliefs as a source of anxiety at public sector universities of Sindh. Since he found speaking to be the most anxiety-provoking skill and high in demand, the researcher considered this skill only.

The sample of the research was taken from three universities of Sindh i.e., University of Sindh, Jamshoro, University of Karachi, Karachi, and Sah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur. Students of BSc. part I and part II from, four departments of English, International Relations, Mass Communication, and Chemistry from each university were taken for uniformity. A semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was used to collect data that consisted of eight questions. Items 1, 2, and 3 sought learners' views about their preferred language accent. 4, 5, and 6 asked their views about the time they should master the language, and questions 7 and 8 attempted to obtain their opinion about committing language mistakes. The results revealed that learners' beliefs and perceptions about themselves and misplaced ambition to master the English language in the shortest possible time are the reasons for anxiety in language classes. The research again confirms the previous studies with a focus on affective factors.

An important work emerged on LLA Canvas in 2017 by Gopang and his colleagues. It was an investigation of foreign language anxiety in Pakistani universities.

Gopang et al. (2017) reviewed the historical development of English LLA from the 1960s onward and came up with the conclusion that early studies on LLA were correlational and brought inconsistent results. After Horwitz et al. (1986) theory of LLA theory, the focus shifted to the uniqueness of the LL process. This new dimension of the subject was explored either qualitatively or quantitatively. Gopang

et al. (2017) adopted a mixed-method approach to deal with the issue as they asserted the issue of LLA is persistent and needs exploration from a new dimension. He justified his selection of mixed-method research by presenting the words of Price “It is confirmed in research that clear picture of foreign language anxiety has been missing. And the reason for that is the only quantitative paradigm used in anxiety research (Gopang et al., 2017).”

The population of the research was all the students of Lasbela University Balochistan, and the sample was randomly selected from four departments of Water Resource Management, Agriculture, Economics, and English with 25 participants from each. In the quantitative phase, the research used Horwitz et al. (1986) FLCAS to find out anxiety in three domains: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. On the other hand, for the qualitative phase focus group interviews were selected as Gopang (2017) considered interviews to be appropriate and lucrative. These semi-structured interviews were conducted to learn about the feelings and beliefs of the participants. The research came up with a diverse range of factors as anxiety-causing in language classes such as poor academic background, no motivation to learn a language, fear of tests in English, fear of peer evaluation, and fear of making mistakes. The research also highlighted the discrepancy between teaching and assessment as a reason for anxiety as it states that the medium of instruction is supposedly English but the students are mostly instructed and taught in Urdu language. The result is that the students fail to perform satisfactorily in English language (Gopang et al., 2017). The research suggested that teachers should create rapport among students, respect their feelings and emotions, and avoid making fun of the students in front of their fellows. Although the study has provided an in-depth understanding of the issue, however, it suggested further exploration of this complex issue. The work is a useful addition to LLA research especially in the Pakistani context as it realizes the multifaceted nature of LLA. However, the study did not consider the dynamic approach that had emerged and was in practice in other countries. Anxiety-causing variables are not categorized which leaves this study unsystematic and random.

The reoccurrence of the issue of LLA in Pakistan and its persistent nature diverted the attention of researchers toward the factors that were not explored in earlier research works. Zahid, Z., & Ghani, M. (2018) decided to explore the impact

of social identity on second LLA in the Pakistani context. He observed that the anxiety of language learners increases because of the difference in the social identity related to a language because when one speaks a language, he is involved both socially and psychologically in that speech. Language is a manifestation of one's identity and one's association with an ethnic group. To find out the association between social identity and LLA, the researcher used a quantitative approach. A questionnaire consisting of 13 items was developed by the researcher and checked for validity which was 0.70. These two hundred and fifty participants were selected from MA English Literature and Linguistics, the third semester in two public sector universities of southern Punjab. Analysis of the questionnaire revealed that social status and social identity are interlinked; English is the language of higher social class. Those, who were higher in status, were reluctant to use the national language. The study ended with the conclusion that social status and LLA are negatively correlated. Since the study had touched a new dimension of LLA, therefore results were not generalized. The researcher suggested that more studies are required to form a hypothesis about the interrelationship of social identity and LLA.

Following the quantitative trend in LLA, Iqbal (2018) explored the causes of anxiety among Pakistani ESL arts students. The study aimed to get the answers to questions such as the level of anxiety in Pakistani students, the sources of anxiety, the role of gender, and self-reported beliefs in LLA. One hundred and eighty-three students of humanities and social sciences enrolled in their first and second year, from one of the universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province were taken as samples. Forty-eight percent of the sample was from the first year and fifty-two percent from the second year. For gender, forty-two percent of the sample was made up of males, and fifty-eight percent of females. Horwitz et al. (1986) FLCAS with categorical divisions of communication apprehensions fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety was used as a tool for data collection. The students in the research exhibited a high level of anxiety. Fear of negative evaluation emerged as the most dominant source of anxiety among the students. It was followed by communication apprehension and then test anxiety. The study suggested that teachers should use more group activities in the class to decrease the fear of negative evaluation. The variable of gender is also important as female members of the research exhibited more anxiety as compared to males. The researcher suggested paying special

attention to female students in mixed-gender classes. Since the research was limited to one tool and one institute, that is why the researcher accepted the limited scope of the study, the results cannot be generalized. The study was limited in scope, even then, it was included in the literature for the reason it was published by Northeast Normal University China and was a joint venture. Such a study can highlight the place of local research in an international scenario. The research, however, appeared to be local completely without any consideration of modern trends prevailing at the international level and determining the place of the study in international studies on language-learning anxiety research.

In 2019, Gopang explored how gender affects anxiety and beliefs about LL with mixed-method research. The population selected to dig out the issue was from Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET). Since gender was an important variable, males and females both were targeted for the sample. 105 males and 116 females from 9 departments of MUET voluntarily participated in the research. For the quantitative phase, FLCAS by Horwitz et al. (1986) and BAALI by Horwitz (1988) were used. Whereas FLCAS was used to check the anxiety level of the students, BAALI was used to determine the beliefs they held about language learning. To elicit detailed and rich information about the beliefs of the participants, interviews were conducted at the qualitative stage. The data were analyzed with the help of SPSS21. The results of FLCAS revealed that both males and females show similar anxiety in language learning. The results from BAALI found the same i.e., similar views about the LL process. The interviews conducted also confirmed the descriptive results obtained from BAALI. The results indicated no significant gender differences in terms of English LLA. The study claimed to present a holistic picture of the issue as Gopang (2019) asserted that the study attempted to present a holistic picture of Asian students' anxiety and beliefs through a mixed methods research design which concurrently addressed LL issues in a classroom.

Like his previous research, Gopang (2019), used a mixed-method approach to explore the issue that is an emerging trend. This methodological triangulation provides the breadth and depth of the issue. The reference to holism refers to the current switch to the ecological approach. Talking about the research, conducted with BAALI, Gopang found that the research conducted with this inventory proves that beliefs about LL are context specific. This shows that by that time the researchers

had started realizing the context-specificity of the language-learning anxiety phenomenon. According to Gopang (2019), beliefs about LL are linked to the previous LL experience (p.56) a factor that belongs to the second layer of the ecosystem i.e., Meso. The absence of ecological theory prohibited the researcher from using technical terms. The acceptance of the relevance of anxiety and previous LL experience validates the selection of ecological system theory to study the issue of language-learning anxiety.

In the year 2020, Qaiser Hussain explored the reasons for English language speaking anxiety in Pakistani students. The purpose of the study was to confirm whether Pakistani students share the same factors of anxiety that are identified by the FLCAS of Horwitz et al. (1986) (Hussain, 2020). A sample of 512 students was taken from a public sector university in Karachi. The students showed anxiety because of negative evaluation and peer pressure while the three factors mentioned by Horwitz et al. (1986) to be the possible sources of anxiety were missing. The researcher contends that FLCAS does not fulfill the needs of the Pakistani context. Moreover, a thorough study comprising other disciplines must be conducted to have a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Although the researchers tried to confirm the validity of FLCAS for the Pakistani context, the idea of exploring LLA concerning other subjects calls for a comprehensive study of the phenomenon.

In EFL educational settings, the anxiety researchers in Pakistan are still at the primary stage focusing on simple correlational methods and exploring affective factors as possible sources of anxiety while the things diverted to ecological methods on the horizon of the EFL world. The shift from a co-relational to an ecological perspective using qualitative analysis instead of a quantitative one has changed the dimensions. This changed dimension has not been explored in the Pakistani context. Still, old quantitative methods prevail in EFL anxiety studies. This study explores the issue of anxiety amongst Pakistani English language learners through an ecological approach for the systematic and in-depth exploration of the reasons for anxiety.

Ali et al. (2021) who investigated anxiety in speaking skills of Pakistani learners, is the most recent publication in the Pakistani ESL context. In this quantitative research, the researcher found from his observation that from early education in Pakistan, the real concern of teachers and students is to cover the

syllabus that consists of only reading and writing activities. Since the curriculum has nothing to do with speaking, students remain shy and under-confident in speaking English proficiently (Ali et al. 2021). Moreover, he noticed that no platform is available for speaking the language which is why they are unable to speak properly. To find out other causes of speaking anxiety in the class, research was planned by Ali et al in 2021, which focused on finding the problems faced by ESL learners in speaking English.

To dig out the issue, the data was collected from five universities: one university from the capital and the other four universities from the provincial capitals. Twenty students of graduation were randomly selected from each university, forming 100 of the sample. The researcher had observed earlier that speaking anxiety existed due to factors belonging to three domains, i.e., psychological, social, and linguistic; therefore, they devised a questionnaire that dealt with all these factors. Questions 1 to 3 dealt with psychological issues, 4-7 with social issues whereas 8-10 dealt with linguistic issues in speaking anxiety. It was quantitative research that used SPSS for data analysis. The analysis revealed that participants in the Pakistani ESL context cannot speak English proficiently as they are under-confident and fearful. On the social plane, the overall ambiance is not conducive; neither the student is eager to listen nor is the teacher eager to speak English. At the linguistic level, the lack of linguistic competence creates a hindrance in speaking. Learners do not have a proper choice of words and are not familiar with the right pronunciation; therefore, they cannot express themselves. The research ended with a few recommendations such as academic ambiance for speaking developing the vocabulary of the students and providing counseling to deal with psychological issues. The study is different in dealing with the issue of speaking anxiety; the typical FLCAS developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) was not used. Dealing with speaking anxiety from a psychological, social, and linguistic perspective is a way to deal with the issue dynamically. However, the study did not mention any reference to such a theory. The ecological framework, if adopted, could have contributed more.

The review of the research works conducted in Pakistan in the LL anxiety context revealed that the research is at its primary stage, focusing on simple correlational methods and exploring affective factors as possible sources of anxiety. These studies are either quantitative or qualitative; some have used mixed methods



but even with mixed methods, the focus has been maintained on exploring the correlation. The things at the international level, however, have been diverted to ecological methods on the horizon of the EFL world.

The existing literature on English language learning anxiety in Pakistan provides valuable insight into the issue; however, there are noticeable gaps that warrant further investigation. Firstly, the geographical variation in language learning anxiety (particularly between Islamabad, the Federal Capital, and other cities) remained unexplored. Secondly, the literature lacks a comprehensive examination of LL anxiety factors from an ecological perspective, a perspective to which the researchers have already switched at the international level. Addressing these gaps will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of language learning anxiety in the Pakistani context.

## **2.11. Chapter Summary**

This chapter consists of four sections; the first of these introduces anxiety with all its pros and cons. Anxiety is introduced as a psychological construct that is defined differently by different psychologists. After introducing several definitions by scholars, the definition provided by the American Psychological Association is taken as standard that says, Anxiety is a subjective feeling, that is caused by the anticipation of a threatening event, and it is different from fear. After the establishment of the definition, its types are introduced to determine the location of LL anxiety. Anxiety can be a trait, state, or situation-specific. Trait anxiety is a permanent feature of one's personality; the state is temporary. The third type of anxiety i.e., situation-specific is recurrent and the person suffers from it whenever he comes across that situation. LL anxiety is a form of situation-specific anxiety. After these types, the chapter introduces the definition of LL anxiety as put forth by Horwitz et al. (1986). They defined it as "a distinct complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom LL arising from the uniqueness of the LL process" (Horwitz et al. 1986, p. 128). The definition is followed by the LL anxiety theory put forth by Horwitz et al (1986) with three factors communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. This section also introduces various levels of anxiety to establish the point that anxiety can be facilitating and debilitating. However, the concern of the current study is only with debilitating anxiety that hinders the language-learning process. This section

closes by providing the historical development of LLA research and establishes the point that anxiety needs to be treated from an ecological perspective.

The second section is about the ecological turn in LL anxiety. First, ecology is defined, and then how eco-linguistics emerged as a field of study is discussed. Hugen (1972) defined ecology as ‘the study of the interaction between any language and its environment’. Language exists in the minds of its users, and they use it to develop a link between themselves and nature. On the other hand, society uses it as a medium of communication. Hence, the part of ecology is psychological, and the other part is sociological (Haugen, 1972). This part has discussed how ecology became multidisciplinary from the limited field of biology and engulfed language as well. The link of language with the physical, and social environment and other languages is discussed to bring home the point that language has a strong relationship with the environment. 10 characteristics (Relations, Context, Patterns/ Systems, Emergence, Quality, Value, Critical, Variability, Diversity, and Activity) of an ecological approach put forth by Lier (2004) are discussed to prove that the current study is ecological in all respects. The historical development of LL anxiety research with a confounded, specialized, and dynamic approach is discussed to establish the need to switch to an ecological approach to study the issue. After establishing the need, the theoretical frameworks of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) and Engestrom’s (1987) are discussed in detail. The core framework for the study is Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) nested ecosystem model based on bio-ecological theory whereas Engestrom’s (1987) activity theory adds dimension.

The third section talked about the research conducted on LL anxiety around the globe. The research has discussed all the important findings since 1970 when the research on LLA started. The trend to study LL from an ecological perspective started with the seminal work of Lier (2003). Since then, several researchers have used ecological models in their works. In the second phase of this last section, the research works conducted in Pakistan in the context of LLA are discussed. By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the research on LL anxiety started in Pakistan, since the time is short; the current study has tried to gather all prominent works available. Methodologically, the research on LL anxiety in Pakistan is quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. Most of the researchers have employed quantitative correlational methods. By using FLCAS, they searched whether students get anxious because of

communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, or test anxiety. Horwitz et.al (1986) identified these three variables in their LL anxiety theory. Some researchers have worked with qualitative methods and explored the relationship between LL anxiety and affective factors such as the lack of confidence, self-perceptions and beliefs, and peer evaluation. This adaptation was in line with the shift from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered one. This shift from learner-centered to context-centered approach brought a new trend in LL anxiety research. In Pakistan, Gopang (2019) has emphasized the need for holism in his research. This holism asks for a complete picture instead of looking only at one point and is the foundation stone for a context-centered approach. By using mixed methods, the researcher has tried to explore the reasons for anxiety outside the language classroom. However, the absence of context-bound theory saved him from exploring many factors. The present study is an effort to explore the contextual variables that are still unexplored. By filling this research gap, this research hopes to improve the situation of language-learning anxiety in Pakistan.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Chapter 2 discusses the basic concepts associated with anxiety and reviews the literature related to English LLA around the world as well as in Pakistan. This chapter discusses the theoretical framework and methodological framework, i.e., the methods employed in the study, choices of methodological procedures, and rationale for employing them. The chapter caters to four distinct purposes, i.e., to introduce the theoretical framework, to discuss in detail the nature of research, to introduce sample and population, and to rationalize data analysis tools. Therefore, the chapter contains three distinct sections with every part focusing on a purpose.

#### **3.1. Theoretical Framework**

Thus far, language-learning studies in Pakistan are predicated on traditional psychological theories like behaviorism that posit a transmission-receiver model and locate learning in individuals. This study challenges the prevailing trend by reconceptualizing learning as a complex and wider phenomenon where an individual is embedded in multiple settings.

The present study uses two theoretical frameworks, i.e., Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystem model (1979) based on ecological systems theory and Engestrom's Model of Activity theory (Engestrom, 1987) to elucidate the complex process of LLA. These theories believe that social networks where an activity is embedded are necessary to understand to get a full picture of learners' development. However, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system theory of development forms the core framework of the study, and activity theory lends a supporting hand. The reasons for opting for it as a core framework are many: the theory believes that development cannot be understood completely with exclusive consideration to an individual; it requires the exploration of the complexity of his/her environment. Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated: "Development never takes place in a vacuum but is always embedded and expressed through the behavior in a particular environment. Individual characteristics interact with a multilayered environment in a dynamic way in shaping the development of the person."

### 3.1.1. Bronfenbrenner's Nested Ecosystem Model

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) was an American psychologist whose ecological systems theory played an important part in shaping educational programs. Being a psychologist, he started his work on the theories of human development and finally came up with ecological system theory to explain how the inherent qualities of a learner interact with the environment and impinge on his development and growth. From the 1970s (the time when Bronfenbrenner started his research) until his death, the theory of human development went through considerable changes.

According to Rosa and Tudge (2013), most of the research scholars had not recognized the changes in the developmental theory of Bronfenbrenner and kept on practicing it as a theory solely concerned with context. They ignored the central concepts of the theory like proximal processes, personal characteristics, and historical time. They analyzed 25 different studies that had used Bronfenbrenner's model (1979) and came up with the conclusion that 21 out of 25 dealt with the contextual factors only. There is nothing wrong with using the older versions but according to Rosa & Tudge (2013), one should be explicit about "specific theoretical basis." Rosa (2013) believed that for the development of the subject, it is necessary to apply theory explicitly in its true sense to find out the loopholes of the earlier versions and the necessity to switch to the newer one. Therefore, for the explicit application of the ecological theory of human development, an understanding of the different phases of its development is necessary. The theory according to Rosa & Tudge (2013) went through three distinct phases:

Phase I: from 1973 to 1979

Phase II: from 1980 to 1993

Phase III: from 1993 to 2006

**a. *Phase I (1973-1979).*** In the first phase of his theory, Bronfenbrenner (1979) named his theory the "bio-ecological theory of human development." Although the research was published in the 1970s, the roots can be traced back to 1960's research on a family where he explored that parent-child relationship and social class background are responsible for a variety of patterns in human development.

In this first phase, Bronfenbrenner was interested in the methodological limitations of the research of his time. His major criticism was against the

experimental research, which explores the problem without taking into consideration the critical role of the context. Lier (2004) affirmed, “Bronfenbrenner was not in favor of laboratory experimentation” so he came up with a model that had given importance to the context. He believed that contextual information, of the situation under investigation, is necessary to find out the solution to a problem.

In the first phase of the theory, some formulations were made about the context and its levels. Micro-system was defined as a system consisting of the physical environment of the developing person whereas meso-system was taken up as a system of systems. In a meso-system, two Microsystems interact, and both contain the developing person. Exo-system did not contain the developing person and the developing person did not have direct access to this system. Macro-system was defined as a social, political, and cultural aspect of the society.

**b. *Phase II (1980-1993).*** The second phase of the theory is concerned with the different conceptualizations of the term “context” and the lacuna of the first phase i.e., the role of personal characteristics in the development. Bronfenbrenner (1979) reassessed and renounced a few of the concepts presented in the previous volume. In this phase, he came up with the person-process-context model that was then adapted as process-person-context and ultimately caused the emergence of PPCT. Lev Vygotsky, Glen Elder, and Mary Drillein affected his conception of human development during this period (Rosa, 2013).

In this phase, he focused on different models used in developmental research. The very first model that he dealt with is the “social address model” which is based on the social or geographic site of the developing person. The research design was concerned with the comparison of children from different geographical or social backgrounds. The main limitation of the theory was its extreme adherence to contextual factors, according to Rosa (2013). Next, he dealt with person-context models that relied heavily on the personal characteristics of the developing person. The person-context model then turned into the person-process-context model with theoretical development. In this model, the processes that are responsible for the interaction of the person and the context are essential to the developmental outcomes. Bronfenbrenner, however, observed that researchers did not focus on the characteristics of all the participants involved in the process. Another problem

highlighted was the absence of consideration for time which led to the development of the chrono-system model.

The new development of the chrono-system brought time to the fore. Chronosystems believe that time is the most important factor in human development. The researchers, who had worked with this model, took into consideration the time-caused changes. By the end of this phase, Bronfenbrenner presented an ecological paradigm for human development. This paradigm believed that development occurs because of interaction between the developing person and the persons who encountered him. Some changes were also introduced in micro and macro systems. The elements of the psychology of the participants, the effect of time, and culture were introduced. The concept of macro-system was also redefined as consisting of economic and social resources, social class, and ethnic and religious groups.

c. **Phase III (1993- 2006).** In this phase, the theory received its status from an ecological theory to a bio-ecological one and got its current nomenclature. In this phase, he came up with a model that he calls PPCT i.e., process, person, context, and time.

a. **Process.** The process is located at the inner core of the bio-ecological model. An ecological approach focuses on processes instead of the product. According to Bronfenbrenner (2001), development occurs through the complex processes of interaction between an evolving biophysical human and the human and non-human objects in the external world. This interaction should be on a regular basis over an extended period, so infrequent activities will not lead to considerable development. Bronfenbrenner (2001) himself defines proximal processes and their working in the form of two propositions:

b. Human beings develop because of reciprocal interaction between biophysical human beings and the people, objects, and symbols in the immediate environment.

c. The form and function (power, direction) of proximal processes vary according to the characteristics of the developing person and the environment.

Such proximal processes include interaction between teacher and student, student and his parents, student, and students, or group activities, and are responsible for the real development of the learners. As a learner develops progressively, the number of his micro-systems increases and resultantly proximal processes become

more complex (Stivaros, 2007). According to Bronfenbrenner (2001), the qualities of the developing person and the environment decide the form, content, and direction of the process.

1. **Person.** A person influences the people and institutions of the environment and in return is affected by them. The emotional, cognitive, genetic, social, and physiological characteristics of a person play an important role in the proximal processes. According to Bronfenbrenner, the following three aspects of an individual's biophysical characteristics are important in shaping the trajectory of one's development: dispositions, bioecological resources, and demand characteristics. Bronfenbrenner deems some characteristics developmentally generative while others as developmentally disruptive. Curiosity and willingness to work in-group or independently are generative while impulsiveness and distractibility are disruptive.

2. **Context.** In the third phase as compared to the first two phases, much less was written about the context. Bronfenbrenner (1979) provided the definitions of the different contextual levels: micro, meso, exo, and macro. However, in this phase, the micro-system was re-conceptualized, and the concept of proximal processes was introduced. Although proximal processes occur in a micro-system, the other contextual systems also affect it (Rosa, 2013). The macro-system was discussed once only in the entire phase.

3. **Time.** The chrono-system of the second phase was re-conceptualized as time in bio-ecological theory. However, this concept of time was broadened as "ontogenetic and historic" both times were included. Time has three levels: micro, meso, and macro time. Whereas micro-time referred to the continuity and discontinuity in an ongoing proximal process, meso was concerned with how often a process occurs. Macro time on the other hand was concerned with "changing expectations within and across generations." According to Tudge (2009), the concept of time requires a longitudinal study with two measurement points.

The present study is longitudinal, but it does not consider the improvement over time as English courses are not offered in a sequence. The first course is offered in the first semester whereas no semester is specified for the next course.

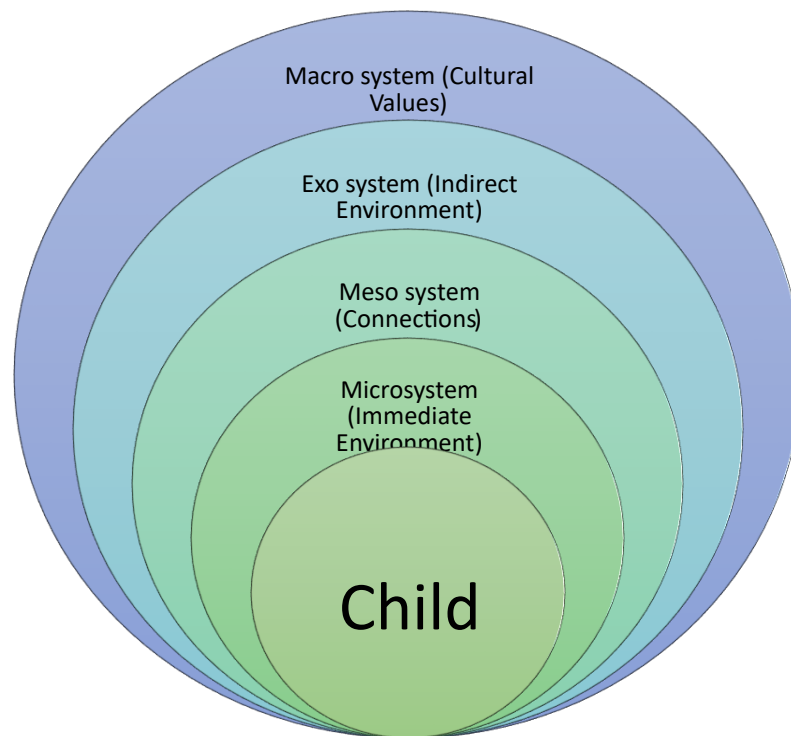


### **3.1.1.1. Nested Ecosystem Model based on PPCT.**

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the educational context can be conceptualized as a set of ecosystems where one system is nested in the other. Every system has its own “actors, artifacts, patterns of operations and relations, time scale and cycles of events” (Lier, 2004). Therefore, the Nested ecosystem model has the potential to be used as a theoretical framework to explore language-learning anxiety from an ecological perspective.

The context of human development is considered as multilayered and Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines these layers as micro, meso, exo, and macro. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the growth of a learner is dependent upon multiple factors from multiple environments, which he termed as ecosystems. These ecosystems (in which a learner is enmeshed) start with the very basic unit of home to the expansive system of culture and tradition.

The environment, in which a child lives, is the microsystem. This microsystem includes the home, school, peer groups, or the community of the child. Interactions in such systems consist of relationships with the parents, teachers, or peers. The development of a child is affected by how these interactions take place. On the other hand, the behavior of the child will determine the attitude of the people towards him. An important finding of Bronfenbrenner (1979) in this regard is two individuals, developing in the same ecosystem, can grow very differently from one another, and living in the same ecosystem, individuals can experience different environments.



*Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Nested Ecosystems Model*

Meso-system is the second level of the ecosystem. In this layer of the ecosystem, the linkage between the two settings is observed where the developing person is a part of the one. In educational settings, all the previous factors that affect the individual's learning in the class are considered. These factors may include the past outside the class and the institute. The relationship between the family of an individual and the school's staff and administration is also considered.

The third layer is called the exo-system. In this layer, the focus is on the interaction between two or more settings in which one does not contain the developing person. It indirectly affects the developing person. Examples include the financial conditions, social class of parents, job stress of the parents, and conditions at home and their impact on the person. In educational terms, Curriculum design and course development can be such settings.

Since this last system is all-encompassing, it is called macro, which means 'the large'. This is the last layer that forms the outermost part of the ecosystem. In the process of an individual's development, the macro-system consists of societal or cultural beliefs. The norms of a society or the religious background can be put as an

example of a macro-system. In terms of education, it can be the indigenous culture of learning.

This model has implications for exploring the classroom. According to the nested model, a classroom is a subsystem in the larger ecosystem of the institution. At the micro systematic level, the beliefs of the learners are checked along with the motivations. Cognitive, i.e., reasoning skills, linguistic, and affective factors are important here and background knowledge is also observed. Another aspect to consider at this level is the environment of the class.

At the meso-systematic level, the past learning experiences of the learners or participation in extracurricular activities can be considered. For the exo-systematic level, the relationship between the classroom and the curriculum design, the assessment system, or any other micro-system in which the observant is not an active participant, is evaluated. At the macro level, the social, educational, and cultural factors that affect the learners are considered. Overall, this model provides a suitable framework for this study, which intends to explore ESL students' classroom anxiety from an ecological perspective (Lier, 2004).

The study has used the Nested ecosystem model in its original form; however, the layer of chrono-system was not explored for the reason that English courses were not offered consecutively, and every department has its own policy to offer the subject. Therefore, to apply the time element, almost three years were required as the final course of English was offered in the 6<sup>th</sup> semester.

#### **3.1.1.2. Reasons for Using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Model in FLA Research**

There are many reasons for taking up Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested ecosystem model in language research.

1. The bidirectional nature of the FLA requires an ecological model like that of Bronfenbrenner (1979).
2. A complete understanding of the process of learning and teaching cannot be developed without taking into consideration the context. This model provides an in-depth understanding of the context.

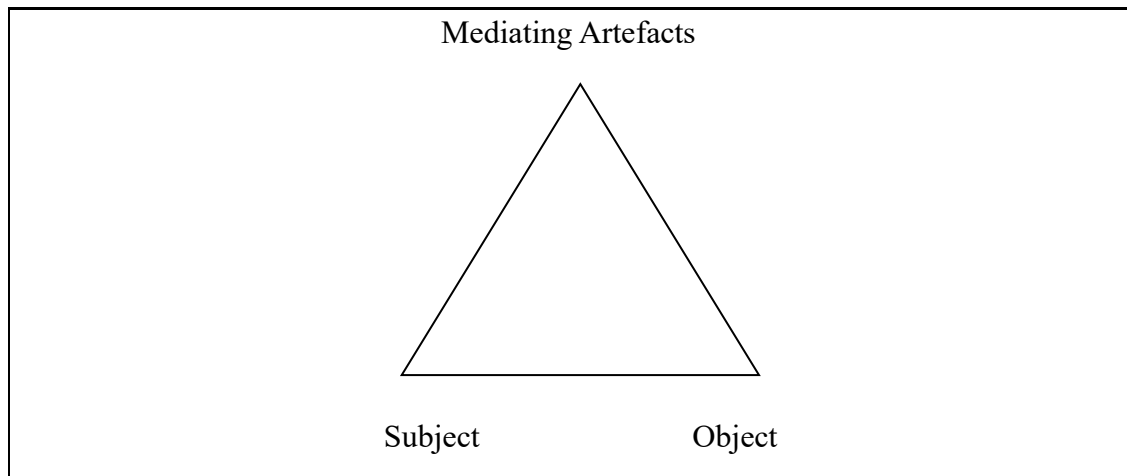
3. The employment of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model in SLA research has been confirmed through many ecological studies. Lier first practiced the model in 2003 to investigate the interdependent forces affecting computer technology in language class. According to Shirvan (2016), Cao used this model to study non-linearity within the nature of willingness to communicate in a language classroom therefore he used this model in his work on language learning anxiety from a socio-cultural perspective. The most recent use of the model was by Gkonou (2017) to study English language anxiety in the Spanish context in 2019. The reasons mentioned above, and the research studies justify the use of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested ecosystem model in LLA research.

### 3.1.2. Activity Theory

Activity theory is a social-psychological framework stemming from Vygotsky's cultural-psychological approach and "praxis-focused Marxist materialism" (Devane, 2012). Activity theory, which is also known as cultural-historical activity theory, believes that tools, rules, culture, etc. are inseparable components of human activity that constitute thought. According to Nardi (1996), activity theory is a cross-disciplinary framework for studying human practices. It is committed to both individual and collective aspects of human behavior from a cultural and historical perspective. Theorists believe in three distinct generations of the theory that transformed the simple cultural-historical psychology into cultural-historical-activity theory. These three generations are:

- a. Cultural-Historical Theory by Vygotsky
  - b. Activity Theory by Leontiev
  - c. Cultural-Historical Activity Theory by Engestrom
- a. ***Cultural-Historical Theory by Vygotsky.*** First-generation activity theory is called the cultural-historical theory that believes activity to be "socially, culturally and historically situated." It stemmed from the works of Vygotsky on social psychology. Vygotsky (1978) rejected the famous stimulus-response concept of Pavlov and came up with his proposition that abstract symbols and physical objects mediate thinking. Therefore, Vygotsky first propagated the idea of mediation as a

determiner of human thought (Devane, 2012). The graphical depiction of Vygotsky's activity theory is as follows:



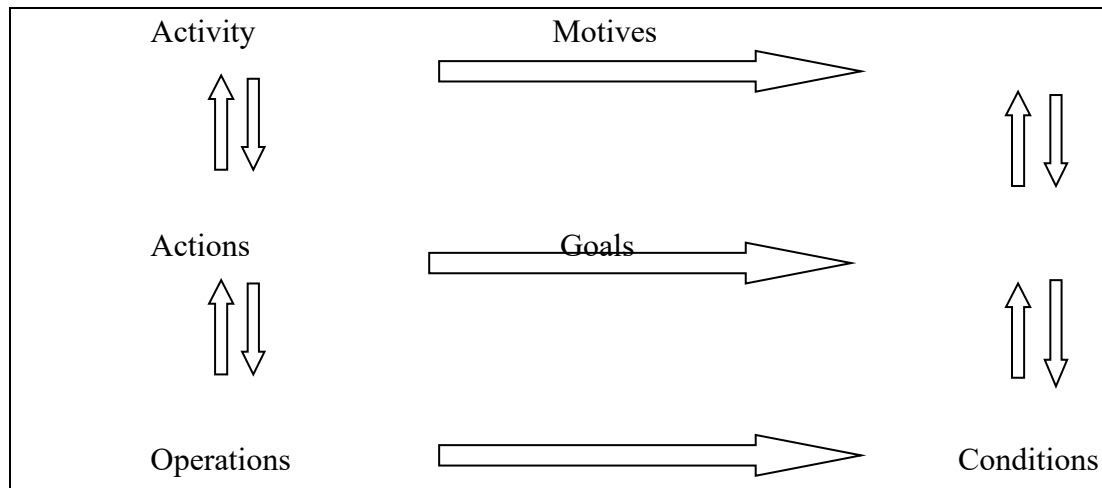
*Figure 2: Vygotsky's (1978) Concept of Mediation*

Object mediates influences and shapes human thought. Vygotsky believed that human thought is a social phenomenon that “achieves structures through social norms and cultural practices” (Devane, 2012). According to Vygotsky (1978), a child's cultural development appears on two levels: first on the social level and then on the psychological level. The first absorption is inter-psychological while the other is intra-psychological. Therefore, social interaction, according to Vygotsky (1978), is responsible for learning which requires studying natural situations to understand the process.

An important concept of the cultural-historical theory is the zone of proximal development (ZPD). In the words of Vygotsky (1978), ZPD is the difference between actual development and potential development under guidance or collaboration with more capable peers. It informs what a performer can do with the help of competent assistants.

**b. *Activity theory by Leontiev.*** In this period, one can separate activity theory from cultural-historical psychology. Leontiev (1978) paid tribute to Vygotsky for providing a point of departure for further investigations; however, he realized Vygotsky's theory to be “unsatisfactory and too abstract.” Up to the point, we were talking about activity in general while in actuality we deal with specific activities, Leontiev stated (1978).

Leontiev (1903-1979) was a disciple of Vygotsky (1896-1934) and like his teacher, he was a Marxist and wanted to develop a framework that may suit Marxist ideas of the world be objective and thought, an outcome of practice. He toiled on his teacher's work after his death and expanded his theory. Leontiev distinguished



*Figure 3: Hierarchical Model of Activity by Leontiev (1978)*

between individual action and collective activity and developed the notion that activity is hierarchal (Mwanza, 2002). Another concept propagated by him is the structural representation of human activity. An activity consists of three hierarchal levels: first, an activity that is driven by motives, second some actions are determined by goals, and lastly, the operations are controlled by conditions.

Leontiev (1978) believes human activity occurs only in the form of actions or a chain of actions where actions are goal-directed processes that must be undertaken to fulfill the objective of the activity. Actions are always determined by the motives that stimulate activity but do not direct the succeeding activities that arise because of this activity. These motives can be explicit, inexplicit, imagined, or perceived. A motive is a prerequisite for an activity to occur so no activity can exist without a motive. If the motive is not visibly stated in an activity, for sure it is implied subjectively or objectively as the activity is directed towards the achievement of that motive (Mwanza, 2002).

As activities are directed to attain some motives, actions are aimed at achieving the goals. A single action or sometimes several actions are directed towards the achievement of a single goal. Actions are temporary as compared to activities as they occur at a particular time in an activity and are short-lived. These

actions can be repeated several times to attain certain a goal. Because of this repetition, these actions get internalized and are called operations, which are performed automatically by the person. Leontiev (1981), gives the example of a person who is learning how to drive a car. In the beginning, the person changes the gears consciously but after a few days' practice, the action of changing gears is internalized and is executed automatically. According to Leontiev (1981), development occurs because of internalization and externalization processes. Changes, however, in the conditions of activity can change the different parts of the activity itself: operations can become actions and actions, and operations as an expert driver with problematic machinery will revert from operations to actions.

The theory presented by Leontiev (1981), is heavily criticized for too much emphasis on the relationship of activity, actions, and operations while on the other side, the role of personal characteristics of individuals is much neglected.

**c. Engestrom model of activity theory.** The limitations of the first and second generations of activity theory called for an expansion and modification in the theory. Engestrom and Miettinen (1999) found Vygotsky's concept of mediation problematic for its heavy reliance on an individual's actions in the world of objects. They believed that individuals act in collective practices and communities and such collective practices cannot be equated to the sums of individual actions, so Engestrom (1987) developed the collective model of activity.

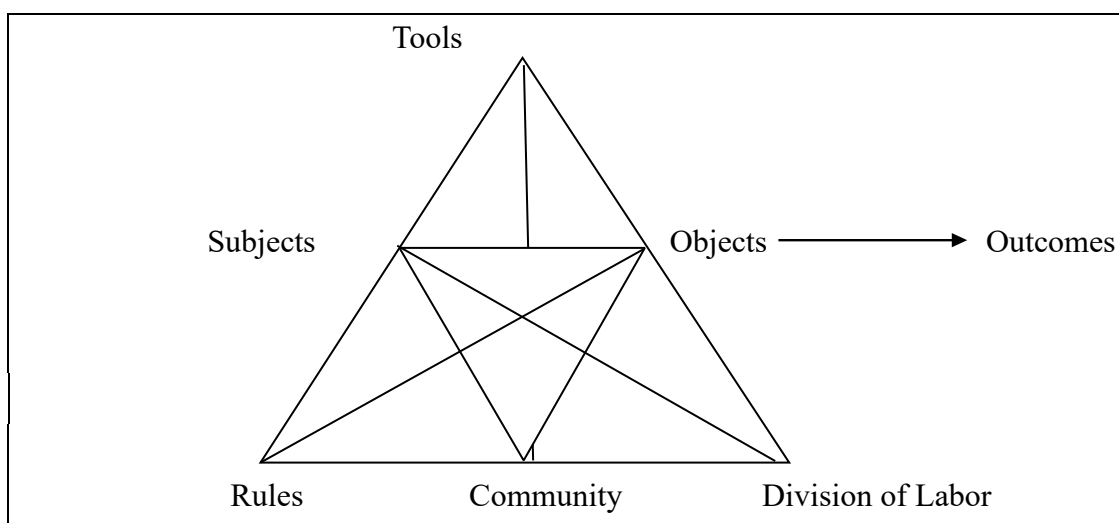


Figure 4: Activity System by Engestrom (1987)

The third generation of activity theory that is also called cultural-historical activity theory is marked by the work of Engestrom (2001). Engestrom was inspired

by Vygotsky's (1978) concept of tool mediation and he further developed and presented an expanded version of the mediational model. This expanded version believes in the "collaborative and collective nature of human activity" (Mwanza, 2002). Another important modification made by Engeström (1987) was the addition of the "Subject" element in Leontiev's activity system (Devane, 2012). The activity system that is also called the "Activity Triangle Model" consists of the following elements: Subject, Object, Community, Tools, Rules, and Division of Labor. The details of all the components of the activity system model are as under:

1. **Subject.** The subject is the doer in an activity. It shows the collective nature of human activity. Tools mediate the relationship of the subject with the object.
2. **Object.** Object or objective is the motive behind doing an activity. It shows the purposeful nature of human activity (Mwanza, 2002). It is a short-term goal of the activity.
3. **Outcomes.** Outcomes are the long-term goals of the activity. Objective and outcome, both direct the activities of the subject.
4. **Tools.** Tools are the mediating forces that help in accomplishing an activity. They can be physical like computers, multimedia, or whiteboards in a classroom, or they can be non-physical like language.
5. **Rules.** Rules, division of labor, and community have their social basis. They can be explicit or inexplicit i.e., rules are not only the dos and don'ts but also all the values and conventions abide by a society.
6. **Community.** A community is a larger group of society of which the subject is a part. The activity is shaped by the interest of the community and the members of the community divide the roles among themselves.
7. **Division of Labor.** It describes how an activity is divided among its participants.

According to Mwanza (2002), an activity system consists of several sub-activities that are linked with one main goal or objective. To understand new development, there is a need to understand the relationship that exists between these subsystems. Clashes flare up in these inter-connected sub-activities as the main activity develops. According to Engeström (1987), the clashes that are called



“contradictions” in activity theory are important points of study as they reveal real development.

### 3.1.2.1. Basic Principles of Activity Theory

To apply activity theory, the basic principles of the theory need to be discussed.

Kaptelinin (1996) has explicated the following six basic tenets of activity theory:

1. Object orientation
2. Tool Mediation
3. Internalization and Externalization Processes
4. Historical Development
5. Consciousness
6. Context

1. ***Object Orientation.*** In Activity theory, the concept of object orientation means, that human activity is subject to an objective. Therefore, to understand human activity, there is a need to focus on the objective of that activity. According to Kaptelinin (1996), the transformation of objects into outcomes is responsible for the existence of an activity. These objectives can be tangible like a plan and sometimes non-tangible like an idea. The objective drives the activity which means activities are directed by the objectives. Human beings engage in pre-determined purposeful or objective activities.

2. ***Tool Mediation.*** Tool mediation is the core concept of activity theory that states that human beings develop tools to perform certain activities effectively. These tools are mediational means i.e., they are “the intermediate party in between the two entities of subject and object (Mwanza, 2002). These tools can be physical or psychological and are developed according to the culture and society. The choice of a tool affects human beings’ abilities to perform certain activities.

3. ***Internalization and Externalization Processes.*** According to this concept, Human thought develops because of external activity that they internalize. These processes are cultural and social and require considerable time. Human beings assimilate themselves with the cultural a social norms and ultimately make them a part of their personality. Internalization uses psychological tools while

externalization uses both physical and psychological. The information in this aspect can reveal the objects and tools for an activity.

4. ***Historical Development.*** This concept believes that actively develops and redevelops because of historical changes in society. These changes then transform activity. Activities are reshaped as a result of historical changes occurring in society.

5. ***Consciousness.*** Consciousness is a difficult concept to define. Inactivity theory, according to Mwanza (2002), is associated with emotional aspects and awareness of intentions. The awareness of intentions helps in controlling one's emotions to attain certain activity-related objectives. It is in everyday practice that consciousness is manifested as "you are what you do and what you do is embedded in the social context" (Mwanza, 2002). Therefore, activity theory takes consciousness as a unit of analysis.

6. ***Context.*** This aspect of activity theory believes that if the context of activity is studied, one can better understand the situation. Activity is not performed independently by a person but in collaboration with others in the community. Even when a person claims to perform an activity independently, he is not alone there too. Rules and regulations of the community surround him; therefore, activity theory believes in focusing on contextual analysis. Analysis of a context helps in uncovering the individual's intentions, rules, and contradictions in performing an activity.

### **3.1.2.2. Justification for the Use of Activity Theory as a Theoretical Framework**

Human activity in context can be analyzed with the help of activity theory. According to Shirvan (2016), an activity comprises the subject, object, and outcome, since this activity is conducted in a culture the tools, rules of that culture, the community itself, and the division of labor. All these factors should be given due consideration in research using activity theory (Shirvan, 2016). This framework, as an analytical tool, can help in analyzing the reasons for anxiety in LL classrooms.

This theory is aimed at investigating the context through several triangles. The first triangle is that of the subject, object, and mediating tools triangle while the second triangle is of the subject, object, and community. Afterward, other triangles bring other aspects of the context. Activity theory in the words of Lier (2004) "the

idea is to represent an interconnected system of physical and symbolic aspects of the environment within which the activity occurs.”

In this study, Engestrom's model of activity theory is used to help Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystem model. This model helps in exploring anxiety-causing factors at the micro, meso, exo, and macro levels by providing different variables in different triangles. The model is applied with the help of the Mwanza model (2002), a tool devised to practically apply activity theory.

### **3.1.2.3. Integration of Theories in Research Design**

The combination of Bronfenbrenner's Nested Ecosystem Model and CHAT allows for a comprehensive examination of language learning anxiety from both a broad environmental perspective and a detailed activity-based perspective. Bronfenbrenner's model structures the analysis of findings into distinct environmental layers, while CHAT ensures that the interview questions probe deeply into the socio-cultural and interactive aspects of language learning. This integrated approach provides a holistic understanding of the factors contributing to language learning anxiety among students in Pakistan, encompassing immediate interactions, broader institutional influences, and socio-cultural contexts.

## **3.2. Nature of the Research**

This is mixed-method research that uses qualitative and quantitative methods. It is a versatile and increasingly popular research method to get a deeper understanding of an issue and to answer complex research questions. A mixed-method research approach can offer a holistic perspective on research issues which makes it most suitable for the current study.

The quantitative component of the research focuses on the collection and analysis of numerical data. Surveys, questionnaires, and experiments are used for quantitative forms of data collection. For the current research, numerical data was collected with the help of FLCAS by Horwitz et al. (1986). The scores of the participants were analyzed with the help of Oetting's scores (Attached as Appendix D).

The qualitative component of mixed-method research involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative data. For the current research, the qualitative

data was obtained through interviews based on activity theory (Mwanza Model), Diary writing, and teachers' perspectives on students' anxiety.

### **3.3. Research Population and Sample**

The population is the people whom the study is about while the sample is the group of people who are observed by the researcher (Dornyei, 2007). The focus of the study is to find the ecological factors that contribute to English LLA in English language classrooms in the universities of Pakistan. Therefore, English classrooms of all the universities of Pakistan formed the population of this research.

Since it is not possible to study the whole of the population, therefore, the study has focused on two universities from Faisalabad (one from the public sector and one from the private sector) and two universities from Islamabad (one from the public sector and one from private sector). These universities were selected from the capital and the province of Punjab through purposive sampling. HEC categorizes universities into federal, public, private, and public sectors; therefore, the selection of the universities helped in attaining a representative sample for statistical generalization.

From Faisalabad, the National Textile University (NTU) and the University of Faisalabad (TUF) were selected. National Textile University is a W category public sector university whereas the University of Faisalabad was the only private sector university in Faisalabad. On the other hand, the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) and Riphah International University (RIU) were selected from Islamabad. NUML is a W-category public sector university whereas Riphah International is the second highest-ranked university in the public sector.

To maintain uniformity, the data were collected from similar departments in all the selected universities. The following departments were found common among all these four universities:

1. The Department of Management Sciences
2. The Department of Computer Sciences

The composition of the data should be given due consideration (Walsh, 2007) to the extent of whether it is homogeneous or heterogeneous. The current data is heterogeneous as it takes into consideration both types of universities: Public and Private. In the selection of departments, homogeneity is considered as every

department has its merit and specific culture. The selection of these departments also provided a wider representation of the sample as students with both science and arts backgrounds were available in these departments.

### 3.3.1. Sampling Criterion and Sampling Technique

The study has employed a purposive sampling technique to reach the required sample, i.e., students with the highest level of English language learning anxiety. FLCAS was used to measure the anxiety of the students in the departments of Computer Sciences and Management departments. Only the students who had scored 123 or above were included in the sample as according to Oetting's score (1986), they are considered highly anxious. The details of the sample from every university are given below:

- NTU: Out of 105 students administered with FLCAS, 16 students were identified as highly anxious
- TUF: Out of 37 students administered with FLCAS, 4 were highly anxious
- NUML: Out of 229 students administered with FLCAS, 24 students were as highly anxious
- RIU: Out of 112 students administered with FLCAS, 7 students were as highly anxious

### 3.3.2. Administrative Approval

Administrative approval was sought prior to data collection from the respective universities.

- **Departmental Consent:** Heads of Computer Sciences and Management departments were briefed about the study and consent was obtained for conducting the research.
- **Students' Consent:** Written consent was taken from each student participating in the research and they were free in their choice to the part of the research

## 3.4. Data Collection and Data Analysis Tools

In Applied linguistics research, there can be three types of primary data: quantitative, qualitative, and language data. Quantitative data is usually gathered in numbers while qualitative data is gathered in the form of recording, which later on is transcribed. Language data includes language samples of different durations, which are

recorded from different sources for the analysis of language. Language data is also subsumed into qualitative data (Dornyei, 2007). According to Dornyei (2007), in classroom research, it is indispensable to use mixed methods, therefore, the present study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques.

The current study has used four data collection tools: the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale by Horwitz et al. (1986), Semi-structured Interviews based on Activity theory (Mwanza Model), Diary Writing, and subsequent Interviews and Perspective Taking. NVivo 11 facilitated the coding and data analysis processes. Although the purpose of the study is to find out the ecological factors that cause anxiety among students at the university level, these tools will also help locate the factors that trigger anxiety because of some previous happenings. It makes these tools suitable for a study from an ecological perspective.

#### **3.4.1. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale by Horwitz et al. (1986)**

Horwitz et al (1986) defined foreign LLA as “a distinct complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning, arising in from the uniqueness of LL process (p.128). By that time language anxiety research was unable to find out a relationship between anxiety and language achievement and Horwitz et al. (1986) found that it was because of the unavailability of standardized measures. The only available scale, relevant to foreign language anxiety, to measure anxiety was designed by Gardner, Clement, and Smythe (Walkera, 2013). It was a five-item scale but very limited in scope. Other Scales that were used in psychology to measure anxiety were adopted for measuring LLA. Horwitz et al. (1986) realized that LLA is altogether different from other forms of psychological anxiety as there is nothing common between musophobia (Fear of rats) and Xenoglossophobia (Fear of language). They believed LL to be a unique process that requires a new scale to deal with its problems. To deal with this uniqueness of language they convincingly presented the argument that LLA needs to be reoriented in its conception and measurement (McIntyre, 2017).

Horwitz et.al (1986) came up with their theory of LL in 1986 when they presented the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The foreign LLA scale (FLCAS) was hypothesized to include three domains: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. This scale is a 33-point

Likert scale, which helps in determining the level of anxiety. The scale consists of three constituents: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. According to Walker (2013), these three factors were considered because Horwitz drew on measures of test anxiety, communication apprehension, and speech anxiety. Gardner's (1985) five-point scale was also in consideration along with others. Communication apprehension is an emotional state that a person experiences when he is communicating with a native speaker. Question numbers 1, 3, 4, 9, 13, 14, 18, 20, 24, 27, 29, 31, 32, and 33 measure communication apprehension. Fear of negative evaluation is an apprehension of others' evaluation, especially negative evaluation. Items 2, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, and 30 are included in the scale to measure fear of negative evaluation. Test anxiety is a physical and emotional state that prohibits one from performing well in the exam. Three questions 8, 10, and 21 are added to check test anxiety.

Items on 5-point Likert scale are rated from 1 which is equivalent to strongly agree to 5 which stands for strongly disagree. The total score that a person attempting the quiz can get is 165 and the lowest is 33. The lowest score on the scale demonstrates lower anxiety while a higher level of anxiety is linked to a higher score. On the scale, positively worded items are 24; 9 items are negatively worded. Horwitz et al. (1986) original study took Spanish learners of Anglophone in the first year of their university. Later, different levels of instruction were focused like school, high school, and university level. FLCAS has been rigorously validated for internal reliability, test-retest reliability, and construct validity (Horwitz, 1991).

Globalization has an impact on all spheres of life, and so is LLA. English is, now, learned around the globe which has multiplied the issues faced by the multitude of learners. Language is a culturally specific phenomenon which is why several attempts have been made in different cultures to modify FLCAS to suit their culture. In some cultures, FLCAS was modified while in others efforts were made to devise a new scale. The results of such efforts bore fruit in the form of the "Arabic Foreign Language Anxiety Questionnaire" (AFLAQ), and Chinese LLA scale. Although these scales are being used at local levels to assess anxiety, Horwitz et al. (1986) FLCAS is still considered the most reliable tool for research in LLA and is being used around the globe.

This study used FLCAS in its original form to determine the anxiety level of the students. The scale was adopted as it is the most reliable of all the scales available. The researcher visited the classes in person and explained every statement in the Urdu language so that they could tick the right option. The students were visited individually to make sure that they had ticked what they meant in reality. Students were also told that their scores on the questionnaire were not going to affect their grades in any way; it was purely for research purposes.

Different researchers employed different methods for the classification of anxious and relaxed students; some used percentile scores and others relied on average scores. This study uses Oetting's scale for the classification of students according to their levels of anxiety. The students with a 123 or more score, according to this scale, were considered to have a high level of anxiety and were selected as the subjects of the study. The scores to determine anxious and relaxed students according to Oetting (1983) are as under:

*Table 1: Oetting's Scores to Determine Anxiety*

Sr. No	Score Range	Level
1	33-65	Very Relaxed
2	66-86	Relaxed
3	87-107	Mild Anxious
4	108-123	Anxious
5	124-165	Very Anxious

For the current research, the students who had scored 123+ and above were considered. In other words, the students who were highly anxious formed the sample. The selection was in line with the requirement of qualitative and ecological study to take a limited sample.

#### **3.4.2. Semi-structured Interviews**

Interview is a very important data collection technique that involves communication between a researcher and a subject. They are mostly used in exploratory and descriptive studies and range from highly structured to unstructured (Fox, 2006). According to Fox (2006), the degree of structure imposed on an interview will vary



along a continuum, but three types can be thought of: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured.

A structured interview is one in which the interviewer follows a pre-designed and elaborative structure, and such tightly controlled interviews are conducted to elicit specific information from the interviewee (Dornyei, 2007). On the other hand, an unstructured interview gives the liberty to ask whatever an interviewer wants to ask. They are also called in-depth interviews, as the interviewer is free to ask whatever he wants to ask. Only a limited number of questions are asked, and an interviewer takes the details about those topics. The third type of interview, semi-structured, offers a compromise between two extremes i.e., structured, and unstructured. In applied linguistics, most of the interviews preferred are semi-structured. In such interviews no doubt some questions are written but these questions are open-ended which provides the interviewee an opportunity to elaborate things in an explanatory manner. According to Fox (2006), semi-structured interviews are useful when gathering attitudinal information from the interviewee or when it is not possible to establish pre-codes as little information is available on the subject. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer has the liberty to probe into whatever is mentioned by the interviewee (Fox, 2006).

The present research used semi-structured interviews; some of the questions were set; and others followed from the questions during the interview. The interviews were based on the Eight-Step Mwanza model (2002). Activity theory is a theoretical framework for understanding human interaction. In HCI (Human-computer interaction), the Activity Oriented Design Method (AODM), a toolkit based on activity theory, was introduced for an explanation of contextualized learners' experiences. This ADOM helps in the practical implementation of Activity theory. However, realizing the complexities in the application of ADOM, Mwanza modified the ADOM toolkit and introduced the 'Eight-Step Model', activity notation, a method for generating research questions, and a technique for mapping the activity system. All these four are methodological tools in the ADOM toolkit.

Eight-step Model is the first tool of the AODM toolkit. This model helps in the application of activity theory that is otherwise difficult to apply directly (Mwanza, 2002). Activity theory consists of six components, i.e., subject, object, tools, rules, community, and division of labor. These six components are converted into eight steps

to make them applicable. This eight-step model provides question types against the points of activity theory that can help in understanding the activity of a person in context. The details of the eight steps, according to Mwanza (2002), are as under:

*Table 2: AODM's Eight-Step Model (Mwanza, 2002)*

<b>Eight Step Model</b>		
<b>Identify the...</b>		<b>Questions to Ask</b>
Step 1	Activity of interest	What sort of activity am I interested in?
Step 2	Objective	Why is the activity taking place?
Step 3	Subjects	Who is involved in carrying out this activity?
Step 4	Tools	By what means are the subjects performing this activity?
Step 5	Rules & Regulations	Are there any cultural norms, rules or regulations rules or regulations governing the performance of this activity?
Step 6	Division of labor	Who is responsible for what, when carrying out this activity and how are the roles organized?
Step 7	Community	Community What is the environment in which activity is carried out?
Step 8	Outcome	Outcome What is the desired outcome of carrying out this activity?

Following Nazari (2017), questions based on Mwanza's eight-step model and activity notation were generated to get the required information. The adapted and contextualized version of the eight-step model (taken from Nazari, 2017) is attached as Appendix 4 which clearly shows that the questions posed by these eight steps cover all four levels of Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystem model. The research participants were interviewed based on all these questions but since it was semi-structured so wherever the need for clarification was felt, the questions were added. The selection of the Mwanza model (2002) for this research was made because it is a reliable model. Its validity and reliability were established by Mwanza (2002). Moreover, it is used in LLA research by Nazari (2017) and Farnia (2020). Since the interviews were semi-structured therefore every interview took a different time. These interviews were recorded and

later transcribed to find out themes. The transcription was non-verbatim as the concern of the research was with the information provided and not with the language used.

### **3.4.3. Diary Writing**

In research, a diary is used as a tool for collecting data in qualitative research. It helps in collecting data about the feelings, behavior, activities, and experiences of the participant under investigation. An important feature of diary writing is it is longitudinal which means diaries are written for an extended time; a time long enough to provide sufficient data for generalization. Contextual understanding of user's behavior is not possible in an artificially created environment; diary writing is the most appropriate method in such a situation. Diaries can be used to gather data about the following:

1. Habits
2. Attitude and motivation
3. Changes in behavior
4. Difficulties

Diaries can be of open format or highly structured format. A diary is typically composed of five phases: planning and preparation, pre-study brief, logging period, post-study interview, and data analysis. At the planning stage, the purpose of the research is described and a rationale is provided for diary writing. It also explained why longitudinal data is required and how it will help in the research. The prompts for diary writing were also prepared at this stage. In the second stage, a meeting was scheduled with the research participants to inform them about the details of the research and the time period required for diary entries. In the third stage, the participants were provided with detailed and clear-cut information about the requirements of diary writing. They were informed about the information they needed to log in. Two types of logging are recommended by the researchers: in-situ logging and snip-it technique. In-situ logging is a straightforward way of collecting data. The research participants record their feelings, emotions, and behavior when they are in the required situation. Salazar (2016) puts it in these words: "When they are engaged in the required activity, they must report all the important details about the activity right away." On the other hand, the snippet technique is used when it is not possible to provide an in-detail account of the happening at the time of their occurrence. The participants then record short snippets

of the information and then write them in detail when they get time, mostly at the end of the day. In the snippet technique, the participants are provided with prompts or questions so that they may not miss the appropriate information (Salazar, 2016). In the fourth stage, the information provided by the research participants is evaluated. Follow-up interviews were planned if anything needed clarification.

The current study has used this technique of diary writing to get an insider view of the participants' problems related to LLA. All the above-mentioned steps were followed for the diary writing method. The students were asked to write down the point of most comfort and discomfort during the class. Then participants adopted the snippet technique as it was not possible to write in detail during the class. The participants were provided with prompts for eliciting the required data from the diaries (attached in Appendix B). The participants were asked to submit their diaries at their convenience. Since it was not possible to interact with the students frequently and freely because of the constraints put by the management of Private sector universities, therefore, clarification interviews were conducted once only i.e., at the end of diary writing. In the last stage, the data gathered from the diaries was coded and analyzed for themes. Since it was not a marks-based activity, the students submitted a very limited number of entries. Other reasons that prohibited them from writing freely and independently were the lack of confidence and the lack of familiarity with such activities. An important aspect is that highly anxious students submitted their diaries; however, the response rate varied. To deal with this variability, the researcher focused on those factors which were reported by majority of the research participants. If a factor was not reported by more than 50 percent of the participants, it was not considered.

#### **3.4.4. Perspective Taking**

Taking one's perspective, also known as empathy or perspective taking is used to step into one's shoes in order to understand their thoughts and feelings. There are different ways of seeking one's perspective such as conducting interviews, focus groups, surveys, observation, asking questions, and reviewing materials. In the end, the perspective of the teachers was sought on the issue by requesting them to answer the question "What do you think are the reasons for anxiety among undergraduate students in English language classrooms." All the teachers who were teaching the classes of anxious students provided their perspectives.

### **3.4.5. Data Collection Tools and their Appropriateness**

In the current study, quantitative and qualitative data collection tools are used to thoroughly investigate language learning anxiety. These include Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), semi-structured interviews, diary writing, and perspective-taking. Each tool is selected for its ability to provide insights about language learning anxiety and to enhance the reliability and validity of the study.

The first tool, FLCAS developed by Horwitz and Cope (1986) is used to quantify English language learning anxiety. It is used in this study to get reliable data on anxiety levels among students and is crucial for generalizing the findings to a broader population. Semi-structured interviews are used to gain in-depth insight into the personal and contextual factors responsible for the anxiety of the students. This qualitative method aligns with the principles of Activity Theory (Mwanza Model), which emphasizes the dynamic interaction between individuals and their socio-cultural environment. Diary writing is employed to capture longitudinal data on students' anxiety experiences over an extended period of time. The use of this tool provided insights into students' experiences of English language learning anxiety that would have remained unattainable through cross-sectional surveys or one-time interviews. The final tool, i.e., perspective taking is used to collect data from the teachers who were teaching the classes of anxious students. Their perspective is sought to gain an external viewpoint on students' anxiety. The use of this tool enhanced the validity of the findings.

The mixed-methods approach used in this study, with FLCAS, semi-structured interviews, diary writing, and perspective taking, provided a comprehensive understanding of language learning anxiety. Each tool contributed uniquely to the data collection process and allowed for a thorough exploration of both the prevalence and the underlying causes of anxiety. This methodological synergy ensured that the study's findings are both statistically robust and richly descriptive, offering valuable insights for educators and researchers aiming to address and mitigate the English language learning anxiety of university students in Pakistan.

### **3.5. Research Design**

The study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches as analytical and descriptive measures were taken in the course of the research. First, Horwitz et.al (1986) questionnaire was used to determine the level of anxiety of the students in the universities of Faisalabad and Islamabad.

In the second phase, the students with a 123 or above score on FLCAS, identified as highly anxious (based on Oetting's Scale), were interviewed with the help of the activity-based Mwanza Model (2002). These interviews were semi-structured, therefore, wherever the researcher needed clarification, he asked for that. Thirdly the students were asked to keep diaries and after diary reading interviews were conducted to take an in-depth view of the issues faced by them. In the end, teachers' perspective was sought through a question with the language teachers where they presented their views about the potential causes of students' anxiety in language classrooms.

NVivo 11 was used to facilitate the analytical procedure. NVivo is a computer software package developed by QSR International. This software is designed purely for qualitative researchers to organize and analyze data by finding patterns. It helps in identifying the themes that might be neglected in manual coding. Different versions of the software are available at the moment such as NVivo 2, 7, 8, 9 10, 11, and 12. NVivo 12 is the latest version available with more advanced features. The current study has used NVivo 11 as it was easily available in the country. Moreover, the study did not require any advanced features; all that it needed was available with NVivo 11. In the program, manual coding of the data was a difficult task. For inter-rater reliability, the codes assigned at different times by the researcher against two different universities were checked for reliability. Cohen Kappa's measure was used which showed a result of 0.64 which means a substantial agreement. The nested ecosystem model, suggested by Bronfenbrenner (1979;1993), was used as the analytical framework to analyze and categorize the reasons for anxiety among the research participants.

### **3.6. Ethical Considerations**

According to Domyei (2007), educational research that considers peoples' lives involves ethical issues that need consideration. It becomes highly important in terms of qualitative research, which relies on the personal details of the participant. Therefore, a qualitative researcher should go for a moral and ethical research process. Domyei

(2007) presents the following points for a study to be morally and ethically considerate:

1. Obtaining informed consent
2. Preventing physical and mental harm
3. Providing the participants with the right to refuse the answers to the questions.
4. Ensuring participants' confidentiality and anonymity

All these four criteria were met during data collection. For obtaining consent, an application for data collection was sent to the chairperson of ORIC of the university. On the other hand, the students were given the choice; if they wanted to be a part of the research then they were taken. Since the research didn't involve any physical harm therefore the second point is not valid. As far as the mental harm is concerned, the students were not asked any questions that may disturb them mentally. In the consent form, they were given the option to withdraw from this process whenever they wanted to. The teachers were asked for permission to record the lectures. The teachers and students who were not willing were not forced. It was assured both to the students and the teachers that their names would be kept confidential.

### **3.7. Chapter Summary**

The chapter comprises three distinct parts. The first part discusses the nature of the research. Different perspectives of mixed methods research were discussed and its relevance to the current work was established. The purpose of this part was to make it clear that it is purely mixed-method research.

The second part discusses the population for the research and the selection of the sample from the population. All the universities of Pakistan formed the population of the study and for the sampling, convenience sampling technique was used. To make the sample statistically representative, two universities were taken up from Faisalabad, and two from Islamabad. The rationale for taking up these universities and for picking up certain departments is also provided.

The last part of the chapter discusses in detail the different tools used by this study. FLCAS is the first tool used in the quantitative phase, which was selected because of its reliability and wide acceptance. Then the second tool used was Semi-

structured interviews based on the Mwanza Model. The model provided empirical support to activity theory; it helped in analyzing the contextual factors. The third tool was Diary writing which provided an insider view of the problem, moreover, it is reliable for longitudinal studies. The last of the tools i.e. Perspective Taking was used to seek teachers' perspectives on students' anxiety. Toward the end of this chapter, the researcher has discussed the research design and ethical considerations.



## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS

The methodology and framework for the present study were presented in the previous chapter. In this part of the thesis, the data collected, its description, and interpretation in the light of theoretical and methodological insights are provided. The data were collected to answer the questions set as research questions. The data were collected using Horwitz et.al (1986) FLCAS, Interviews with Activity Theory Mwanza Model (2002), Diary writing, and taking teachers' perspectives. This section discusses the findings of the data gathered with FLCAS.

#### **4.1. Data Analysis Plan**

The purpose of this study is to explore the ecosystem of ELL in order to find out the reasons for English LLA, among university students in Pakistan. To dig out the reasons for ELL anxiety at the undergraduate level in Pakistan, the chapter is divided into five sections. Section one discusses the anxiety level of the students in the universities of Faisalabad and that of Islamabad. The second section discusses the findings obtained from the data gathered from NTU, a public sector university in Faisalabad. The third section discusses the findings of the data taken from the University of Faisalabad, a private-sector university. The fourth section is about the findings obtained from the students of NUML, Islamabad and the fifth section analyses the data gathered from Riphah International, Islamabad.

#### **4.2. Identification of Anxious Students through FLCAS**

The concern of the study was to find out the reasons for anxiety among the university students in Pakistan, therefore it was decided to take data from public and private sector universities. For reasonable representation, it was decided to take two universities from the capital territory and two from the provincial level. Islamabad is the capital of Pakistan and the 9<sup>th</sup> most populous city in the country that has multiple universities. For the current research, NUML and Riphah were taken up randomly.

Faisalabad is the third-largest city in Pakistan and was the first planned city of the British era. According to the data provided by HEC, Pakistan, has 5 general

universities and several university sub-campuses. For the current research, the focus was only on the established universities; sub-campuses of the universities were however not considered. Two universities were selected from Faisalabad: one from public sector and one from private sector. National Textile University is a public sector University whereas TUF is the only private sector university in Faisalabad division.

To reach the required sample, Horwitz et al.'s (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) attached as Appendix 1 was administered. The purpose of this data gathering was to find out the levels of anxiety among the university students. From these universities, the data was gathered from the students of similar departments (departments that were common among all the universities, i.e., Business and CS) for uniformity and because every department has its environment and merit for the intake. Moreover, the results obtained from these departments are widely applicable as the students from both the faculties of Science and Arts enroll in these programs. The analysis of the data gathered from the universities revealed the following results.

#### 4.2.1. Analysis of Data Gathered from National Textile University

National Textile University (NTU) was primarily established in 1959 as an institute for textile engineering to cater to the needs of the textile sector. In 1965 it was affiliated with the University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore, and turned from an institute to a college. In 2002, National Textile College received an upgrade and got the status of a university. At present, NTU is a general cadre, a federally chartered university that offers education in multiple disciplines. The assessment of the students with FLCAS revealed the following results:

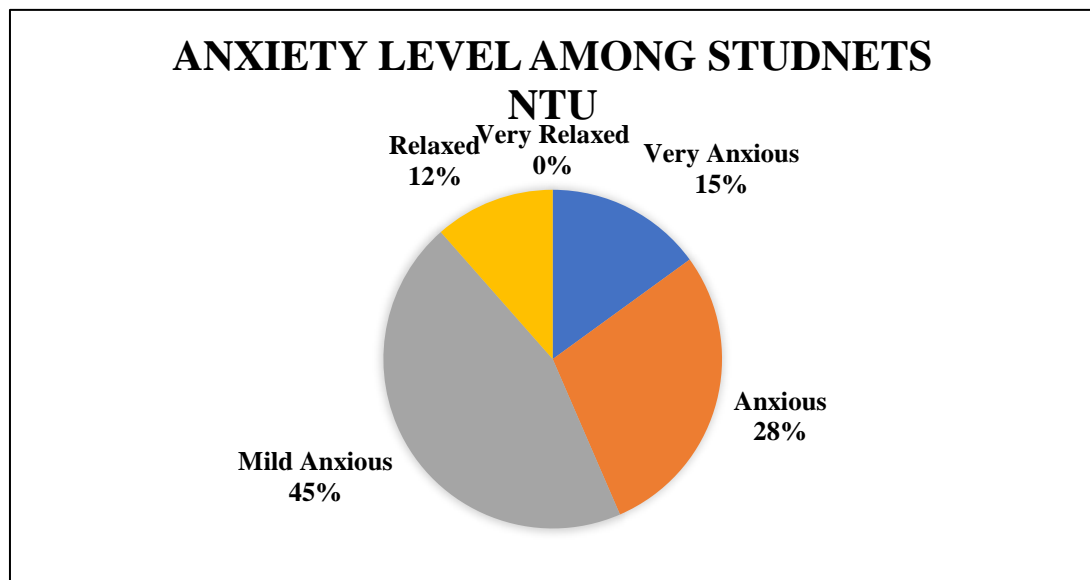
*Table 3: FLCAS Results of LLA among Students (NTU)*

Range	Level	Number of Students	Percentage
124-165	Very Anxious	16	15%
108-123	Anxious	30	28%
87-107	Mild Anxious	47	45%
66-86	Relaxed	12	12%

33-65	Very Relaxed	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

In the university out of 105 students administered LLA, 16 were found very anxious, 30 were anxious to an alarming level, 47 had mild anxiety and 12 were relaxed. Not a single student was very relaxed. Out of the 16 highly anxious students, 6 students were from the Computer Science Department and 10 belonged to Business Department. Since the departmental variation was not a variable of this study; therefore, anxiety was not explored further with respect to the selected departments. The table above shows the percentage of students from different levels of anxiety.

#### 4.2.2. Analysis of Data Gathered from the University of Faisalabad



*Figure 5: Anxiety among Students NTU*

The University of Faisalabad (TUF) is a private-sector university established in 2002 by the philanthropist organization, Madinah Foundation. The university was established to meet the educational and technological needs of the city by providing quality education. It offers various degrees in twenty different departments. The university falls into the highest 'W' category of HEC and is among the five top private universities in Pakistan.

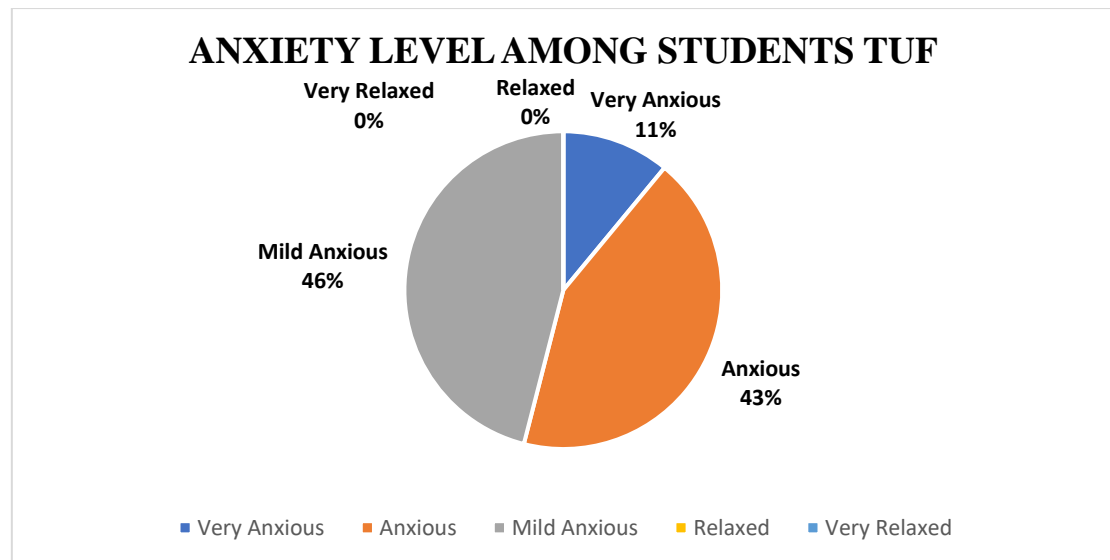
In the University of Faisalabad, there were a total of 37 students in the Department of Business Administration and Computer Sciences. There were 24 students for BSCS and 13 for BBA. Out of these 37, 4 students were very anxious, 16 anxious, and 17 were with mild anxiety. All four highly anxious students belonged to

the business administration department. The considerable point here is there were no students with scores less than 86, in other words, no student was relaxed in terms of language learning. The lesser number of students in the university may be attributed to the high fee structures.

*Table 4: FLCAS Results of LLA among Students (TUF)*

Range	Level	Number of Students	Percentage
124-165	Very Anxious	4	11%
108-123	Anxious	16	43%
87-107	Mild Anxious	17	46%
66-86	Relaxed	0	0
33-65	Very Relaxed	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>37</b>	<b>100%</b>

The percentage of students with different levels of anxiety is presented below.



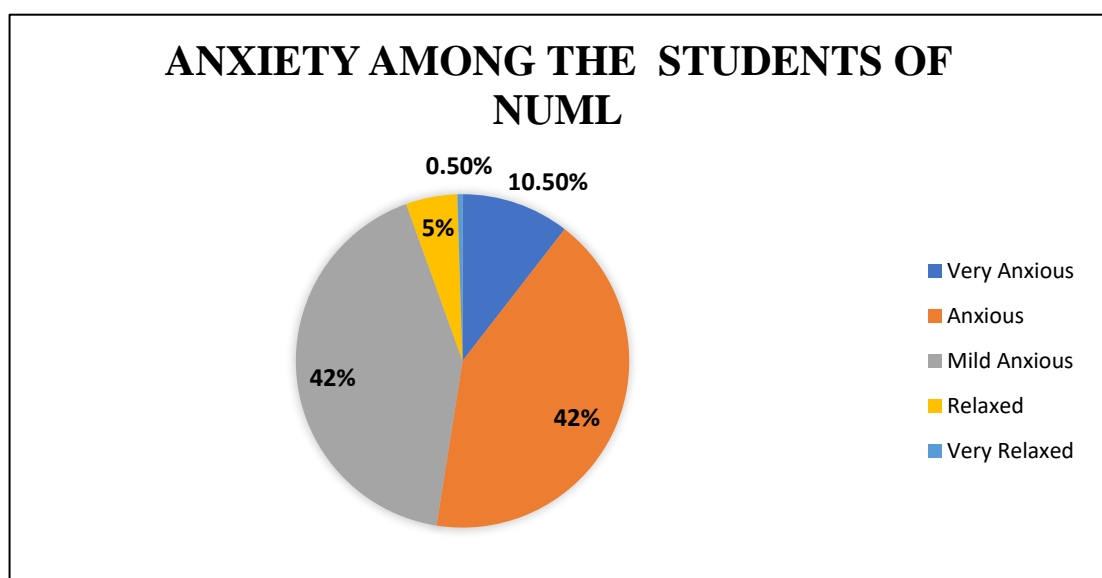
*Figure 6: Anxiety among the Students of TUF*

#### 4.2.3. Analysis of Data Gathered from the National University of Modern Languages

National University of Modern Languages (NUML) is a public sector university, located in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. It was established in 1969 to help people communicate in oriental and occidental languages. It was upgraded as a university in May 2000. Currently, the university is offering courses in 27 oriental and occidental languages along with other numerous programmers. For the current study, 229 students were assessed with the help of Horwitz FLCAS from the departments of BBA and CS. The analysis of the gathered data revealed the following:

*Table 5: FLCAS Results among Students (NUML)*

Range	Level	Number of Students	Percentage
124-165	Very Anxious	24	10.5%
108-123	Anxious	96	42%
87-107	Mild Anxious	96	42%
66-86	Relaxed	12	5%
33-65	Very Relaxed	01	0.5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>229</b>	<b>100%</b>



*Figure 7: Anxiety among the Students NUML*

In this university, out of 229 students administered for LLA, 24 were very anxious, 96 were anxious, 96 had mild anxiety and 12 were relaxed. Out of the 24 highly anxious students, 15 were from the computer science department and 9 were from the business administration department. Since it was not a variable in consideration, therefore, departmental variation was not explored further. There was 1 student who was very relaxed. There were no such students in the data obtained from the universities in Faisalabad. The percentage of different levels of anxiety from the students of NUML is manifested above.

#### 4.2.4. Analysis of Data Gathered from Riphah International University

Riphah International University (RIU) in Islamabad is a private-sector university chartered by the federal government of Pakistan in 2002. The university was established with a view to producing professionals with Islamic moral values. It is sponsored by a non-profit trust i.e., Islamic International Medical College Trust created in 1995. Currently, the university has seven faculties with various academic departments and an overseas project. The data gathered from the departments of BBA and CS of the university revealed the following results:

*Table 6: FLCAS Results of LLA among Students (RIU)*

<b>Range</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
124-165	Very Anxious	7	6%
108-123	Anxious	32	28%
87-107	Mild Anxious	56	50%
66-86	Relaxed	17	15%
33-65	Very Relaxed	0 1	1%
<b>Total</b>		<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>

In the university, out of 112 students administered for LLA, 7 were highly anxious, 32 were anxious, 56 were mild anxiety and 17 were relaxed. One student was relaxed, like NUML, and quite contrary to the results of the universities of Faisalabad. Out of these seven highly anxious students, four were from CS and three from BBA. The percentage of students with different levels of anxiety is mentioned below.

#### 4.2.5. A Cross-Comparison of the Universities in Terms of Anxiety

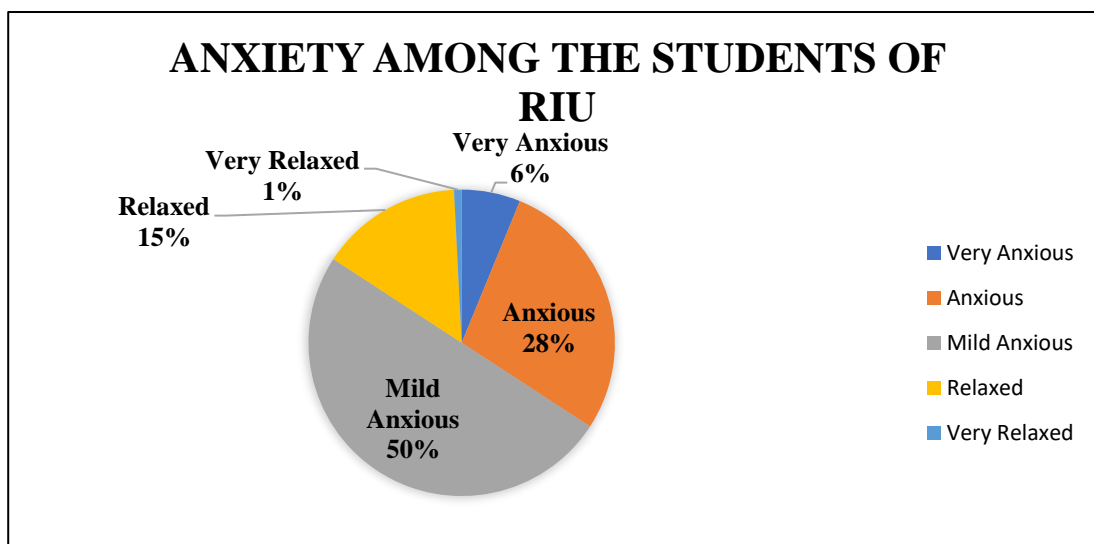


Figure 8: Anxiety among the Students RIU

For the present study, the students with severe anxiety were taken into consideration, or in other words, the students securing less than 124 scores were not considered. The reason for selecting only highly anxious students is that ecological studies are based on a holistic approach. A holistic view is possible only in longitudinal/Qualitative studies that require a smaller number of participants so that they may be studied.

Table 7: Comparison of Anxious Students of All the selected Universities

Institute	Total no of students	Anxious Students	Percentage
NTU	105	16	15%
TUF	37	4	10%
NUML	229	24	10.5%

RIU	112	7	6.2%
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The table above shows the percentage of anxious students in all the universities of the sample. The highest number of anxious students were at NTU which formed 15 percent of the total sample. The highest number of anxious students may be attributed to the quota system of the university which reserves seats for students without considering the merit. The second highest percentage was at NUML which was almost like that of TUF. The comparison, however, is not valid as there is a huge difference between the number of students. TUF is a private-sector university with high fees to pay for students. Therefore, admission to the TUF is purely on a financial basis. The least anxious students were found at Riphah International University. Although Riphah International is a private-sector university, the number of students is quite opposite to TUF. This can be attributed to the fee structure of the university which is a major factor in a country like Pakistan.

As the data gathered from different universities varied in number of students, the question of validity may arise. Since all the students enrolled in the universities were taken as a population therefore the number of the students is naturally occurring that cannot be objected to. Secondly, in purposive sampling, the focus remains on the purpose, and then all the rest of the things become irrelevant. Therefore, based on the purpose, the students from all the universities with the highest percentage of anxiety were taken up as a sample.

#### **4.2.6. Section Summary**

This section of chapter 4 discusses how the sample was taken out of the whole population. A purposive sampling technique was used. Two universities were taken from Islamabad and two from Faisalabad (one public sector and one private sector university from both). Since it is not possible to collect data from all the university students, the two departments of computer sciences department and the management department were administered through FLCAS. The data was analyzed with Oetting's Score (19) which helped in identifying the students with different levels of anxiety. The number of students varied in different universities, however taking all the participants enrolled in a department helped in resolving the issue of validity. Since it was a



qualitative study, a limited sample was allowed. Therefore, the students who had scored highest were taken up with their consent as the sample.

### 4.3. Analysis of the Data from the Students of NTU

Following are the details of the scores on FLCAS of the participants from NTU.

*Table 8: Scores on FLCAS (NTU)*

No.	Student ID	Score at FLCAS
1	Participant 1	124
2	Participant 2	124
3	Participant 3	124
4	Participant 4	125
5	Participant 5	126
6	Participant 6	128
7	Participant 7	129
8	Participant 8	129
9	Participant 9	134
10	Participant 10	135
11	Participant 11	136
12	Participant 12	139
13	Participant 13	143

#### 4.3.1. Analysis of the Data Obtained from Activity-based Interviews (NTU)

The analysis of the data obtained from the anxious students of NTU, through interviews based on Activity Theory (Mwanza Model, 2002) revealed that several factors cause anxiety at the graduate level in Pakistan. These factors belong to different domains and can be categorized into four levels of Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystem model (1979; 1993). The demographic information of the research participants is as under:

#### 4.3.1.1. Micro System

The Microsystem is the innermost system of the ecosystem and is related to the individual. The research findings demonstrated that micro-level factors abound as far as anxiety of the English language is concerned. The factors identified at this level are presented in the form of a Hierarchy chart thus:

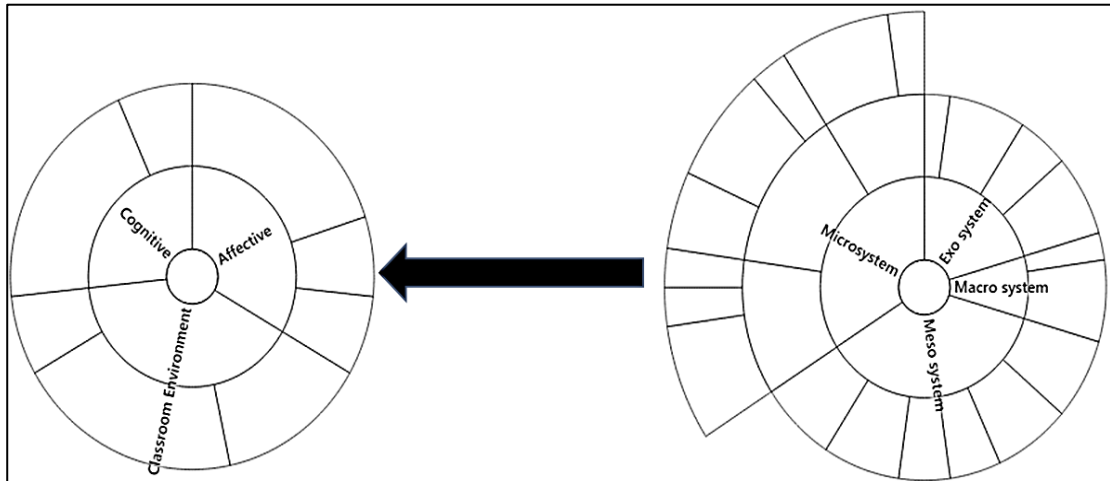


Figure 9: Anxiety Causing Factors at Micro-level (INTVW, NTU)

The following factors were identified from the interview data:

1. Classroom Environment
  2. Affective
  3. Cognitive
- 1. Classroom Environment**

Classroom environment for the current study means physical and psychological factors such as the size of the class and number of students, teacher-student relationship, and peer relationship.

a) ***Relationship with the language teacher.*** Lack of relationship between teacher and students has an impact on the classroom performance of the students. The lack of collaboration between the teacher and the learner resulted in anxiety in the participants. The nature of the relationship between a student and a teacher is categorized into three: Good and productive, good and nonproductive, and no relationship. The interview data revealed only two types of relationships between the research participants and the teacher. Either they had a good non-productive relationship or no relation at all. 11 participants reported problems in their relationship with the teacher. The rest of the two participants had a good relationship with the teacher but their relationship was not productive therefore they were unable to share their problems with them. The hierarchy chart below shows the ratio of the different types of relationships.

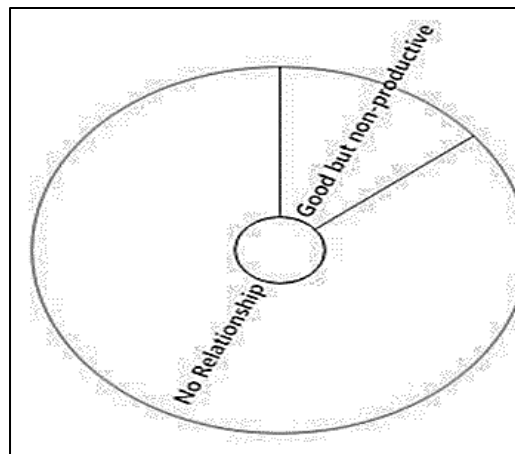


Figure 10: Comparison of the Students' Relationship with Teacher (INTVW, NTU)

The participants had shared their experiences of school and college. There were multiple reasons for their lack of relationship with the teacher. Sometimes they could not develop the confidence to talk to the teacher or the introverted personalities hindered their way to the teachers. At another time, the teacher was so strict that they could not dare to talk to him. Participant 1 said: "*Mera English teacher k saath kabhi b acha talluq nahi raha. Mujh main itna confidence he nahi tha k un sy apny language issues discuss ker sakun*" [I never had a good relationship with my language teacher so, I could never develop the confidence to share my language problems with her]" Participant 4, on the other hand, mentioned the strictness of the teacher in developing a relationship. He said, "*school or college main English k teacher itny strict thy k kabhi himmat he nahi hui unk pass jany ke bus aik bar gaya tha number theek kerwany k liye*"

[The teachers at school and college were so strict that I could not dare to approach them. I visited my English teacher once only for the correction of the marks in the exam].

Sometimes the teachers speak so much English that it horrifies the students. Participant 10 talked about it in detail in these words, “*mera kabhi b acha relation naahi raha apny teachers sy, na school main na he college main. University main teacher English itni zayda bolti hain k un sy der lgta hy jesy alien hain*” [I could never develop a healthy relationship with my teachers neither at school nor at college. In the university, the teacher talks in English, and I am so afraid of her as she appears to be an alien]. On the other hand, those who had a relationship with the teacher never took advantage of the relationship. Participants 3 and 5 had a friendly relationship with the teacher but they never took that as an opportunity to learn.

**b. Relationship with peers.** Language is a matter of use. If you have opportunities to speak, you will get better automatically, and friends create such opportunities for us. A person can have three types of relationships: productive, non-productive, and no friendship at all. A productive relationship helps a lot in improving the language skills of a person. The ratio of these three types among the participants is as under:

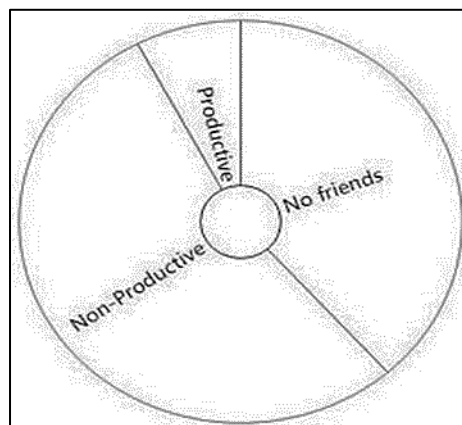


Figure 11: Comparison of the types of Peer Relationship (INTVW, NTU)

The interviews with the participants revealed that introverted personalities easily become anxious because they do not dare to talk to anyone. Six participants (1, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 12) reported having no friends and presented themselves as an introvert. Lack of vocabulary, as well as expression, marked their speech. Participant 1 had only one friend and that too had left studies even before completing his school. In the university, he had not formed a friendship with anyone as talking about his routine he said, “*Main university k baad class fellows k sath time nahi guzaarta kion ki mujhy*

*forum wapis ja ker shop per jana hota hy.*” [I do not spend time with my classmates after university hours. I leave the university immediately after the class as I have to be in the shop.] Participant 10 mentioned that he did not have any friends and he preferred to spend his time at home. His introverted personality can be determined from his comment, “*Mery dost nahi hain, main university k baad b ghar sy bahir nahi jata.*” [I do not have any friends and I do not go out of my home after university hours.] Since such students couldn’t develop their confidence because of the lack of interaction and lack of opportunity, they were still feeling anxious in the class at this advanced level.

On the other hand, some of the participants had many friends but they negatively affected their learning. Their friendship was not productive therefore instead of becoming support, it was disadvantageous as far as language learning was concerned. Participant 5 talked about his friends in the following words, “*Unka is subject main koi interest nahi. Na wo parhty hain na parhny dety hain*” [They are not interested in this subject. They neither study themselves nor let me study.] Participant 13 shared his experience, “*College main bohat dost thy lakin wo classes nhi leny dety thy shyed yehi wajh hy k mujhy parishani hoti hy ub.*” [At college, I had many friends, and they did not allow me to attend classes, especially in English. I couldn’t develop my interest in the subject this is the reason I get anxious.]

**c. Size of the class and number of students.** The number of students in the class affects the quality of learning. It becomes important when it comes to second language learning as the learners will not get any opportunity to practice outside the class. The majority of the students agreed that the number of students in a class has an impact on their learning. However, the majority of them were satisfied with the number of students at the university level. The number of students at the college level, however, posed a problem for their language learning. They did not get the opportunity to talk to the teacher in such a crowd. Three of the research participants talked about the problem faced due to the number of students at the college level. Participant 1 complained that there were about 200 students in his class at college while Participant 4 thought it better to have 30 students maximum. Participant 9 talked about the issue of strength of the class in these words, “*University main bachon ke tadaad theek hy lakin college main inty zayda students thy k attention mumkin he nahi thee*” [in the university the amount of the students is fine but at college, there were so many students in the class that individual attention was impossible.]

## 2. *Affective Factors*

The following affective factors were reported by the research participants:

a. ***Views about English Language Classroom.*** The data revealed that participants held different beliefs about their language classrooms. The majority believed that they should be guided on vocabulary, grammar, and tenses. Moreover, the participants wanted their teachers to focus on speaking skills more. Participant 12 suggested that the teachers should focus on verbal practice if they want to improve their language. He also added, “*Group discussion or debate help ker skty hain speaking skills main.*” [Activities like group discussion and debating contests can help a lot in developing speaking skills.]” Participant 3 believed in the point that for learning a language, the knowledge of rules is not sufficient; there is a need to work with real-life situations. He further added “*teacher hamin sentences and paragraph bnaany sikha rhi hain, ye hum ny pehlyhe seekh liya that school main. Mera khayal hy teacher ko koi drama ya play kerwana chahye kion k students comfortable feel kerty hain esi activities main jis sy language behtar ho jaye gee.*” [The teacher only teaches us about the basic rules of constructing good sentences and paragraphs, a thing already learned at school. I think the teacher must conduct some dramas or plays as the students will feel more comfortable with such activities which in turn will accelerate the language learning process.]

b. ***Perception of the self in the class.*** Language learning has a strong positive correlation with the perception of the self in the class. Achievement in language depends on how one perceives oneself in the class. The results of the data showed that participants had a low perception of their selves in the class. 10 out of thirteen research participants perceived themselves negatively in language class. They viewed themselves as incompetent and backbenchers who were trying to avoid the teacher. Participant 1 has expressed his perception in the class in these words, “*Main active participant nhi hun, main class main aksar khamosh rehta hun kion k inta confidence nahi k class main bol sakun.*” I am not an active participant; I usually keep quiet as I do not have the confidence to participate in the class.” Participant 6 talked about his perception thus, “*Main backbencher hun, kuch smjh aye ya na aye main nahi pouchta kion k meri shuru sy introvert hun or ye mera problem hy.*” [I am a backbencher. Since I am an introvert, I do not ask the teacher anything. Whether I get it or not, I don’t ask,

and it is my natural problem.] They were also aware of the fact that teachers knew their weaknesses and had formed negative views about them. Participant 8 mentioned it in his comment thus, “*Main backbencher hun n mujhy nhi lgta teacher mery baary main kuch acha sochti hain.*” [I am a backbencher and I think the teacher does not have a good impression of me.]

c. **Communication Apprehension.** Speaking activities always create a problem for language learners. The research participants mentioned that they found themselves in trouble when the teacher called them in front of the class for an activity. Participant 12 said that he remained in trouble in the class because of the fear of presentation. In his words, “*Mujhy her waqt dar laga rehta hy k agar teacher ny mujhy class k saamny bula liya to kiya ho ga.*” [I fear in the class what would happen if ma’am called me in front of the class to talk.]

### 3. Cognitive Factors

The factors in the cognitive domain are two as reported by the anxious students of NTU. The name and the aggregate value of the factors are presented below in the form of a hierarchy chart.

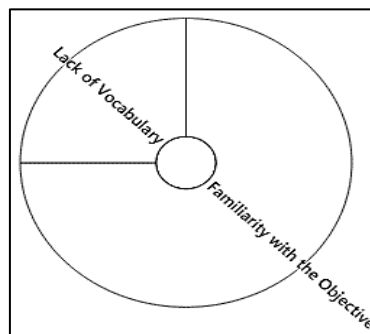


Figure 12: Hierarchy Chart of Cognitive Factor (INTVW, NTU)

a. **Familiarity with Objective.** Familiarity with the objective makes things acceptable. When one realizes the importance of a task, he puts his best effort into accomplishing that. The same is true with language learning; those who realize that English is essential for success, master it. The data gathered from the participants showed that the majority of them were not familiar with English. They were taking it as a burden as the comment of a participant shows, “*Mujhy nahi pata hamin ye kion parhaya ja raha hy*” [I don’t know why we are learning this language.] The hierarchy chart below shows the ratio of the familiar and non-familiar students.

The hierarchy chart clearly shows that the majority of the participants were not familiar with their objective of learning English. 11 out of 13 participants said they did not know the purpose of including this subject in their degree. Participants 1 and 12 had realized the importance of the subject but even after realizing the importance, the data revealed that learners were not intrinsically motivated to learn the language. The comments of both participants showed they are learning it as something that they cannot escape. They could not link the objective with their immediate need and the far-off

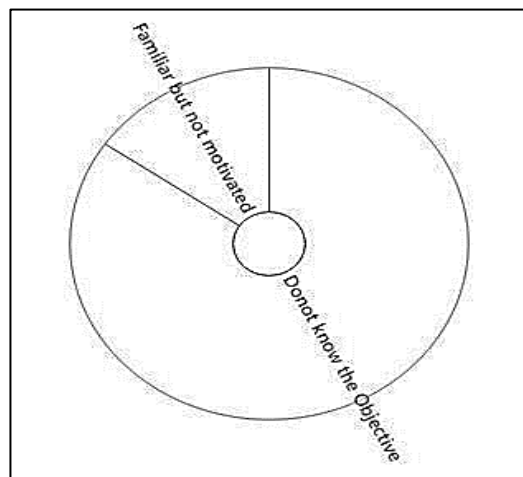


Figure 13: Comparison of Familiar with objective with Unfamiliar Students (INTVW, NTU)

objective was not providing enough stimulation. Participant 1 gave the following statement while talking about his objective, “*Kion k English aik common language hy or jo Urdu nhi bol skty un sy baat kerny k liye isy use kerty hain. Ye advance language bun rhi hy*” [Because English is a common language and a way to communicate with others those unable to understand Urdu. It is also developing as an advanced language.] Participant 12 on the other hand thought it necessary for survival as he said, “*English important hy kion ki is k bagair hum nahi reh saktay kion k ye her jagh istemal hoti hy*” [English is important as we cannot survive without it as it is used everywhere.]



b. **Lack of Vocabulary.** The second important factor at the cognitive level was a lack of vocabulary. A lack of vocabulary was reported by Participant 4 in his interview. He believed that he could not understand a lot of things only because of the incomprehensible words used by the teacher in the class.

#### 4.3.1.2. Meso System

The data collected through interviews and observations revealed an association between the classroom setting and the settings that contain the participants. At the meso level, the representation of the factors identified is as under:

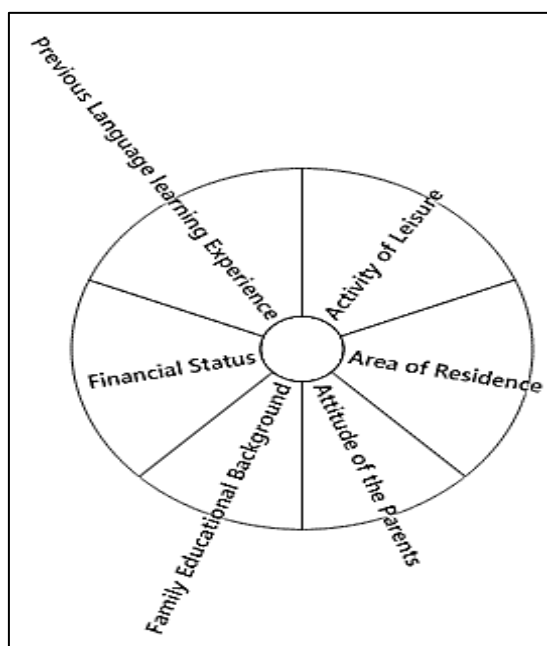


Figure 14: Anxiety Causing Factors at Meso-Level (INTVW, NTU)

##### 1. Previous language learning experience

Participants in the study mentioned many times the role of previous learning in language learning. All 13 participants figured out previous learning experiences to be the cause of present failure in the subject. The grammar-translation method was reported by many students to be the cause of their current anxiety in the class. Previously, the English language teachers used local languages in their classrooms, so the learners were not habitual in listening to the English language. This new experience of attending the whole lecture in English added to their anxiety. Participant 1 articulated that at school his teacher used Punjabi in the class to teach English while Participant 4 reported the usage of Pashto in English class.

The majority of the participants expressed that at the college level, their focus was only to get good marks so they joined the colleges and academies that might prepare them from the examination perspective. Participant 2 explained his experience of intermediate in the words: *“Main sirf aik week liye college gaya tha lakin tub be classes nahi huin is liye abu ny mujhy ghar per tuition rakhwa dee mery teacher ko yehi kaha gaya k is k number achy aany chahyen.”* [I went to the college only for one week and there were no classes. Therefore, my father arranged home tuition for me, and the task assigned to my tutor was just my good grades.] Participant 3 had the same experience as Participant 2, he joined the college just for affiliation, and his learning concern was with the academy. Participants 1, 6, 9, 11, 12, and 13 expressed that they joined the colleges that could help them in getting good grades. All the subjects including English were taught in the same way i.e., keeping in mind the perspective of examination. The language was not taught to be used but to get good marks.

Another perspective from the previous learning experience mentioned by the learners is that of cramming. Participant 8 uttered, *“Conceptual clarity ko importance nahi dee jati thee. Sirf material day dety thy jis ko cram kerna hota tha. Is k elawa or koi option nahi tha.”* [No importance was given to conceptual clarity, we were provided with the material to cram, and no other option was offered.] Participant 10 exclaimed that at school they were used to cram the answers to questions, letters, applications, and essays instead of being creative writers.

Reading and writing were focused on in the classes at the school and college level, listening and speaking were not considered as they were not required for the exam. English was not treated as a language but as a subject, the learners asserted. Participant 1 said, *“Main ny school or college main kabhi reading nahi ke isi wajah sy jub teacher mujhy readding kerny ka kethi hain to mera confidence khatam ho jata hy.”* [I never had an experience of reading at my school and college that is why when the teacher asks me to read, I lose my confidence.] Participant 7 shared his experience in the words, *“Hamin Urdu main parhaaty thy. Pehly teacher kisi student ko kehta tha k wo reading kary or phir usy explain ker deta tha. Reading or writing per he focus hota tha.”* [Urdu was the medium of instruction; the teacher asked the students to read out the material and then he translated whatever the students had read. Reading and writing were the skills of concern.]

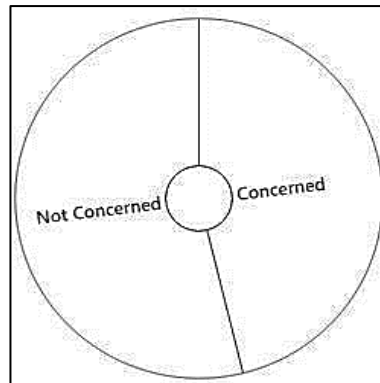
Students' relationship with the previous language teacher is another anxiety-causing factor. The learners of the present study were either reluctant to ask anything from the teacher because of the highly formal relationship or the teacher was so strict that the students couldn't imagine developing a relationship with him. Participant 6 expressed, "*School main teachers hamehsa achy bachon per tawajo dety thy kion k unhain lgta tha k wo school ka naam roshan kerin gay.*" [At school, the teacher focused only on good students as they thought that these students would bring a good name to the institute.] The other students, according to the interviewee, were not encouraged to visit the teacher outside the class. On the other hand, Participant 10 blamed his college teachers to be the cause of his anxiety in the current class, "*Teacher itni sakt thein k meri himmat he nahi hoti thee un sy kuch b pouchny ke.*" [The teacher was so strict that I could never develop the courage to ask him anything problematic for me.]

The course content taught at an earlier level also added to the anxiety of the students. From the books recommended by the board; the learners had developed a concept that English is just studying literature or cramming a few letters, stories, applications, and essays. They never had imagined that any subject like functional English could exist. The non-familiarity with the new area of the English language was a source of anxiety for them. Participant 1 shared his views about the same in the words, "*Stories ya poems seekhnay ko he hum English samjhty thy ye functional English bilkul new hy.*" [English means studying some stories and poems, learning the summaries, and cramming some essays and letters. This functional English is something new for us.]

Another factor that contributed to the anxiety of the participants was the change of the institution from an English medium to an Urdu medium. This contrast in the mediums of instruction resulted in language instability in the participant. Participant 1 shared this problem in the following words, "*Mery parents ny mera school 2 bar change kiya. Main ny apni parhai Auston public school main shuru ke phir mery parents ny mujhy government school main dakhil kerwa diya shyed paison ke wajh sy. Ye school pehly school sy bilkul mukhtalif tha. Parhaany ka tariqah, teacher or students sub kuch.*" [My parents changed my school twice. I started my study at Auston Public School, a private institute, then my parents decided to take me to a government school for reasons I do not know. The change of school was not just a change of institute; rather it was just like everything under the sun changed for me. The syllabus was different,

the teaching methodology was different, and above all the attitudes of the teachers and the students were different.]

## 2. *The attitude of the Parents*



*Figure 15: Comparison of Parental Attitude towards English Language (INTVW, NTU)*

The attitude of the parents towards a subject helps in developing the student's interest in that. If parents as their children regularly and show concern, they develop their interest in the subject too. The majority of the research participants reported that their parents were least interested in the subject as well as in their studies. The hierarchy chart below shows the comparison of parental attitudes towards the subject.

The study has also revealed that the attitude or concern of the parents with the studies is not unfruitful in the absence of their education. Most of the students believed that their parents were not concerned about their studies. They are just snubbed by their parents at the end if they get low grades. Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, and 13 reported their parents to be concerned but since the parents were not educated they could not guide them on how to improve their condition. The concern of the parents without providing any way out is more than just a worry.

## 3. *Area of Residence*

The area where you live affects your life negatively or positively because you spend most of your time among the people of that area. All 13 participants agreed on the point that the area of residence had an impact on their language and 12 out of 13 agreed that their residential area has exerted an influence on their language. Participant 10 however disagreed with a point as he used to remain at home all the time. The data

also revealed that participants were either from rural or backward areas of the cities with uneducated folk making the majority of the population. Participants 1 and 11 believed that in the Mohalla system, it was difficult to remain aloof and develop your language. Participant 11 expressed his point thus’ *“Agar main kisi colony main rehta hota to situation behtar hoti. Hamary elaqy ka mahol itna acha nahi. Yahan log parhy likhy nahi.”* [If I had lived in a colony, the situation would have been better. The environment of our locality is not good. They are uneducated and illiterate.] Participant 3 noticed that the language of his brother was far better than his language and it was because he was living in a hostel right from the beginning. He said, *“Mera bhai Cadet college main parhta hy, uski english mujh say kafi behtar hy.”* [My brother is in Cadet College, and he is far better than me in English.] Participant 7 agreed that the area of residence matters. He said, *“Jahan ap rehty hain us sy b faraq perta hy. Main thar k aik dour daraz elaqy main rehta hun. Wahan education achi nahi yehi wajah hy aksar log uneducated hain.”* [The area of living also matters. I live in a far-off village of Thar. Education facilities are not up to mark that is why the majority is uneducated.] Participant 9 also felt that his area has an impact on his language as he said, *“Bilkul is ny meri language per asar dala hy. Hamara elaqy backward hy or log b ziyada educated nahi. Main ny apna sara bachpun inhe logon k beech guzara hy isi liye meri english kamzor hy.”* [Yes, it has affected my language a lot. It is a backward area, and the majority of the people are uneducated. I spent my childhood among such people which is the reason perhaps of my being weak in the subject.]

#### **4. Activity of Leisure**

The research has indicated the impact of the activity of leisure on language classrooms. The previous research works on LLA concluded that the students engaged in book reading and watching English movies had lesser anxiety as compared to the students with other activities of leisure. They had a better store of vocabulary and better sentence structure. Moreover, they are less fearful in class during classroom speaking activities. The participants of the current study did not engage themselves in fruitful activities to spend leisure. The table below clearly shows the nature of the activities they were engaged in:

*Table 9: Participants' Activities of Leisure (NTU)*

<b>No</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Activity of Leisure</b>
1	Participant 1	Shopkeeping and Pub G
2	Participant 2	WhatsApp chat with friends
3	Participant 3	Cricket, Football and social media
4	Participant 4	Sleeping
5	Participant 5	Chatting or playing with friends
6	Participant 6	Pub G and Instagram
7	Participant 7	Ball Poll
8	Participant 8	Shopkeeping, WhatsApp, and Facebook
9	Participant 9	Using social media
10	Participant 10	Pub G and watching Indian movies
11	Participant 11	Pub G
12	Participant 12	Watching English seasons with subtitles and Pub G
13	Participant 13	Pub G and Cricket

Participant 12 showed his interest in English Seasons but that too was futile as he used to watch them with subtitles. Participant 1 declared that he had no interest in the books, and he had not read anything except the course books. He used to spend his free time in his father's shop, helping him and at the same time playing Pub-G. 7 out of 13 wasted their spare time playing Pub-G, a game banned by the government because of its destructive effects.

Social media has an impact on our daily lives, but it is wreaking havoc on the way we speak and write. A majority of what is written on social media is provided by the common folk and is not edited or checked by professionals against proper English. Social media has resulted in an exponential increase in a new form of English that has ruined the original language. All the participants liked to spend their time on social media apps like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Participant 8 who works after university hours uses WhatsApp and Facebook whenever he finds time during his work at the shop. One expects such a person should keep books with him so that he may study whenever he gets time but instead of books the participant prefers to use social media.

## 5. Family Educational background

The education of parents had an impact on the performance in the language classroom. The previous researchers found that students with highly educated parents had less anxiety comparatively. They have the opportunity to listen to many vocabulary words that are later on used in the class by the teacher. The familiarity with the vocabulary words helps in understanding the lecture of the teacher and the clarity of concept makes it easy for them to use. The present research found that the parents of the majority of the learners were graduates; one of the participants had uneducated parents and another uneducated mother. The details of the education of the parents in the form of a concept chart are as under:

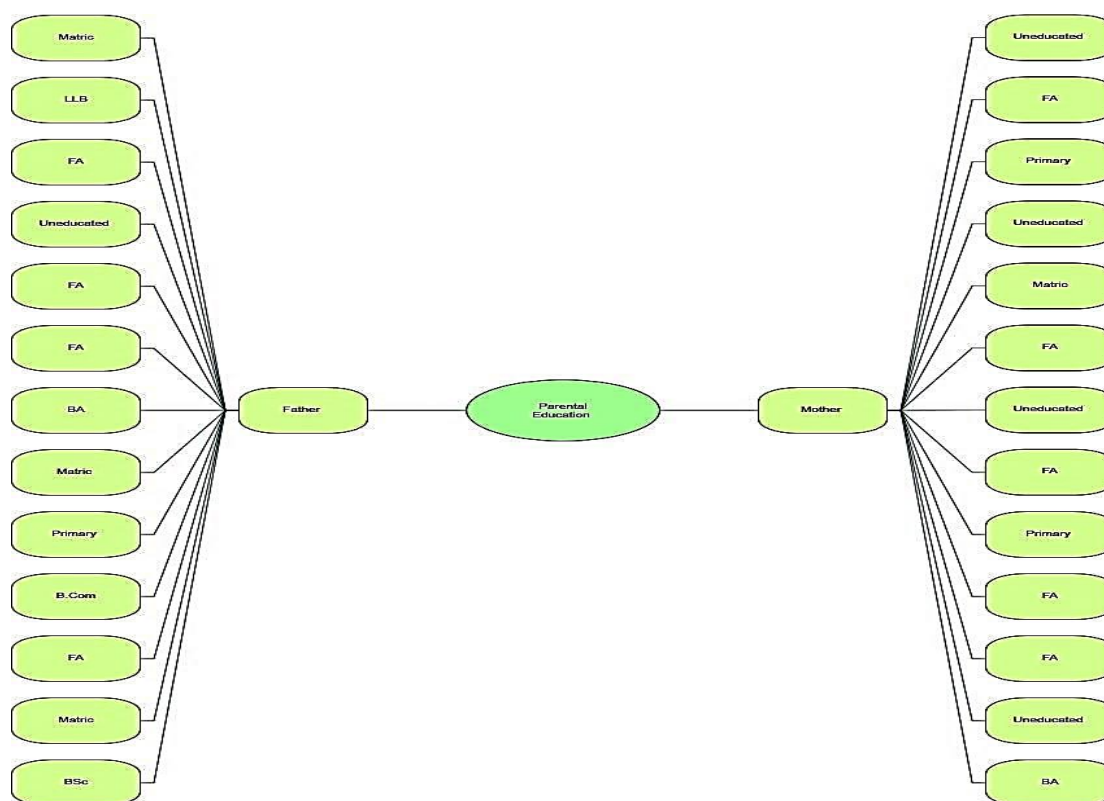


Figure 16: Education Level of the Parents of Anxious Students (NTU)

The noticeable thing is not even a single participant had highly qualified parents. Graduation is the highest degree held by their fathers; the majority of the mothers were not even graduates. Three of the participants had uneducated mothers. Participant 2, whose father was a graduate, remained away from his father. His father was working in Karachi while he used to live with his mother in Larkana who was a housewife. Both the parents of Participant 4 were uneducated. Participant 12 shared his experience, “*Mery cousins ke English mujh sy kafi behtar hy kion k unk father un sy esy words bolty*

*hain jo hamary gahr nahi boly jaaty.*” [My cousins are better than me in English because their father uses many words with them that are not used at my home.]

### 6. *Financial Status of parents*

Social classes are determined based on financial conditions. Every social class has its peculiar activities that influence the other layers of the life of an individual. Social class exerts an influence on your LL process as well. The financial condition of the research participants was determined with the help of Kuppuswamy’s scale. It is obvious from the table below that the majority of the participants belonged to the lower strata of the society.

*Table 10: Social Class of the Research Participants (NTU)*

<b>No</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Father’s Education</b>	<b>Father’s Occupation</b>	<b>Score on Kuppuswamy’s scale</b>	<b>Social Class as per the score</b>
1	Participant 1	Matriculation	Shopkeeper	13	Lower Middle
2	Participant 2	LLB	Banker	17	Lower Middle
3	Participant 3	Matriculation	Landowner	14	Lower Middle
4	Participant 4	Uneducated	Unemployed	1	Lower
5	Participant 5	FA	Fire Officer	11	Lower Middle
6	Participant 6	BA	Spare Part Business	15	Lower Middle
7	Participant 7	BA	Teacher	15	Lower Middle
8	Participant 8	Matriculation	Shop Keeper	14	Lower Middle
9	Participant 9	Under Matric	Workshop employee	12	Upper Lower
10	Participant 10	B.com	Property Dealer	22	Upper Middle
11	Participant 11	FA	Clerk	15	Lower Middle



12	Participant 12	Matriculation	(Died)	13	Lower
13	Participant 13	BSc	Ranger	16	Lower Middle

English is considered to be the language of the elite for several reasons. According to Gulzar (2009, p 1), English is the language of power as it is used by the bureaucracy and army officials, a legacy of the British. Elites are taught in English medium schools while government schools are for the middle and lower-middle strata of the society. The study has demonstrated that the majority of the anxious students had studied at government schools or unknown private schools. Two of the research participants talked about their financial status by saying that they work after university hours. They tagged their previous learning experiences as the reason for their poor language. Learner 1 referred to his learning experience in the following words, “*Mery parents ny 2 bar mera school badla. Main ny Austin Public School main shuru kiya phir mery parents ny socha k mujhy government school main daakhil kerwa dain shyed fee ke wajh sy. wahan mery liye to sub kuch he badal gaya syllabus b different tha perhaany ka tareeqa , student or teacher sub kuch he mukhtalif tha mera khayal hy yehi wajh hy k main parahi main peachy reh gaya.*” [My parents changed my school twice. I started my studies at Auston Public School, a private institute, then my parents decided to take me to a government school for reasons I do not know perhaps the fee. The change of school was not just a change of institute; rather it was just like everything under the sun changed for me. The syllabus was different, the teaching methodology was different, and above all the attitudes of the teachers and the students were different. I feel this is where my learning pace slowed down.]

#### 4.3.1.3. Exo System

The hierarchy chart below shows the presence of different factors thus:

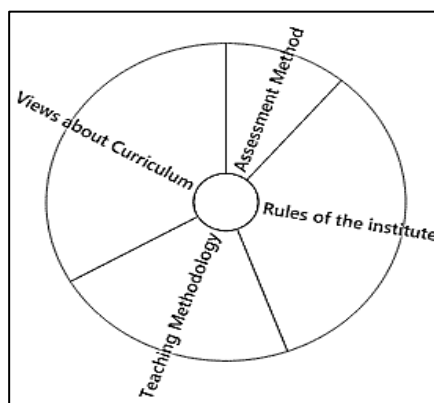


Figure 17: Anxiety Causing Factors at Exo-level (INTVW, NTU)

### 1. *Teaching Methodology*

The teaching methodology is perhaps the important factor that can increase or decrease the anxiety of language learners. Students have highlighted the issues they faced related to teaching. Out of all the mentioned factors, the most frequent one is the medium of instruction. The analysis of observation revealed that the teacher had used English throughout while the students put their queries in Urdu i.e., an indication of the fact that they are not comfortable with the language and cannot speak it. Most of the research participants recommended that the teacher should use Urdu along with English so that they may understand the concepts well. One of the participants said, “*Teacher ko chahye k wo lecture k end per Urdu main b explain kiya kerin taa k hum b wo smjh sakin jo kuch class main discuss howa.*” [The teacher should explain the basic concepts in Urdu at the end of the lecture so that we may have a better understanding of whatever was discussed in the class.]

### 2. *Views about Curriculum*

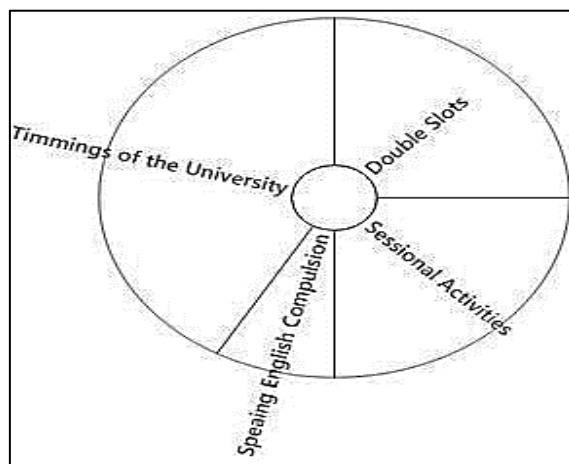
The findings of the study have verified an association between curriculum selection and classroom anxiety. The participants agreed that the course books contain only activities that promote reading and writing. The books neglected completely listening and speaking skills which are the real requirements of the job market. All the participants complained that they were taught with the grammar-translation method as the curriculum required only finding equivalents in Urdu. Moreover, they were never assessed for speaking or listening as it was not the requirement of the curriculum. One of the participants expressed his views by saying, “*Hamra nisab hamari parishani ka bias hy class main. Nursery say FSc tak hamin literature parhaya jata hy or hamin nahi pata hota hum kion ye stories, poems or essay parh rhay hain. Language skills per focus he nahi kiya jata.*” [our curriculum is responsible for our poor performance in English. From Nursery to Intermediate, we are taught literature without the proper guidance of why we are reading these stories, poems, or essays. Language skills were never focused so we could not develop.] Another participant endorsed the above-stated views in the following words, “*hamary nisaab main speaking skills per zor nahi hy. Hamin ye nahi sikhaaty k english main kesy sochty hain bal k hamin kehty hain k Urdu ke English dhondain. Main jub b english bolny ke koshish kerta hun, pehly Urdu main concept banata hun phir uski English dhondata hun. Is sub main itna time lag jata hy k hu*

*sochta he nahi k participate kerun.*” [our curriculum is not supportive of the development of speaking skills. We are not taught how to think in a language, rather we are taught how to find equivalents. Whenever we want to speak, first we develop the concept in Urdu then try to find its equivalents in English. It takes so much time that we leave the idea of class participation.]

A textbook was designed to teach the students at this level which included certain exercises and activities to help the students in promoting their writing and speaking. Several activities to promote writing skills were included till week 8 and from 9 to 16 speaking activities were included. Both types of activities were included to meet the requirement of the subject i.e., to write and communicate effectively.

### 3. *Rules of the Institute*

Four of the rules of the university as well as that of the classroom were highlighted by the research participants as reasons for their anxiety in language class. The graphical detail of the rules and their comparison is as under:



*Figure 18: Comparison of anxiety causing Rules (INTVW, NTU)*

The very first rule was that of timings of the university. The university trimming was from 8:30 to 4:40 and in between, they had a break of 50 minutes. The students were not habitual in taking classes for such long hours. Language class became a real problem for them because it was difficult to focus on a language that required active participation in the class to learn. The research participants suggested that the classes of English should be early in the morning when the students are fresh.

The second rule that caused a problem for the research participants was the double slot for English. Three of the participants reported double lectures as the reason

for their anxiety in language class. For a course of three credit hours, the lectures in English were divided as 2+1. This was a practice in the institute as all the classes of English followed the same pattern (timetable attached in Appendix H). The students found it difficult to listen to a foreign language for two hours continuously. They had lost their interest in the subject after 30 to 40 min; the rest of the lecture they attended just for the sake of attendance without learning anything. Participant 3 suggested that double slots should be avoided as “*Double class main hamara interest khatam ho jata hy.*” [we lose our interest in the double class.] Participant 4 found that LL can be a better experience if double slots are avoided. Participant 13 also confirmed that double lectures were problematic for him.

#### **4. *Sessional Activities***

In the university, the students are required to attempt papers for 70 marks, and the rest of the 30 marks are reserved for sessional activities where the teachers evaluate them; a pattern recommended by HEC Pakistan. The research participants thought that classroom activities with marks create anxiety, and they could not perform well in class. Participants 2, 9, and 10 were uncomfortable in the class because of sessional activities. Participant 2 expressed his concern over sessional activities in these words, “*Sessional Marks bohat irritating hain. Bazoqat possible nahi hota activity perform kerna or ye chez bohat irritate kerti hy.*” [Sessional marks are irritating. Sometimes it is not possible to perform the activity and we get anxious when we are not able to perform any of the activity.] Participant 9 suggested that sessional activities should not have been marked as making him anxious because of the fear of losing grades. In his words, “*Mujhy lgta hy sessional activities ke wajah sy merry marks cut jayen gy. I think agar grades kum hony ka dar na ho to main behtar perform ker skta hun.*” [I always fear losing marks in my sessional activities. I think I can perform better if classroom activities do not affect our grades.] Participant 10 on the other hand did not like sessional activities as he feared presenting in front of the class, and it is very difficult for me.

#### **5. *The compulsion of Speaking English***

The research participants were also uncomfortable with the compulsion of speaking English in the class by the teacher. The research participants feared in the class that they might be called by the teacher anytime to speak something out that they would

not be able to comply with. Participant 7 pointed out that he felt uncomfortable in the class because the teacher had made it a rule to talk in English.

#### 4.3.1.4. Macrosystem

At the macro systematic level, the data brought forward the following two themes:

1. Provincial Education System
2. Status of English Language

##### 1. *Provincial Education System*

Every province is independent in running its education system and district boards ensure the uniformity of the education system in the whole province. The curriculum is more or less the same in all the provinces, but the facilities and teaching methodologies vary from province to province. All four students from Sindh complained the teaching methodology and assessment method in Punjab is altogether different from that of Sindh. Participant 3 a highly anxious student expressed his views in the following words: the examination means the exam of your authority and reference. If you are a resourceful person, you need not study anything. In this race of power exhibition, everyone tries to find a reference instead of a book. There is no healthy competition in Sindh.” Another participant appreciated the education system of Punjab and accepted that they can't compete with the students of Punjab. Since they have already accepted the supremacy of the Punjabi students, they feel less confident in the class.

Ethnicity is belonging to a social group that has a cultural or national tradition. The major ethnic groups in Pakistan are Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtun, Baloch, Saraiki, and Muhajirs. These groups were generally formed based on the area as well as the language. Ethnic identity has an impact on second LL. The research has proved that ethnic identity negatively contributes to the second LL process (Trofimovich, 2015).

The research has proved that the ethnicity of the participants had an impact on their LL. Out of 13 highly anxious students, 3 students were Sindhi by ethnicity. They all agreed that the teaching methodology and assessment pattern in their area was very different from that of Punjab. The discrepancies in the systems lead to their anxiety in LL. One of the participants shared his views, “*Sindh ka education system Punjab sy different hy. Hum yahn pehli baar english sun rahy hain. Yahan k exam b different hain,*

*humain wahan book kholny ke ijazat hoti thee exam main an ye galat nhi smjha jata tha. Ub hamin lgta hy hum fail ho jayen gay is waajh sy hum her waqt class main parishan rehty hain.*” [In Sindh, we have a very different education system as compared to that of Punjab. We are attending a lecture in English for the very first time. The assessment method is also different. We were allowed to open books during the exams, and it was not considered a deception. Now we fear that we will fail the examination which is why we are always anxious in the class.]

Participant 4 who belonged to Pashtoon ethnicity also blamed his provincial education system for being weak in English. He shared his experience in the following words, “*Main ny Kohat k aik private school main parha hy lakin mery elaqy main English kahin b achi nahi parhai jaati. Teachers ya to Urdu main parhaaty hain ya pashto main. University aany sy pehly main ny kabhi English nhi suni kisi class main.*” [I have studied at a private school and college in Kohat, KPK. English is not taught well in my area. The teachers used to teach English either in Urdu or Pushto. I had no experience of listening to the English language in the class before coming to the university]”

The participants from Punjab did not express any such view about their ethnicity, however; they have referred to their rural areas to be the reason for their poor language. One of the participants said that English teachers in rural areas are not qualified so we do not get the opportunity to learn from the qualified teachers. Moreover, in rural areas, people even do not understand Urdu so it is pointless to speak English in such an environment. This scenario leads to poor LL. One of the participants expressed his anxiety in the words, “I never heard so much English in my whole life that my teacher uses in a single lecture.”

## **2. Status of English**

The research found that the students fear in the class because they think English learning is something indispensable. The status of English had forced them to learn it irrespective of their willingness. Two participants reported the status of English as the reason for anxiety in the class.

### 4.3.2. Analysis of the Data Obtained from Diaries (NTU)

The analysis of the data from diary writing, and subsequent interviews revealed that many factors cause anxiety at the graduate level in Pakistan. These factors belong to different domains and can be categorized into four levels of Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystem model.

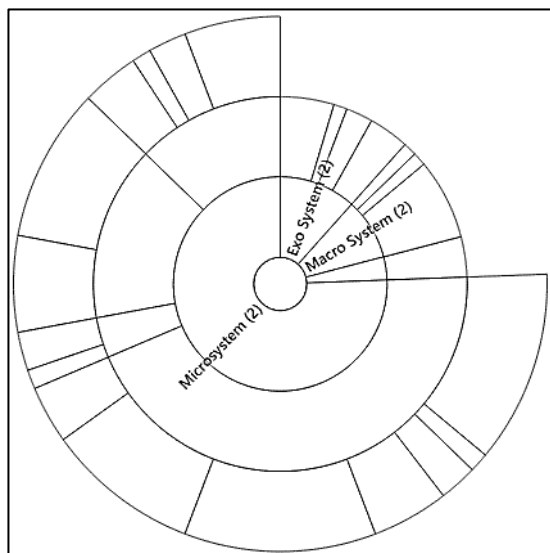


Figure 19: Comparative Analysis of Anxiety Causing Factors (Diaries, NTU)

#### 4.3.2.1. Micro System

The microsystem is the innermost system of the ecosystem and is related to the individual. The research findings demonstrated that micro-level factors abound as far as anxiety of the English language is concerned. The factors identified through diary writing and subsequent interviews are categorized as related to cognitive, affective, Linguistic, classroom environment, and Physical issues. The hierarchy chart below clearly indicates the proportion of different factors in language learning anxiety.

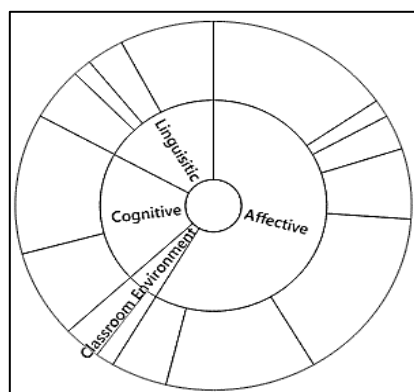


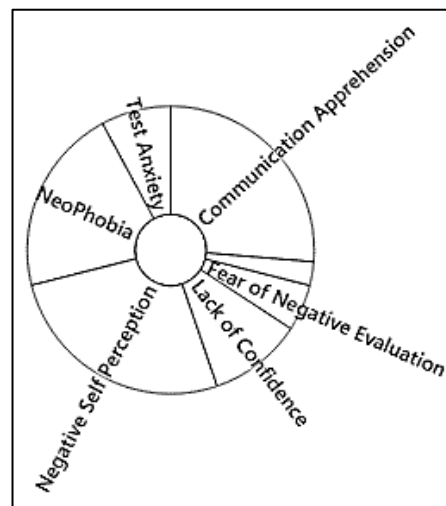
Figure 20: Comparison of Anxiety Causing Factors at Micro Level (Diaries, NTU)

## 1. Affective Factors

The hierarchy chart above clearly shows the high ratio of affective factors in anxiety-causing variables. The research participants reported the following affective factors:

- a. Communication Apprehension
- b. Negative Self Perception
- c. Neophobia
- d. Lack of Confidence
- e. Fear of Negative Evaluation
- f. Test Anxiety
- g. Fear of Foreign Language

The graph below shows the proportion of all these factors.



*Figure 21: Comparison of Anxiety Causing Factors at Affective Level (Diaries, NTU)*

a. **Communication Apprehension.** Communication Apprehension is a technical term for the fear of speaking. In the classroom context, it can be viewed as a fear of participation in classroom discussions and presentations. For the current research, communication apprehension is divided into two: speaking anxiety in sharing views in class, and the fear of public speaking in performing presentation-type activities.



b. ***Fear of Public Speaking.*** Fear of public speaking emerged as an important theme from the gathered data. 10 participants reported the phenomenon at sixteen different places. The participants reported that whenever the teacher called them to present in front of the class, they got anxious. The diagram below shows the frequency of the reported factor by different participants.

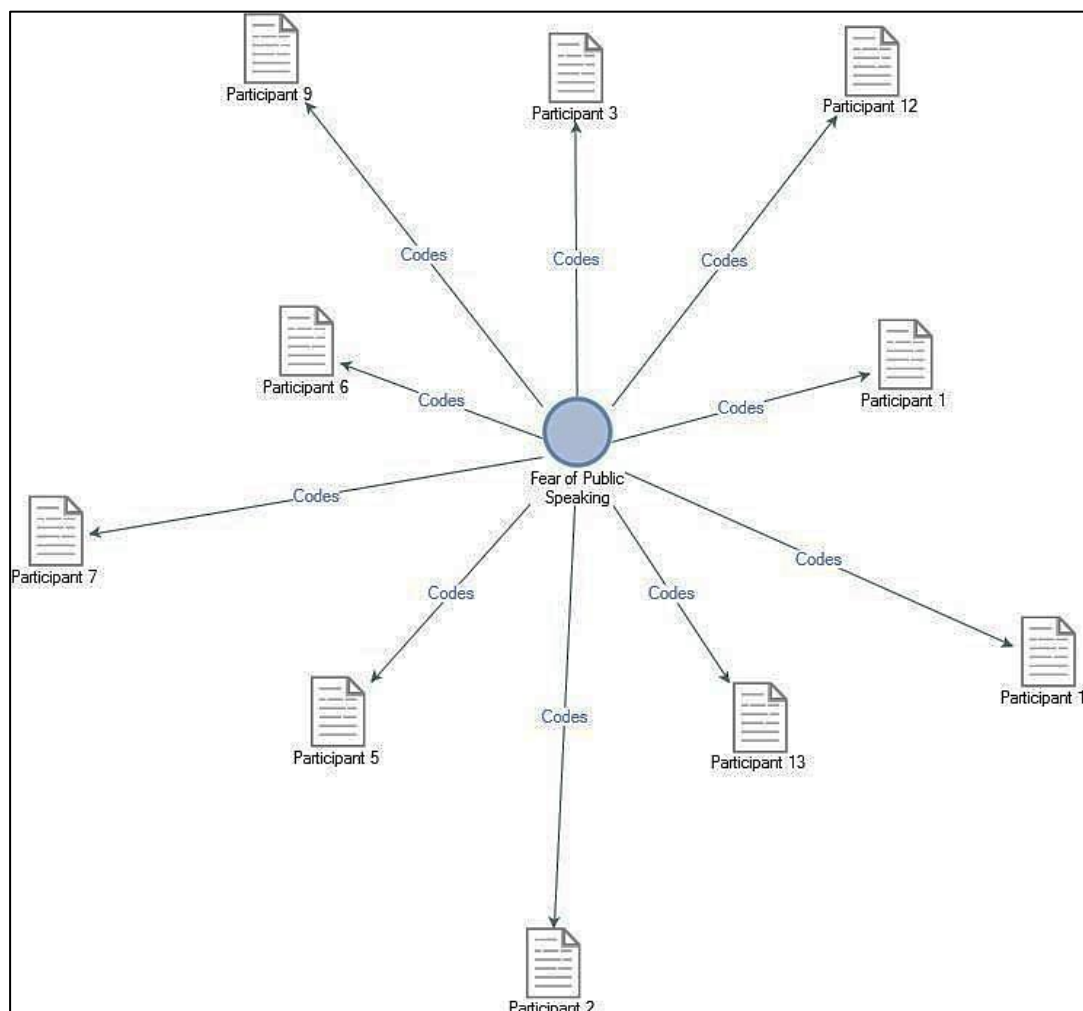


Figure 22: Demonstration of the Learners with Fear of Public Speaking (Diaries, NTU)

All the participants found themselves in trouble when the teacher called them in front of the class to present. Participant 13 reported at three different places that he felt uncomfortable with the activities for which the teacher called him in front of the class. Writing in his diary in the first place he said, “*It was difficult for me to present the task in front of the class when mam called me present the task.*” [It was difficult for me in today’s class to speak in front of the whole class.] At another place, he mentioned the activity of presentation as a reason for his anxiety. He exclaimed that he had felt very uncomfortable whenever the teacher called him to present the task. Finally, he

wrote and later confirmed in the interview that he felt comfortable with writing activity as compared to speaking. He mentioned, *“Easily written down the answers to the questions assigned by ma’am in the class. Cannot present the answers in front of class.”* [I can write down the answers to the questions, but it is difficult to present the same thing in front of the class.] The participants were comfortable with the activity, and they could perform that activity comfortably if the teacher had not called them in front of the whole class. When the teacher called them to come in front of the class, the whole of their attention diverted to the management of the self instead of the activity assigned. Participant 3 talked about the same twice in his comments, *“When ma’am call to share point of view in front of students, I do not understand what to say.”* [I was afraid when the teacher asked me to share my point of view in front of the whole class.] At another point, he said, *“The teacher asked to come in front of class and solve punctuation. I was confused how I will come in front.”* [In today’s class the teacher asked everyone to come in front of the class and do punctuation. I was very confused and nervous about how I would manage to come in front of the class.] Participant 2 felt the same as he expressed that he forgot everything because of confusion when the teacher called him in front of the class as he was unable to form any idea about the topic.

Participant 9 also stated elaborately when he said that it was very difficult for him to come in front of the class for the presentation. He could not understand what the teacher had said and at the same time, he was unable to perform in front of the class. Participant 5 also explained his situation in depth by saying that he felt himself in trouble when the teacher called him in front of the class to perform any task. His whole body began to shiver, and he felt as if everything was horrifying him.

c. ***Speaking Anxiety.*** Speaking anxiety for the current research means anxiety in sharing ideas or in taking part in a second LL classroom. Linguistically competent Students feel comfortable in sharing their ideas with their classmates. They also volunteer themselves for speaking activities. Four participants of the research however mentioned that they do not feel comfortable with the speaking activities, and they never volunteered themselves for activities. Participant 9 accepted that he felt difficulty in speaking English whereas Participant 5 said that he was comfortable when the teacher delivered the lecture.

Participant 7 described his state in elaboration when he said, “Whenever I try to speak English my tongue does not support me. Sometimes the words in my mind refuse to be pronounced by my tongue due to the fear of the language.” Participant 13 was so overwhelmed with the English language that he felt uncomfortable even when he was recording the presentation alone at home. He expressed his feelings at the time of the presentation in the following words, “*Today I send my first presentation on MS Teams. I was alone in the room but I was not relax in speaking English.*” [Today I uploaded my first presentation on MS Teams. Though I was alone while making the video even then I felt uncomfortable speaking English.]

d. **Negative Self Perception.** Learners’ perceptions about themselves and their linguistic competence had such a strong impact on their LL that ten out of thirteen participants reported it twenty-two times to be the probable reason for their anxiety in the class.

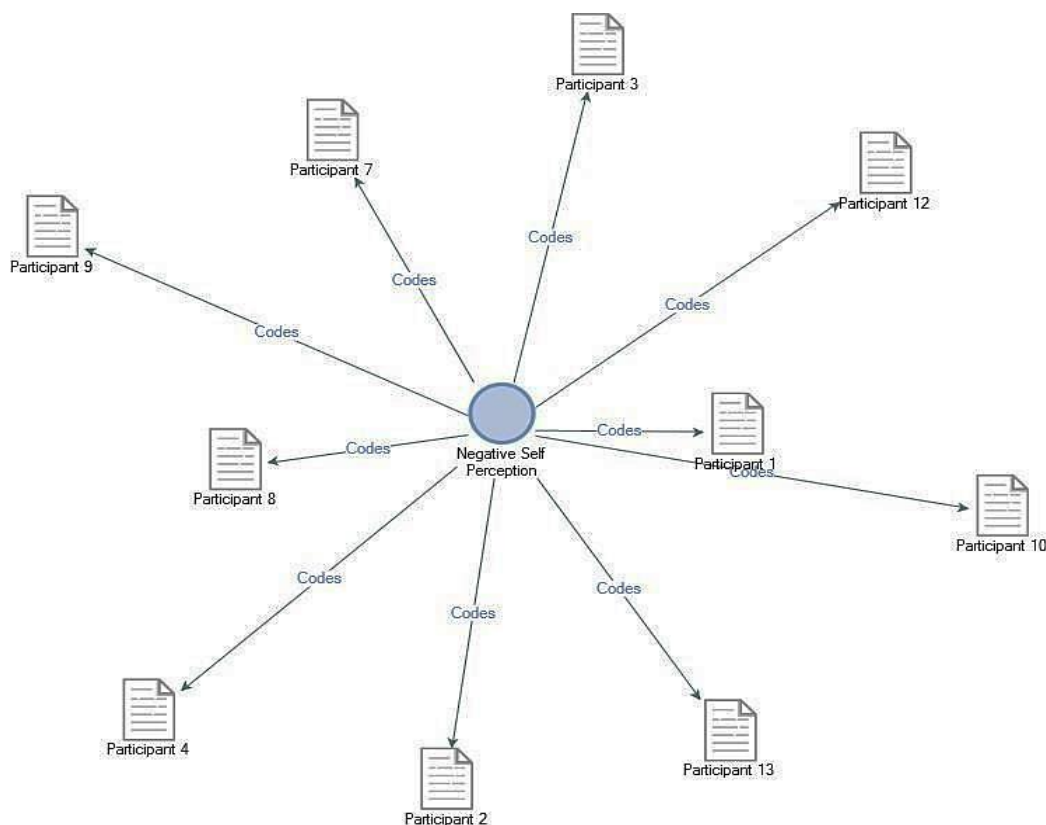


Figure 23: Demonstration of the Learners with Negative Self-Perception (Diaries, NTU)

The attainment of linguistic competence was out of the question for such learners. They had developed different perceptions about different language skills and had tuned their mind accordingly. Such an immutable approach towards LL repels their

development. Perception about the achievement of linguistic competence manifests itself in different forms. Some learners discerned English LL to be impossible for them; others figured out one or two of the skills as unwinnable. Participant 4 confessed that English is a foreign language, so it is difficult for us.

Reading that is highly recommended for language development is no more than a nightmare with onerous and profound vocabulary words. Participant 6 perceived that he had some problem with confidence, so he could never perform in a speaking activity. Participants 7 and 8 were of the view that speaking is very difficult, and they did not think he could ever speak without preparation. Participant 9 expressed his negative views about himself by saying that he had realized the importance of the English language, but he was sure he couldn't master it. Since he had realized that he didn't have confidence, therefore, he was sure he couldn't attain mastery in it.

e. **Neophobia.** Learning something new throws a challenge on the launderers as it forces them to come out of their comfort zone. According to APA, Neophobia is a persistent and irrational fear of anything new, unfamiliar, and change. Eight participants reported at thirteen different places that they get anxious whenever they learn anything that they had not learned earlier on. The figure below shows the ratio of codes by different participants.

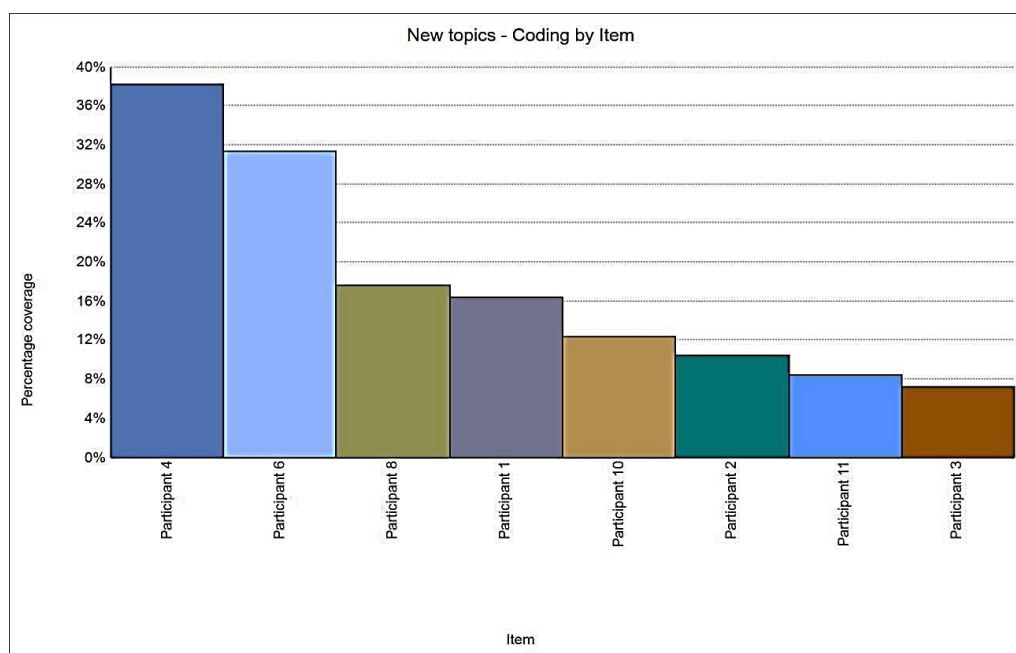


Figure 24: Comparison of the Anxious Participants with New Topic (Diaries, NTU)

From the above graph, it is clear that the highest percentage was taken up by participant 4. He reported at three different points that the reason for his anxiety was a new learning experience. At the first point, he found the listening activity problematic as it was a new one. He said, *“In this lecture, we learn about listening and hearing. We get a lot of information about it but I disable to understand listening as this was first time. Language of the speaker was also not making sense.”* [In today’s class the teacher assigned us a listening task. It was a difficult task as I was doing such a type of activity for the very first time. Moreover, the accent of the native speaker was very difficult to comprehend.] At the second point, he was uncomfortable because the teacher used to deliver the whole lecture in English, and it was something new for him. In his words, *“As it is first time of taking English lectures, id did not understand the conversation used by the teacher when she fluently delivered the lecture.”* [Since I am taking the whole lecture in English for the very first time, I need to focus on each and every word to make sense of the things and it is quite impossible to understand with such a speed.] At the third point, he expressed that he was comfortable with the activity of making sentences with idioms because he had already performed such activity at an intermediate level. He said, *“In this lecture, we learned about idioms, and it was very easy for all of us because we are very used to it.”* [Today’s topic “Idioms” was quite easy for me, as I have already done such activity during my intermediate.]

Participant 1 said that he was uncomfortable in the class because of the new activity of reading; however, the activity of presentation was not anxiety-causing as he was familiar with it. In his words, *“I was uncomfortable in today’s class when the teacher asked me to read out the paragraph from the text. I never had a previous experience of reading so I cannot read in front of the class”* and then at another place, *“I feel good and comfortable when I present something that I have learned by heart.”* Participant 10 on the other hand felt quite the opposite; comfortable with reading and uncomfortable with presentation as it was new for him. In his words, *“In today’s class, the task assigned to us was reading. I have been doing this task since my childhood, so I did not feel any problem”* At another point, *“As it was for the very first time, so I was uncomfortable in my presentation.”*

The second prominent participant in the graph is Participant 6 who had reported anxiety two times when performing a new activity. At one point, he was uncomfortable with listening activity and at another, reading comprehension posed a problem for him.

First, he said, “*The teacher assigned us the task of listening to an audio file and making a précis of that. I feel very uncomfortable as it was a new task for me*” and at the second point, “*Today we learned about reading comprehension. It was a new topic so I could not understand it. As I do not have the confidence to ask the teacher, so I asked my friends after the class. The discussion with the friends clarified a number of my concepts.*” Participants 2 and 3 felt uncomfortable with writing activities only because it was a new experience for them. Participant 2 said, “*Aj ke class main teacher ny precis dee or mujhy bilkul acha nhi lag aaj ke class main. Ye merry liye mushkil tha kion k ye aik nae chez thee.*” [I didn’t feel good in today’s class because the teacher assigned the task of writing a précis. It was very difficult for me to write as the concept of précis was a novel one.] On the other hand, participant 3 expressed in these words, “*It was difficult to write on new things for me.*” [It was very difficult for me to write on a concept that is completely new to me.] Participant 8 was uncomfortable in the class because of the new topic of adverbs. So, from the statements of the participants, it is clear that the problem was not with the type of activity but with the novel experience.

**f. Lack of Confidence.** According to APA, lack of confidence is a belief that one is not able to successfully meet the demands of a task. Though it is difficult to brush up on a lack of confidence, however, some occurrences such as feeling guilty for nothing, not speaking up in class, fear of judgment, and negative self-perception can indicate the severity of the problem. For the current research, the participants reported Negative self-perception, problems in asking others, and fear of judgment as possible reasons for their anxiety in language class.

Another symptom that indicates a lack of confidence is a ‘Problem asking the others’ about the confusion. Four participants reported problems in asking others at six points. The figure below shows their report ratio.

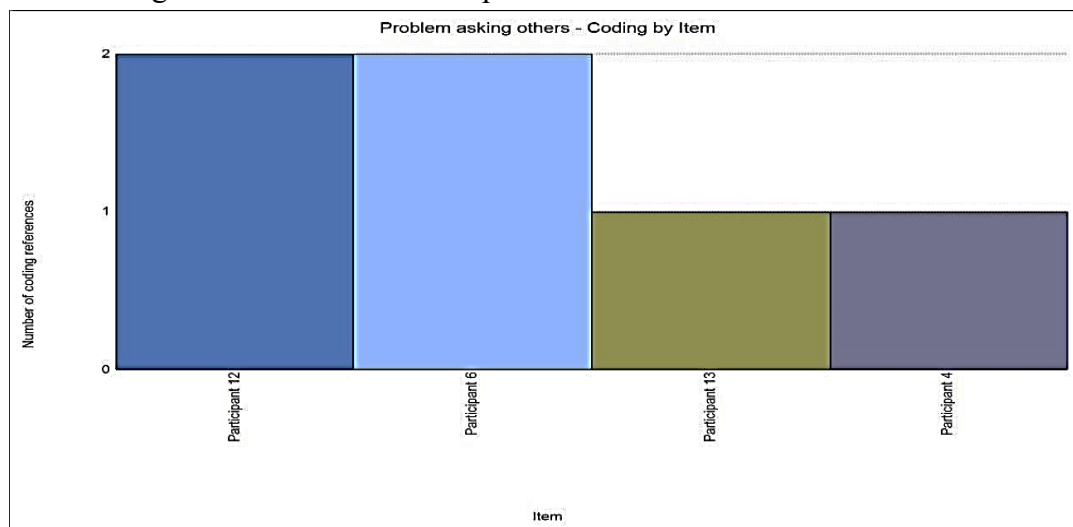


Figure 25: Comparison of the Participants with Problem in Asking Others (Diaries, NTU)

Participant 12 said that he was very uncomfortable when he was unable to understand any of the concepts. Even with this bad feeling, he was unable to develop the confidence to ask the teacher about the confusing things. Again, he said when he was talking about his classroom experience, *“I have confusion in preposition, but I cannot ask her. I clear concepts on asking by my class fellows.”* [I had some confusion in the usage of prepositions, but I could not ask the teacher. When my classmates asked the teacher, my concepts got better.] Participant 6 reported two times that he did not have the confidence to ask the teacher about the confusion in the topic that was taught. He felt hesitation in asking for something from the teacher in front of the whole class. At another point, he talked about the topic of reading comprehension where he could not understand many points, but the lack of confidence prevented him from asking the teacher. He said, *“Today we learnt Reading comprehension. I was not understood it because it was new for me. After class I had discussed it with my friends and it was clear.”* [Today we learned about reading comprehension. It was a new topic so I could not understand it. As I did not have the confidence to ask the teacher, so I asked my friends after the class. The discussion with the friends clarified a number of my concepts.] Two other participants (6 and 13) have reported problems in asking the teacher. Both have shared their inability to ask the teacher about their confusion about the topics that were taught. Participant 13 said, *“some confusion in the usage of*

*punctuation like square brackets and comma but not ask the teacher for no confidence”* [I had some confusion in the usage of punctuation, but I could not ask the teacher because of the lack of confidence.] On the other hand, participant 6 said, *“In the topic of “the difference between American and British English”, I had many problems, but I could not ask the teacher because of the lack of confidence.”*

**g. Fear of Negative Evaluation.** The third factor related to lack of confidence was ‘fear of judgment’. Participants 13 and 7 reported the fear of judgment by their peers as a reason for being worried in the class. Participant 13 shared his feeling of nervousness in performing the activities and linked this nervousness with the fear of judgment by his peers. Participant 7 on the other hand shared his experience by saying that he preferred to be quiet because of the fear of being laughed at by his class fellows. What the people will think about him proved the greatest hindrance in English LL.

**h. Test Anxiety.** Physical symptoms and emotional reactions that interfere with one’s performance of doing well in the exam mark test anxiety. This test anxiety can be because of varied reasons. Three of the research participants reported test anxiety as a reason for their being anxious in class. Participant 2 remained worried in language class because he was not prepared for the quiz. The teacher had already told them that they could have a surprise quiz so they should be ready. Participant 2 was not studying on a regular basis, so he got worried when the teacher announced the quiz. Participant 8 on the other hand found himself in trouble because it was the first quiz as well as he was not prepared. He said that he couldn’t perform well in the first quiz though he was prepared well for that. He mentioned it again when he talked about his end-term exam, in these words, *“Aj ka paper end term main mera khayal tha main achy number lay loun ga lakin precis and British and American English waly sawal achy nahi howy.”* [Today was the end-term paper of English. I thought that I would get good marks but I could not perform.] Participant 10, however, experienced a permanent and different type of anxiety. He remained anxious throughout, as he had developed the fear of failing the exam in English. He shares his state in the following words, *“Maam mujhy fail hony ka dar per gaya hy is liye main class main parishan rehta hun.”* [I fear that I will fail in the exam which is why I always remain worried in the class.]

**i. Fear of Foreign Language.** Psychologists use the term xenoglossophobia to refer to the feeling of nervousness and apprehension in learning or using a foreign language. Participant 13 found himself in trouble because of the fear



of a foreign language. He described his state in detail in the following words, “*I focused on language and accidentally I write down the answers of the other passage which was not the given task. Passage 13 was given by Ma’am and I wrote the answers of passage 1. Situation was embarrass*”. [Sometimes I cannot understand what the teacher is saying only because of the fear of the language. I was so obsessed with the idea of understanding the language that I could not remember the number of paragraphs assigned as homework. I solved paragraph 13 while the teacher had assigned paragraph 2. The situation was embarrassing.]

**j. *Fear of Negative Evaluation.*** What would the teacher think of me? is a fear strong enough to curtail the learning process. The feedback or the judgment of the teacher is very important in the LL classroom as this is the only place available for the students to develop confidence. Participant 6 pointed out that the feedback from the teacher had lowered his speaking confidence. He thought that the sword of the teacher’s evaluation was hanging over his head always and as a result, he was not able to perform well in the class. From his personal experience, he gathered that the teacher should create a facilitating environment. He said, “*The teacher should not highlight students’ mistakes this is why they may develop confidence.*” [The teacher should not point out the mistakes of the students so that they may develop their confidence in the English language.]

## **2. *Cognitive Factors***

The second important factor that is responsible for the anxiety of the students is cognitive. In cognitive factors, the following three sub-factors were found:

- a. Lack of vocabulary
- b. Lack of knowledge

The hierarchy chart below clearly shows the ratio of these three factors.

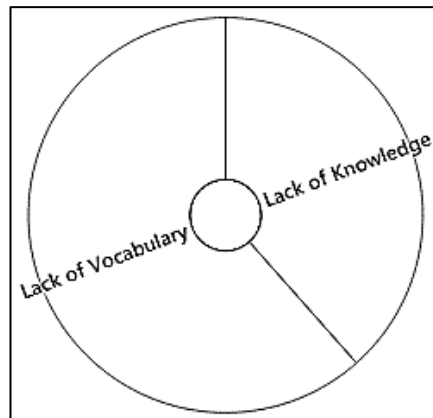


Figure 26: Comparison of Anxiety Causing Factors at Cognitive Level (Diaries, NTU)

a. **Lack of Vocabulary.** The most prominent of the cognitive factors is the lack of vocabulary. The participants of the research found themselves in trouble because of a lack of vocabulary. Eight participants mentioned fourteen times that they felt helpless because of a lack of vocabulary words. The bar chart below shows the ratio of reports by different participants.

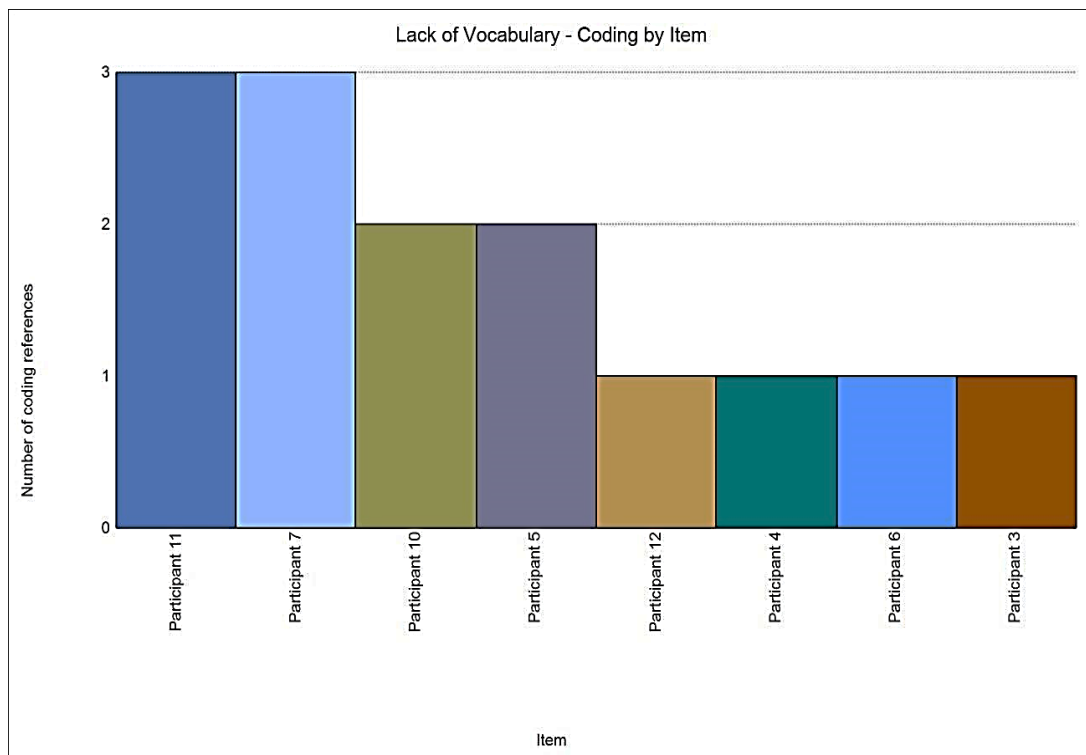


Figure 27: Comparison of the Anxious Participants with Lack of Vocabulary (Diaries, NTU)

Participants 7 and 11 reported three times each, Participants 5 and 10 two times each, and the rest of the participants reported once only. The reasons behind the problem reported by participants are divided into two types: lack of confidence in terms of vocabulary; and the use of difficult vocabulary words by the teacher. Participant 7 mentioned both as reasons for his vocabulary-related anxiety. The lack of confidence is visible from the following two comments: *“My vocabulary is not good that is why I do not feel comfortable in the class”* and *“I feel I am a loser in language class. I am shy but in a language class, the real problem is the lack of vocabulary words.”* In the third comment he talked in detail about his problem he said that along with confidence, another major problem is that of lack of vocabulary. He was able to understand when the teacher had used simple words but when it came to difficult or new words, he got tense. Moreover, whenever he tried to read a book, he abandoned reading after one or two pages because of the lack of vocabulary.

The same two factors were reported by Participant 11 as well. He talked more about the use of difficult vocabulary words by the teacher but in the third comment, he related this problem with his lack of confidence in asking about his problem. In the first two comments, he said that he was uncomfortable in the class because of the difficult words used by the teacher, and in the third one, he shared his experience thus, *“Today lesson was on gender discrimination. There were many words that were new for me. But I couldn’t ask the teacher to clarify those words.”* [Today’s lesson was gender discrimination. There were a lot of difficult words and concepts that were not clear, but I could not muster up the courage to ask the teacher.]

The rest of the research participants mentioned the use of difficult vocabulary words by the teacher as a reason for anxiety in the class. Participant 3, however, came up with a different comment when he found himself in trouble as he was unable to participate in class because of a lack of vocabulary. He talked about his issue thus: *“I do not have words because of this I could not express my point of view.”* [I was unable to express my point of view in front of the class because of the lack of vocabulary.]

b. **Lack of Knowledge.** The second important cognitive factor mentioned by the research participants is ‘lack of knowledge. Five participants reported at six points that they felt uncomfortable because of the lack of knowledge. The bar chart below shows the ratio of the report by different participants.

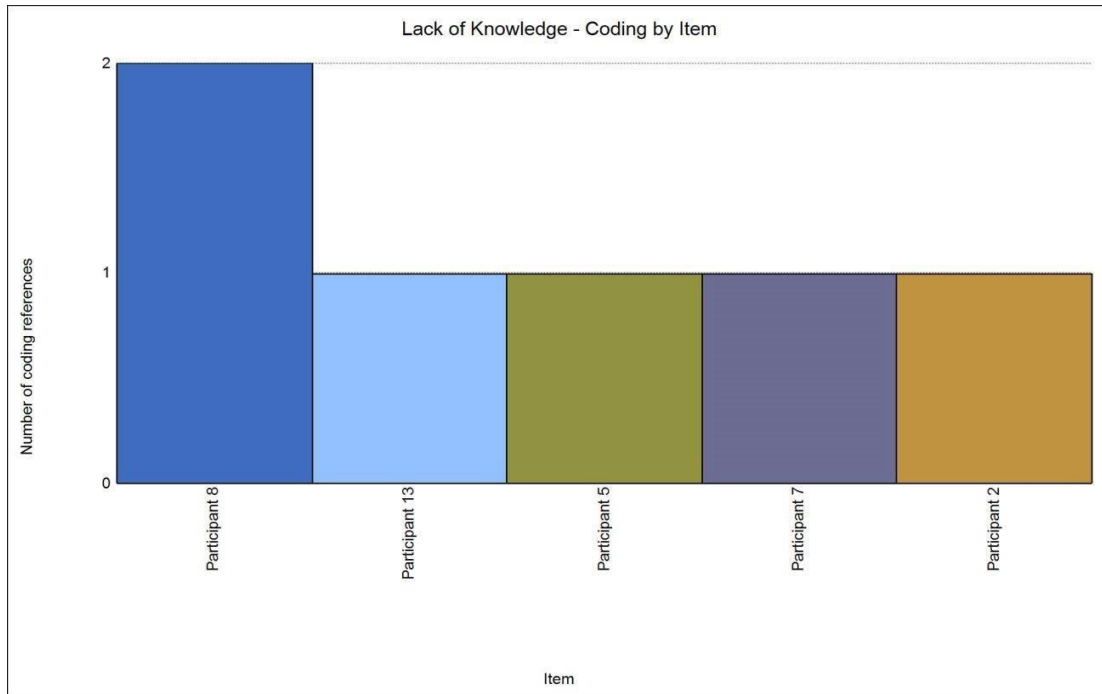


Figure 28: Comparison of the Anxious Participants with Lack of Knowledge (Diaries, NTU)

Participant 8 mentioned two times that he did not have sufficient knowledge of certain constructs for that reason he felt uncomfortable in the class. In the first place he said that he did not know how to construct sentences therefore whenever he came across such activities, he was anxious. The same issue is reported by Participant 7 as well when he said, *“When I try to speak English, sometimes I do not have words and when I have words, I cannot make sentences.”* [ Whenever I try to speak English, I cannot make sentences. I form concepts and sometimes get words too, but I cannot put those words into a sentence.] In the second place, he expressed his anxiety because of the lack of command of reading skills. He said, *“Whenever I try to read something out, things do not make sense. I do not know how to read effectively. This is the reason I cannot perform well in many activities.”*

Another problem mentioned by the participants is the lack of ideas. Participant 13 said that he felt uncomfortable in the class as he did not have ideas to convey. He talked elaborately about it in these words, *“I was unable to wrote down the tings dectated by Maam to write because of knowledge. In writing not only language but*

*ideas too needed which I had not*” [I was unable to write down what the teacher was expecting because of the lack of knowledge. I think for writing we not only need language of expression but also the ideas to convey. Ideas were missing in my case.] Participant 2 talked about the same issue thus, “*Jub teacher mujhy class k saamny bulaati hain to main parishan ho jata hun or mujhy smjh nhi aati k kiya kahun.*” [When the teacher calls me in front of the class, I do not know what to say. I feel uncomfortable as I cannot form any idea about the topic.]

### 3. *Linguistic Factors*

Linguistic issues can be classed into phonological, lexical, syntactic, or semantic. In the current research, the research participants reported phonological and syntactic problems as reasons for their anxiety in class. The difference of accent belongs to phonological issues whereas grammatical rules can be taken as a form of syntactic forms.

The ratio of these problems is clear in the hierarchy chart below.

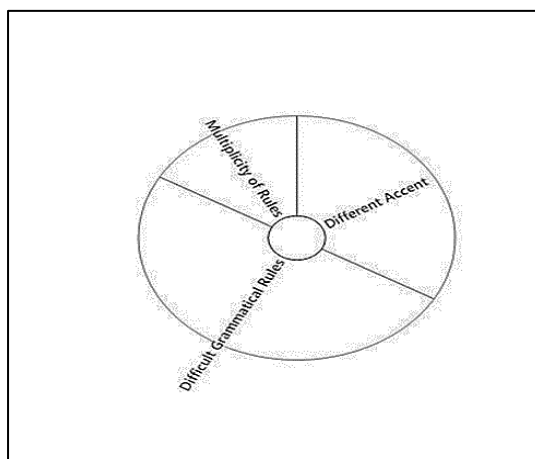


Figure 29: Comparison of Anxiety Causing Factors at Linguistic Level (Diaries, NTU)

In the syntactic domain, two types of issues were reported by the research participants: Difficult grammatical rules and multiplicity of rules.

a. **Difficult Grammatical Rules.** Three participants of the research found themselves in trouble because of the difficult rules of LL. Grammar was difficult for Participant 1 as he used the term ‘nightmare’ for grammar. He said, “*Mujhy Workbook sy problem hy, is main bohat zayada grammar hy jis sy mujhy der lagta hy. [I am not satisfied with the workbook. There is so much given to the grammar and that is a*

*nightmare for me.]* Participant 4 did not have a good experience of grammar learning therefore he was anxious. He expressed his concern in the following words, *“I have no any previous knowledge about grammar is functional English, we have focus grammar not”* [In functional English, there is a lot of grammar; I have no previous knowledge of grammar that is why I feel uncomfortable in the class.] The third participant had formed a negative perception about the grammar and for this reason, he was uncomfortable in the class. He talked about his issue with grammar in these words, *“I am not good at grammar and there is so much grammar in functional English that is why I feel uncomfortable in the class.”*

b. ***The Multiplicity of Language Rules.*** Another syntactic issue faced by the participants was the multiplicity of rules. Participants were uncomfortable with so many rules of grammar to master the language. They were of the view that if we can speak Urdu well without any knowledge of rules, why not English? Participant 9 has expressed his concern with the rules by saying that because of the multiplicity of language rules, he was unable to master the language and he also admitted that there were so many rules that he wasn't comfortable with.

c. ***Incomprehensible Native Accent.*** The accent is a distinctive way of pronouncing a language that is specific to an area. The English language has approximately 160 different accents of native speakers in the world. Nonnative speakers have their distinct accents marked by the impact of their first language. Since the students were receiving their input in non-native accents; native accents posed problems for them. Participants 4 and 12 expressed that they felt uncomfortable when the teacher played audio files of the native speakers for listening activities. Participant 4 was unable to understand the words spoken by the native speakers. He could make sense of the words of his teacher very easily, but the native accent was incomprehensible. Participant 12 expressed his apprehension in the following words, *“Today we gave listening test that was difficult for doing the first time. The way English person was speaking was very difficult and I was not understanding.”* [In today's class the teacher assigned us a listening task. It was a difficult task as I was doing such a type of activity for the very first time. Moreover, the accent of the native speaker was very difficult to comprehend.]

#### 4.3.2.2. Meso System

As already mentioned, the meso-system forms the second layer of the ecosystem. Whatever an organism receives in the meso, indirectly affects its microsystem. The research participants of Fall-20 reported the following factor of the mesosystem to be responsible for their anxiety in the class:

##### 1. *Previous LL Experience*

The research participants (1, 4, and 10) reported that they felt uncomfortable in the present class because of their previous LL experience. Participants mentioned the following three different problems related to previous LL classes:

- a. Impact of previously learned topics
- b. Different Curriculums and Assessments
- c. Different environment assessment

Participant 1 said he was uncomfortable in the class when the teacher asked him to read out the paragraph. The reason for being worried was the lack of experience in doing this activity therefore, he did not know how to do it. Participant 4 however pointed out the same issue but in a different way. He had learned the topic differently but the teacher at the university level was presenting some different aspects of the same. The previously learned concept was creating hindrance and the participant faced a problem similar to inter-language fossilization. Participant 4 talked about the issue in these words, *“In today’s class maam delivered a brief lecture on adverb and its types. This topic is very difficult because we not understand better in lower class.”* [Today I learned about adverbs which was a really difficult topic to understand. The topic was difficult because, in my previous classes, I had learned it differently and at a very basic level.]

Another issue highlighted by the participants from their previous language experience was the difference in curriculum and teaching methodology. Until intermediate, the participants had learned through the grammar-translation method and the curriculum was based on literature. Learning functional English was an entirely new experience for them. Participant 4 talked about his state in these words, *“there is a lot of grammar. I have no any basic idea of English language so this was main reason of being weak in English. Even I have no any previous knowledge about grammar is*

*functional English.*” [In functional English, there is a lot of grammar; I have no previous knowledge of grammar which is why I feel uncomfortable in the class.] On the other hand, participant 10 said, “*Matric or FSc dono main syllabus ka pata hota tha tou ratta laga lety thy. Ub pata b nahi hota k kiya ratta lagana hy is liye main parishan rehta hun k kesy paper kerun ga.*” [I used to cram in my matriculation and FSc. as there was a prescribed syllabus. Now, I do not know what to cram so I am anxious about how I will be able to attempt my paper.]

The difference in the learning culture of the school/college and university posed a problem for the learners. Participant 4 expressed his concern with previous experience in these words, “*As I have come from a village where we used to study in Urdu medium. We did not get the chance to improve the English language at school and college. We used the local languages during the class activities. When I come here, the environment is different.*” [I have come from a village, and I have learned the subject of English in our local language. I did not get an opportunity to improve my English anywhere during my school and college days. When I came here, the environment was different, so I got stressed whenever I came to the class.]

#### 4.3.2.3. Exo System

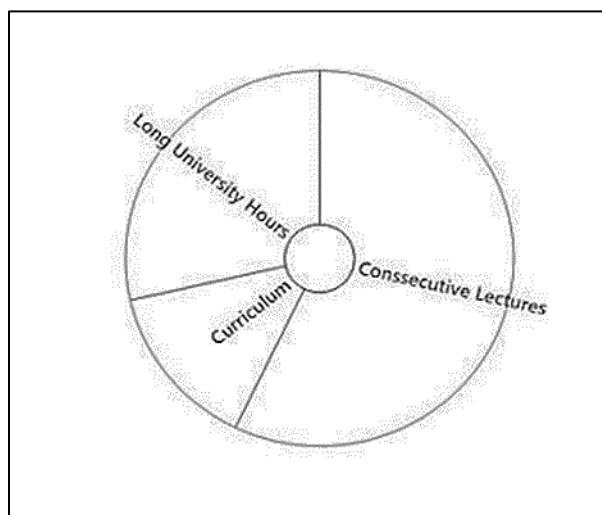


Figure 30: Comparison of Anxiety Causing Factors at Exo-System Level (Diaries, NTU)



The exosystem is the third layer of an ecosystem that does not contain the developing person. In this layer, the participants reported three factors to be responsible for anxiety in the class. The names of and the ratio of the factors are in the hierarchy chart below.

### **1. *The Rule of Consecutive Lectures***

The research participants reported consecutive lectures as a reason for their anxiety in the class. The observance of the university timetable revealed that teachers preferred to have a 2+1 division for a three-credit hours course. They had consecutive lectures in other subjects too but in a language class, it posed serious problems for the students. Lectures were delivered in English which required the students to be fully attentive to understand completely. It was difficult for the students to concentrate for two hours continuously. Participants 1, 5, 6, and 12 found themselves in trouble because of consecutive lectures. Participant 1 said that he felt tired and bored in consecutive lectures and his mind started to waver after some time. Participant 5 expressed his concern by saying that in consecutive classes, he has always felt uncomfortable as it was very boring to listen to a foreign language for two hours continuously.

### **2. *Long University Hours***

The students have also reported that long hours at university make them tired and as a result, it was difficult for them to concentrate in class. The timings of the university is from 8:30 to 4:40 and taking classes for such long hours is difficult for the students. Participants 1 and 5 were in trouble because of the university hours as participant 1 found the timings of the university from 8:30 to 4:40 to be too long for him. He felt tired and whenever he attended English class after three or four lectures, he lost interest. On the other hand, participant 5 mentioned the timing of the lecture along with the long hours of the university. He said, *“Today we had consecutive classes from 8:30 to 4:40. I attended all the classes, and the last lecture was that of functional English. I was so tired that I could not focus on the words of the teacher.”*

### **3. *Curriculum***

Participant 1 reported curriculum to be the reason for his anxiety in the class. He was uncomfortable with grammar and the curriculum of functional English contained nothing but grammar. He expressed his concern by saying that he wasn't

satisfied with the workbook in other words with the syllabus. There was so much given to the grammar and that is a nightmare for him.

#### 4.3.2.4. Macro System

Macro-level, the outer layer of the ecosystem finds the effect of overarching systems on the microsystem. For the macro level, the research participants reported the following factors to be responsible for their anxiety in the class:

1. Online classes because of the Pandemic
2. Importance of English as an international language
3. Lack of English-speaking environment
4. Rural background

##### 1. *Online classes*

The pandemic of COVID-19 affected lives in multiple ways. Health, education, finance, or any other field of human life suffered because of Covid-19. Education in general and LL, in particular, are affected by the circumstances as Covid-19 curtailed social interaction and language is a social phenomenon. Six participants mentioned at eight different places that they did not feel comfortable in a language class in the absence of physical classes. Participant 8 said, “*Main ny acha perform ker lena tha agar physical classes hotin. Online classes ke wajh sy hamin bohat saary masly howy or bohat confusion hui.*” [I could have performed well if I had attended lectures on campus. Online classes have contributed a lot to my confusion and anxiety.]

Another factor that contributed to their anxiety was the ruin of their planning because of online classes. They had planned to improve their language by interacting with the teacher on a regular basis but they could not because of COVID-19. Participant 11 expressed it in these words, “*I know my English is weak so I decided to visit the teacher on daily basis after my class but because of lockdown I could not do so.*”

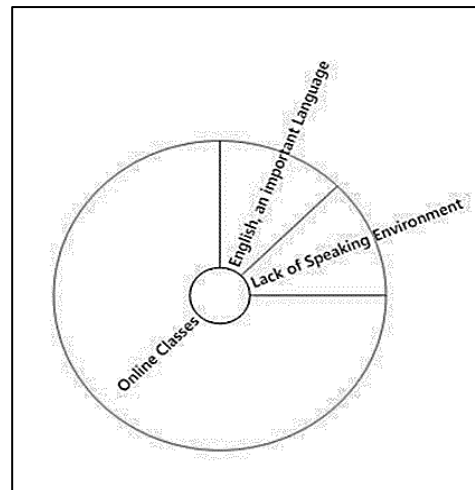


Figure 31: Comparison of the Issues in Online Classes (Diaries, NTU)

The highest frequency factor that was reported by all the participants was ‘poor internet connection’. Pakistan is a third-world country that is not advanced in terms of technology therefore internet facilities are not up to the mark. E-learning is successful in advanced countries where good internet facilities are available with affordable latest devices. In Pakistan, mobile devices and smartphones are expensive and internet connection is poor. Bad devices with slow internet connections made it difficult for the students to focus in online classes. All eight participants reported that they could not complete the activities because of poor internet connection, however, participant 3 discussed it in detail in these words, *“Because of poor internet signals I was uncomfortable. Teacher assigned the task of video and because of internet, I was unable to watch. In the whole class, I am nervous what I will say if the teacher ask.”* [I felt uncomfortable in today’s class because of connectivity issues. The teacher assigned the task of watching the video, but the poor internet connection obstructed my activity. I remained nervous in the whole class about what would happen if the teacher inquired me about the task.] Again, at another point, he discussed his issue in these words, *“Today, me and my partner presented ee. It was difficult because I am weak in writing. Combined activities because of poor signals made it more difficult.”* [In today’s class I and my partner presented a dialog. It was a bit difficult to write down a dialog because my writing was not good. The presentation with a partner in an online class was even more difficult because of poor signals.]

### 1. *English as an international language*

Learning English is not a luxury or status symbol reserved for the elite but it has become a language of everyday life. To succeed in life, it is compulsory to learn English. To get an education, to get a job, to advance in life, everywhere is a prerequisite. Since it has become a compulsion and students realize that it is not an option, therefore, they feel the pressure that causes anxiety. Participant 1 was aware of the importance of the English language in getting a good job and he was willing to improve it but he was doubtful whether he could do it or not.

### 2. *Lack of English-Speaking Environment*

Language is a social phenomenon, and it is very difficult to learn it in the absence of supporting culture. In Pakistan, English speaking environment is not available. This lack of environment hinders LL as students do not get the opportunity to practice it. Participant 2 had expressed that the lack of environment created problems for him. In his words, “*Mujhy pata hy k main English main kamzor hun or iski wajh ye hy k yahan Urdu, Sindhi ya Punjabi to sun'ny ko mi jati hy English nahi or English b sirf aik class main sunty hain jo kaafi nahi.*” [I know I am weak in English, and this is all because of our environment. We have an environment for Urdu, Punjabi, and Sindhi but no environment for English. We can listen and speak English only in one class and that is not sufficient.]

#### 4.3.2.5. **Conclusions from Diary Writing**

The analysis revealed that students get anxious because of multiple factors of various ecosystem layers. At the micro level, the students were worried because of affective, cognitive, and linguistic factors. At the affective level, they were worried because of the lack of confidence. At the cognitive level, the research participants found themselves in trouble because of the difficult vocabulary words used by the teacher. Moreover, they also found that they do not have a sufficient store of vocabulary required for this level and it was because of their lack of confidence in asking the teacher about the meaning. Some of the students reported the classroom environment as a source of anxiety. At the meso level, the learners were worried because they had poor learning backgrounds. At the exo level, the rule of consecutive lectures, long university hours, and curriculum was the problem. At the macro level, the participants were anxious

because of three main reasons i.e., the status of English in society, the impact of Covid-19, and because of the lack of speaking environment.

### **4.3.3. Analysis of the Teachers' Perspective (NTU)**

This part of chapter 4 discusses the views of the teachers put forth by them on the causes of English LLA among the students of NTU. To get the views of the teachers about the causes of anxiety in the English language classroom, it was decided to take teachers' perspectives with the questions asked by the teachers teaching to the classes of anxious students. Taking teachers' perspectives was preferred over meeting or individual interviews for two reasons: first, it is time-saving, and second, participants share their views instead of being passive respondents to set questions. Given below is the list of those reasons that the teachers at NTU reported. In the end, the teacher recommended some measures to improve the situation.

#### ***1. Poor Enrolment/ Poor Academic Background***

The very first reason reported by the teachers was poor enrollment at NTU. NTU is a public sector federal university and students in different programs (especially in engineering) are enrolled on a quota basis. Because of this quota system, students with poor academic backgrounds manage to secure admission. For such students, three advanced courses in English are insufficient to develop their linguistic skills without teaching them the very basics of the English language. In non-engineering programs such as computer sciences and management, the merit is relatively low which lets the candidates with low schooling enter the university. Consequently, it gets hard for such learners to keep abreast of the pace with good learners and they fail to develop English language proficiency. At the same time, in each class, there are students with excellent schooling and linguistic background as well. Such an amalgamation of outliers hinders a standardized/common teaching approach and focusing on either can ignore others.

#### ***2. Conventional Classrooms***

The second important factor identified by the English teachers was the conventional classrooms of the university. They agreed that English language courses were majorly skills-based which require interactive sessions for learners to develop a linguistic culture and learners' confidence in classrooms. The more they practice; the better would be their performance. Conventional classrooms are meant for

teaching/lecturing only and are not helpful in peer learning. Thus, the students cannot communicate interactively with their class fellows or the teacher. As a result, they fail to develop their confidence to speak English.

The English teachers found the absence of English language-speaking culture as an important source of anxiety. One of the teachers said, “In Pakistan, English is not the mother tongue of people, and the students have to learn it as a second language. Language acquisition is easier than LL because one can easily acquire a language through the environment. Therefore, environment helps learners a lot in acquiring or learning a language.” All the teachers agreed that unfortunately, at NTU the students do not have an environment for learning/using the English language other than English classes that may facilitate students in developing their language skills. Students just spend 3 hours a week and 48 hours a semester learning English and even there they remain passive participants for most of the time. On the other hand, they spend most of their time speaking and listening to other languages such as Urdu and Punjabi, and ultimately, they end up performing poorly in this subject.

### 3. *Class Size*

Giving feedback to students is of utmost significance both in speaking and writing. This lets the learners know their weak areas and by focusing on their weak areas, they can minimize their errors and develop proficiency in speech and writing. This is only possible when the teacher gives thorough attention to each individual/student in his/her class. One of the teachers mentioned his concern over the number of students in these words, “In standard language classes, the number of students does not exceed twenty. Research works have also supported that the ideal class size for language teaching should not exceed 10-15 students. In contrast, our classes exceed 50 students and it is almost impossible for teachers to give feedback to all students on a daily basis which may lead to poor performance in English.” All the teachers agreed that the number of students in language classes should be reduced to twenty.

#### 4. *Lack of teacher training*

Updated and trained teachers can cope with the challenges of changing times. In Pakistan, teaching pieces of training are available for the teachers, and even in these pieces of training, there is no place for university teachers. The courses are a prerequisite for jobs at the primary and secondary levels. As a result, universities have highly qualified members but they are not skilled therefore they cannot handle certain anxiety-causing situations. An English teacher expressed his feelings in these words, “English faculty at NTU is well qualified but not appropriately trained for international standard teaching by English language teaching centers such as British Council. At the same time, the faculty members do not have equal Faculty Development Programs (FDP) opportunities which most of the engineering faculty have to develop academically and pursue their PhDs. This would ultimately enable them to serve the institute, in a befitting manner.” All the participants endorsed the point that faculty members of other disciplines can pursue their PhDs easily as their Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) are signed with international universities. Since English is not a degree-awarding department, therefore, management does not consider faculty up-gradation.

#### 5. *Curriculum and Visiting Faculty*

The teachers raised the point that the curriculum developed by the permanent faculty of the university, cannot be taught well by the visiting faculty members. One of the teachers expressed his point of view in these words, “On the recommendations of authority, a few years back, the faculty members collectively designed activity/task-based curriculum of English courses to engage students in outcome-based learning rather than teaching them theory. The existing curriculum is as per HEC’s guidelines for English courses for undergraduate programs and it has been developed considering the standards of the British Council’s Curriculum for undergraduate programs in Pakistani universities. It focuses on all four English language skills and at the same time, it has enough room for the basics of the English language as well. However, it has been observed that recently English courses have been taught by visiting faculty members. These visitors work with two or three institutes at a time, and they try to deliver whatever they have prepared for one class. Since the skill-based curriculum devised by the university faculty needs effort that is why they teach whatever they find

convenient. Moreover, they do not attend departmental meetings and are not answerable. The teaching of the curriculum by the visitors would have disastrous results in terms of students' learning.

#### **6. *Assessment Tools/ Criteria***

Gradual assessment of language courses is as important as the assessment of each of the four English language skills. The assessment determines the attitude of the students towards learning. The teachers consensually decided, "Our traditional assessment tools rely just on assessing writing skills only by giving 70% weightage to it. Consequently, students who are shy or not confident do not actively participate in sessional activities that are conducted to assess listening, reading, speaking, and presentation skills. They somehow manage to get passing marks from 70% but fail to develop language skills and perform well. It has also been observed that most of the students take less interest in minor courses. They join such courses intending to get just passing marks and most of them achieve this objective. However, getting just passing marks doesn't enable them to develop the required proficiency in language which is needed in the industry. Ultimately, they may be good in their core subjects but poor in the English language."

#### **7. *Implementation of Attendance Rules***

The teachers reported negligence in the true implementation of the university's rule of attendance as a cause of failure in the subject. They reported, "The University LMS is a transparent system that keeps the students informed of their performance in sessional activities and class attendance. Students learn a lot in their classes by participating in designed activities. Otherwise, there will not be any learning if they don't attend classes regularly. Unfortunately, attendance rules have not been properly implemented yet. If the students with 0% attendance are allowed to appear in exams, the teachers cannot be held accountable for their performance. At the same time, there must not be any undue pressure by anyone to give passing marks to such students who fail to meet the criteria."



### ***Recommendations***

1. At the end of the meeting, the teachers recommended a few measures to be taken to improve the situation of LL in the university.
2. The university needs to rethink the admission process to attract the best possible candidates for its undergraduate programs.
3. Purpose-built classrooms should be developed in each school to facilitate interactive sessions and other language-teaching activities.
4. The medium of instruction at NTU is English. Besides English teachers, the other teachers should also be encouraged to use English as a medium of instruction. This would develop an English language-speaking culture and help students develop their communication skills.
5. Students should be assigned books and videos by every teacher related to their subjects to develop their reading habits. Reliance on PPTs only will deteriorate the overall learning not to mention communication skills.
6. Permanent faculty members should be hired to teach all the classes.
7. The language class size should be limited to a maximum of 20 students. It will help teachers concentrate on every learner and give feedback to everyone.
8. The University in collaboration with British Council should arrange teachers training for their professional development.
9. The University may get the courses reviewed/revised/redeveloped by the British Council.
10. Faculty Development Programs for Ph.D. studies should also be offered to non-engineering faculty, especially to English faculty.
11. The passing marks for English courses should be at least 60. The assessment criteria should also be revised to give more weightage to spoken English and presentation skills. It may be decided in the Deans Committee and later approved by statutory bodies. The revised assessment criteria/slots should be given on LMS as well.
12. Attendance rules must be implemented in letter and spirit.

#### **4.3.4. Section Summary**

This section of data analysis has discussed the findings obtained from the data gathered from the students and teachers of NTU. Data gathered from the interviews

showed that at the micro level, the students were worried because they did not have productive relationships with the language teacher. They did not know how to seek teachers' guidance. Then their perceptions and views about the self, about the subject, and about the classroom were negative. They had underestimated themselves in the class. They reported the activity of presentation as anxiety-causing, however, they did not mention theoretical lectures and inconsiderate teaching techniques adopted by the teacher as anxiety-causing. Since the participants were asked the same questions therefore at the meso level, they also mentioned the same anxiety-causing factors. The only difference was in terms of ratio. The most anxiety-causing factor at the meso level for the students of NTU was previous language learning experience. Then there was the Attitude of the Parents, area of residence, activity of leisure, family educational background, and at the end financial Status of parents. Exo level exhibited rules of the institute, teaching methodology, and negative views about curriculum as anxiety causing. At the macro level, the participants reported the new anxiety-provoking variable of 'status of English'.

The data from diaries and subsequent interviews revealed that the most prominent theme at the micro level was the fear of public speaking or speaking anxiety. The second important factor was a lack of confidence that manifested itself in the form of negative self-perception and problem asking others about any confusion. Like interviews, the theme of previous language learning experience emerged as the most prominent at the Meso level. The second variable, that was different from the previous data, was rural background. At the Exo level, three factors of consecutive lectures, long university hours, and curriculum were reported as anxiety-causing. The macro level confirmed two of the previous findings of the impact of online classes because of the pandemic and lack of an English-speaking environment and added a new i.e., status of English as an international language.

The last part of the section comprised teachers' views about the poor performance of students in English language classrooms. The teachers identified eight variables that could be the reason for the poor performance of the students. These factors include poor educational background, conventional classrooms, lack of implementation of university rules, unavailability of English-speaking environment, visiting faculty members, lack of teacher training, size of the classroom, and assessment criteria.

### Section3.

#### 4.4. Analysis of the Data from the Students of TUF

This part of chapter 4 deals with the data gathered from the students of TUF. The section is divided into three; one deals with the data gathered through interview questions based on activity theory (Mwanza Model, 2002); the second with the data obtained from diaries, and the last part discusses the Teachers' perception of students' anxiety. The participants in the research were first asked to provide basic information about them before starting the first interview. The demographic information gathered about the research participants and their scores on FLCAS are provided below. Demographical information was gathered to accumulate background information which helped in understanding the 'subject' element of activity theory. Moreover, it helped in deciding whether demographic factors of age, ethnicity, or gender should be considered (in terms of language anxiety) for further exploration or not.

*Table 11: Scores on FLCAS (TUF)*

No.	Student ID	Score at FLCAS
1	Participant1	124
2	Participant2	125
3	Participant3	133
4	Participant4	143

##### 4.5.1. Analysis of Data Obtained from Activity-based Interviews (TUF)

All four participants were willing to be a part of the research. The data gathered from these participants were transcribed and then transcribed files were imported to NVivo 11 software to facilitate the analysis. The hierarchy chart below shows the factors reported by the participants:

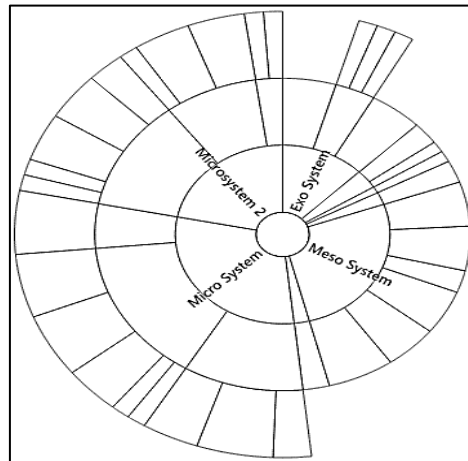


Figure 32: Hierarchy Chart Anxiety Causing Factors (INTVW, TUF)

The hierarchy chart shows that the microsystem is largely responsible for the anxiety of the students in language class. The Meso system is the second prominent level in terms of anxiety-causing factors. The other two levels were also reported to be responsible for anxiety which legitimizes the use of the nested ecosystem model to study the complex ecosystem of language learning.

#### 4.5.1.1. Micro System

The hierarchy chart below shows themes that emerged at this level.

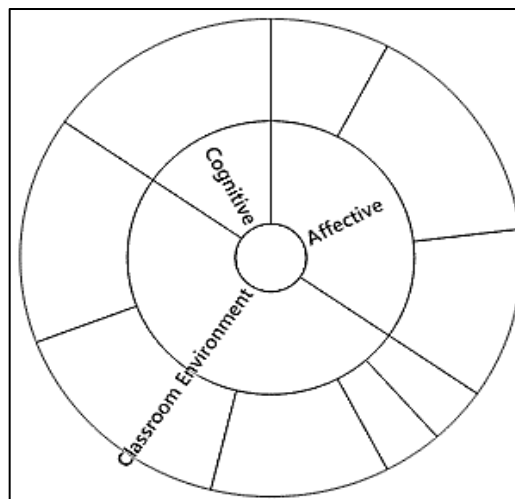


Figure 33: Anxiety Causing Factors at Micro-Level (INTVW, TUF)

The hierarchy chart showed that students get anxious in English language class because of three factors i.e., affective, linguistic, and classroom environment. The details of these factors are as under:

### 1. *Classroom Environment*

Classroom environment refers to the physical, emotional, and psychological setting where learning takes place. The factors related to the classroom environment took the largest share at the microsystem level. The students of TUF reported two classroom factors that might affect their language learning i.e., the relationship with the teacher and the relationship among the peers.

*a. Relationship with Language Teacher.* As far as the relationship with language teachers is concerned, the participants of the research reported two types of relationships with the language teacher: No relation and good but unproductive relationship. No relationship means they do not have any relationship with the teacher. They either never tried to approach the teacher or had developed a fear because of the English language. The second type i.e., unproductive relationship refers to a relationship that does not focus on the attainment of shared goals.

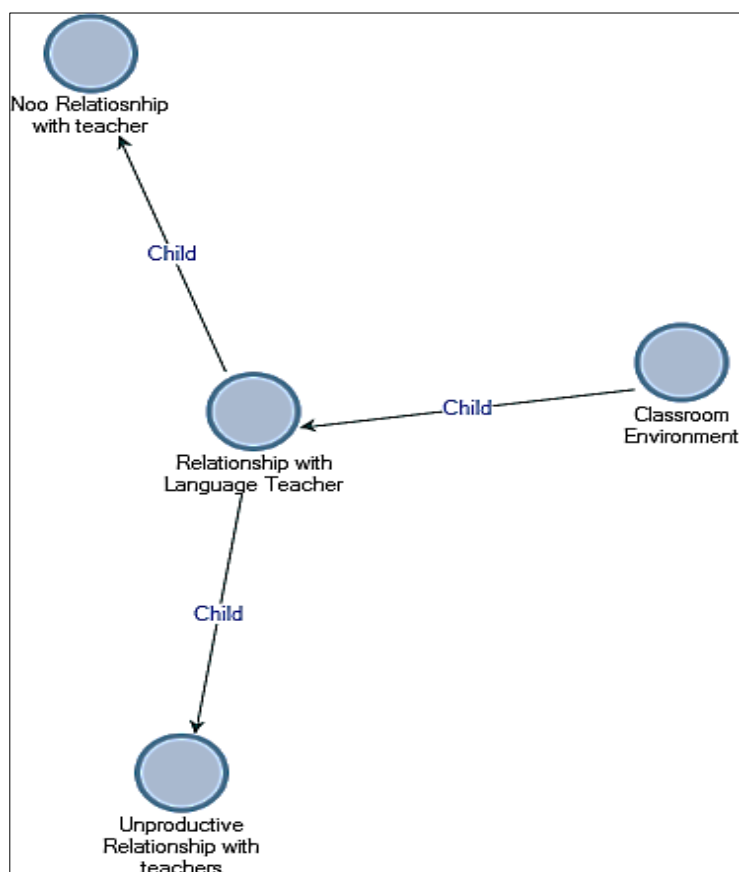


Figure 34: Students' Relationship with Language Teacher (INTVW, TUF)

The diagram above shows that two of the participants did not have a relationship with the language teachers whereas two had a relationship of no value. Participant 3 expressed his view in the words, “*School or college dono main mera experience acha nahi that. Main itna frank nahi thee k un sy apny issues discuss ker sakti. University main abhi mera pehla semester hy is liye abhi confidence nhi k teacher sy baat ker sakun.*” [At school and college, my relationship with the language teacher was not a good one. I was not comfortable enough with them to discuss my problems. As far as university level is concerned, this is my first semester so I could not develop the confidence to talk to the teacher.]

**b. Relationship with Peers.** Relationships with peers are important in the language learning process. Gifford Smith & Brownell (as cited in Butler, 2019), believed that friendships serve as a vital context for social, cognitive, and emotional development. The friends, inside and outside the classroom, play an important role in language development. The current research has found two types of peer relationships between the research participants and the class: Productive and unproductive. The productive relationship for the current study is the one where the participants helped each other in the attainment of the targeted goal. An unproductive relationship on the other hand is a friendship to spend the leisure.

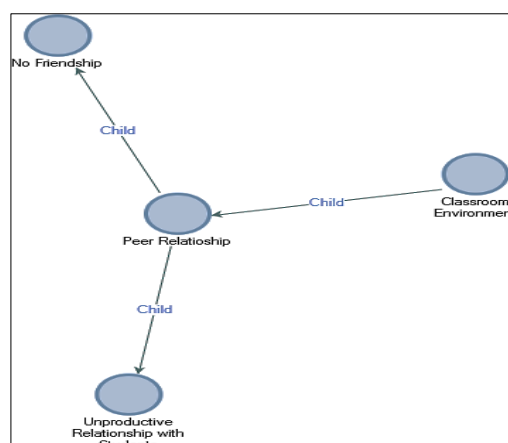


Figure 35: Comparison of Participants on Relationship with Peers (INTVW, TUF)

The first finding of the research is that all the research participants have started making friends after joining the university. No one has mentioned that any of his peers is a former friend too. Therefore, it was quite natural to think that they were more peers in good relations than bosom friends. Since the research participants were in the beginning phase of their friendship, therefore they were not frank enough to share their

problems. They were perhaps avoiding things that may offend a new friend. This is the reason that their relationship was more unproductive.

The diagram below shows the ratio of productive and unproductive peer relationships. Three out of four research participants have an unproductive relationship with their peers.

Participant 4 expressed his experience in the following words, “*I have come from Sindh therefore I have only one friend at the moment who is my roommate in the hostel. We share our study-related issues.*” All the other participants had an unproductive relationship with their peers.

## 2. *Affective Factors*

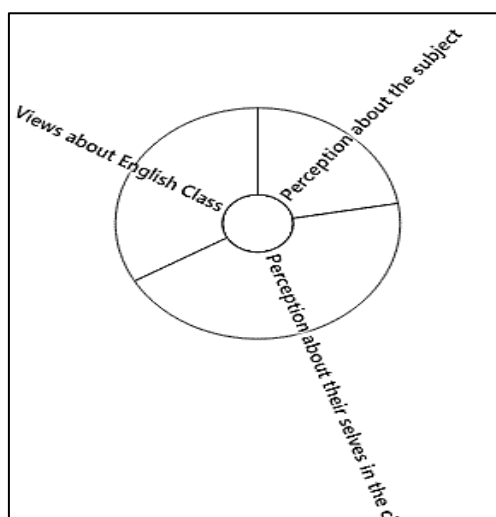


Figure 36: Hierarchy Chart Affective Factors (INTVE, TUF)

Three affective factors were reported by the students of TUF to be responsible for their anxiety in language class. The most prominent of these seven is ‘Perception of their selves in the class’, views about English Class and perception of the subject. All four highly anxious students reported a negative perception of their selves in the class. Participant 1 believed her to be not an active participant in the class and preferred to sit at the end. Participant 2 thought herself to be incompetent in the class whereas participants 3 and 4 both found themselves to be inactive in the class.

Three students reported negative views about their English class. Participant 1 found English classes to be really boring and he never enjoyed those classes. he didn’t even mention anything positive about his English classes at the school and college levels. Participant 2 found them boring too as he never understood the lecture whereas

Participant 3 expressed her boredom by saying that English classes were really boring. Perception of the subject was reported negative by participants 1 and 4 who thought the subject to be futile and were not interested in taking up the subject.

### **3. *Cognitive Factor***

All four participants of the research reported a cognitive factor of unfamiliarity with the objective in their interviews. Participant 1 reported twice in his interview that he didn't know why the subject was included in the degree. She showed her disappointment in the inclusion of the subject in the degree by saying that she wonders why English takes its share in every degree. Participant 2 wasn't aware of including functional English in the degree but he decided to treat it as an ordinary subject. Participants 3 and 4 also weren't aware of the objective of learning this course however both tried to guess it with statements such as English is an international language that is why it is included and it can help in improving the English language that is an international language.

#### **4.5.1.2.Meso System**

At the meso level, the following six factors were contributing to the anxiety of the students:

1. Activity of Leisure
2. Area of Residence
3. The attitude of the parents
4. Family Educational Background
5. Financial Status of Parents
6. Previous language learning experience



The hierarchy chart below presents the ratio of these factors in LLA.

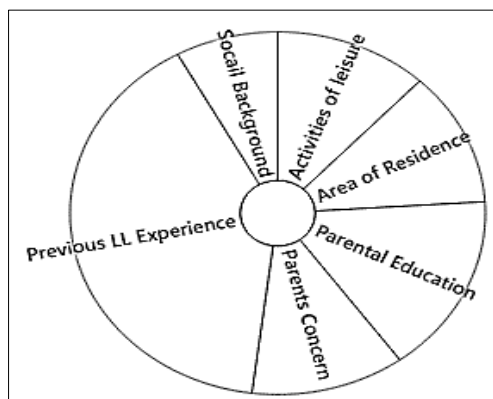


Figure 37: Anxiety Causing Factors Meso Level (INTVW, TUF)

### 1. *Previous Language Learning Experience*

Previous language-learning experience at school and college is the most reported anxiety-causing factor by the participants. For a deeper understanding of the issue, the previous language learning experience is subdivided into the experience at the school and college levels. All the participants of the research reported that they had problems with their previous language learning. Four participants reported ten times that they had problems with their previous language learning.

At the school level, the majority of the students were taught with the grammar-translation method. The teacher used to read out the text and then dictated the answers to the questions given at the end of the text. The participants crammed those answers and assessed them either orally or in writing. The language was taught like any other subject with the exercises to cram. Participant 1 said that her teachers at school had taught English like ordinary subjects and Urdu was a medium of instruction. Participant 3 also shared the same sort of experience at Kamil Foundation School where the teacher used to translate the text and then the answers were provided to cram.

At the college level, again all the participants criticized their college for the too much stress on getting good marks. Whatever colleges and academies they joined; they trained them in how to get maximum marks in the exam. For this reason, the majority of the students even after getting more than 75% marks were still anxious in their language class. Participant 1 said that at the college level, the focus was on attempting the paper in such a way that the student may get maximum marks. Participant 3 expressed the same type of views that English was taken as a subject that could make

your career or ruin you by adding marks. Participant 2 also complained about the concern of the college authorities and the teaching methodology of the teacher. He said, “*College main teacher translate kerty thy English ke or phir jo b exam k hawaly sy important sawal hoty thy wo yaad kerny k liye day dety thy. Phir hamary tests hoty thy unhi questions main sy*”. [At college, the Grammar translation method was used. The teacher provided us with answers to the questions that were important from the paper's perspective. We crammed those questions and the teacher conducted tests to check whether we had learned or not.] Participant 4, however, did not put the whole burden on the shoulders of college authorities. She said that she is also responsible for her poor performance as she did not pay attention to the subject.

## 2. Parental Education

The education of the family facilitates the language-learning process. The children of educated parents get more opportunities to listen to the educated vocabulary that ultimately becomes the active vocabulary of the listeners. All the participants agreed that the education of the family especially the education of parents matters a lot. Participant 2 confirmed that family educational background influences language learning as he had noticed that the students with educated parents were good at studies whereas his parents had never helped him therefore, he remained weak in studies. The family of Participant 3 was also not highly educated and he never received any help in terms of English language from them. He took this lack of help from family as a reason for being weak in language class.

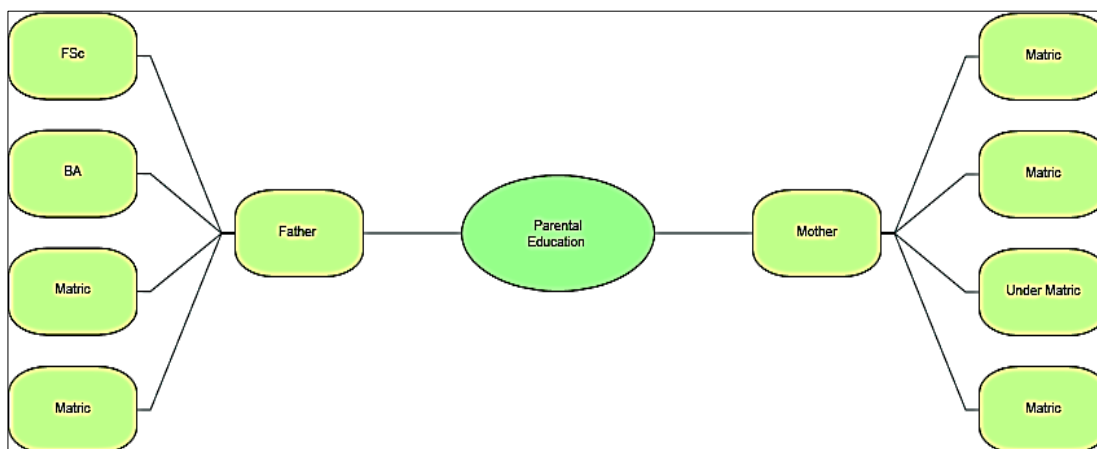


Figure 38: Conceptual Map on Family Educational Background (TNTVW, TUF)

### 3. *Financial Status*

A social class that is based on financial status affects language learning. Research works have confirmed that learners from the lower class get more anxious in a language class as compared to students from the elite class (Buckingham, 2017). The data gathered through adapted Kuppuswamy's Socioeconomic Status Scale (attached in Appendix E) revealed that all the participants of the research belonged to the upper middle class. It is quite obvious even without testing before Kuppuswamy Scale that if a student is enrolled in a private institute for his degree, he is financially stable.

Quite contrary to previous research, the research found that the students from the upper class can also get anxious. The important factor to consider here is parental education. Although these students were financially stable, their parents were not highly educated. This may be the reason for their poor performance because they didn't get an English language listening environment at home. Therefore, finances alone cannot determine language proficiency, it is the environment that matters.

*Table 12: Social Class of the Research Participants (TUF)*

No	Participant	Father Education	Father Occupation	Score on Kuppuswamy's scale
1	Participant 1	FSC	Business	21
2	Participant 2	Matriculation	Business	20
3	Participant 3	BA	Business	22
4	Participant 4	Matriculation	Business	20

### 4. *Area of Residence*

Area of residence is an important factor that can cause or reduce the anxiety of language learning. The very first world that a child comes across after his home is his surroundings. Man is a social being and language is a social phenomenon as it exists in society and is learned in that society too. So, the area where you live affects your language learning to a considerable extent. Participant 4, had a rural background. She was from Kunri, a small tehsil of Umar Kot district, Sindh. All these participants

mentioned in their interviews that they did not have easy access to good educational institutes.

### 5. *Activity of Leisure*

In your spare time, what type of activities you are involved in, has an impact on your language learning. Some activities facilitate the language-learning process by providing an opportunity to be involved in any of the language skills. Research works have shown that those who read books or watch English movies get better with the English language. The data gathered through interviews revealed that not even a single participant was involved in any of the language-supporting activities. The table below clearly shows the type of activities, the participants are engaged in.

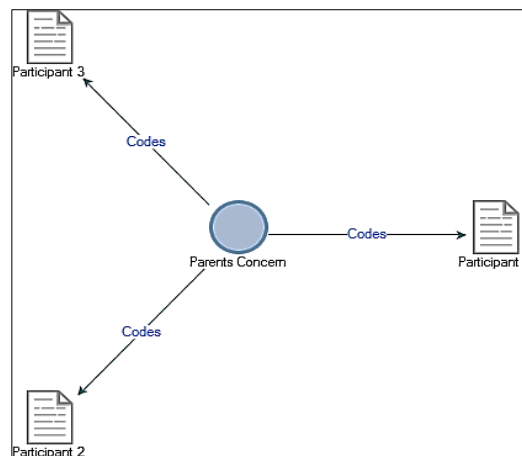
*Table 13: Activities of Leisure Adopted by the Research Participants (TUF)*

No	Participant	Activity of Leisure
1	Participant 1	social media and to watch Indian movies
2	Participant 2	to watch funny Punjabi movies and to use social media
3	Participant 3	to watch Punjabi Indian movies
4	Participant 4	To use a cell phone or to watch Indian

The most prominent activity is the use of social media like Facebook. Another prominent theme is watching movies. The participants reported that they like to watch Indian movies either funny or Punjabi. Consequently, no such activity is performed by these participants they may help them in their LL process.

## 6. *The Attitude of the Parents*

The diagram below shows the different attitudes of the parents towards the education of their children.



*Figure 39: Comparison of Participants on the Attitude of the Parents (INTVW, TUF)*

The attitude of the parents matters a lot in the educational process therefore LL is not an exception. According to Anderson et al (as cited in Forey, 2015), parental involvement contributes significantly to a child's literacy development (p. 1). The data revealed that 75% of the parents did not show any concern with the studies of their children. Only one participant mentioned that her were concerned. Since they were not educated enough to guide them or to help them out in solving their education-related issues, their concerns were no more than apprehensions. Therefore, to improve the condition of the students, the concern, as well as the education of the parents, is necessary.

### 4.5.1.3. Exo system

The interviews based on activity theory brought forward the following four factors at the third layer of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested ecosystem:

1. Teaching Methodology
2. Curriculum
3. Rules of the institute

The ratio of these factors can be seen in the hierarchy chart below.

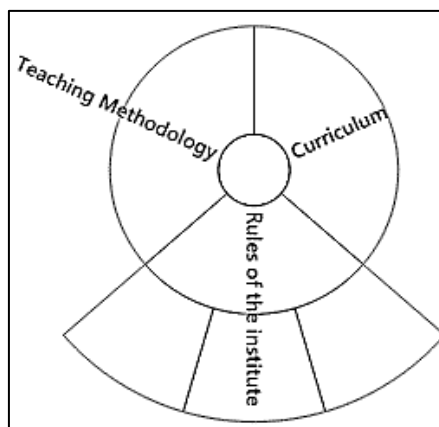


Figure 40: Factors Responsible for Anxiety at Exo-level (INTVW, TUF)

### 1. **Teaching Methodology**

The methodology of teaching has a strong impact on the LL process. If the method of teaching is easy and students feel comfortable with that, learning becomes a joyous activity. The data of the current study showed that half of the participants were dissatisfied with the teaching methodology. It is clear from the hierarchy chart below. They had a problem with the teaching methodology of the teacher. The majority of them however agreed that the teacher should use the Urdu language. Participant 3, for example, said that the teacher should use simple vocabulary and Urdu in the class. Participant 2 pointed out that he was satisfied with the teaching methodology, however, the correction of errors by the teacher in the class made him lose confidence. From the data, it can be said that the major problem faced by the participants was that of language. If the teacher had delivered the lecture in Urdu or a combination of Urdu and English, they were comfortable.

### 2. **Rules of the Institute**

Three of the research participants reported issues with the rules of the institute to be problematic for them in language class. The first rule that was creating problems in the language class was 75% attendance. The rule is set by HEC however whether to follow it strictly or with leniency totally depends on the universities. Students felt uncomfortable in language class as they were bound to sit in the class whether their minds responded or not.

The second rule that caused problems for them was the rule of delivering lectures in English. This is again a rule prescribed by HEC however it totally depends

on the teacher whether he adopts it in the true sense or modify it according to the level of his students. The students felt uncomfortable in the class as the teacher delivered the lecture in English.

The third rule reported by the anxious students was the rule of speaking English in the class. It was completely decided by the teacher. Because of this rule, the students were unable to share their language-related issues.

### **3. Curriculum**

All four anxious students reported their dissatisfaction with the curriculum. They were satisfied with the course contents but the activities related to speaking and presentation weren't easy for them to digest. They recommended that lesser speaking activities should be included in the syllabus. Sessional activities such as presentations were a real problem for them.

#### **4.5.1.4. Macro Level**

At the macro level, two of the factors emerged as anxiety caused by the students: the status of English as a global language and the provincial education system. Living in the global world has made language learning a compulsion for all those who want to survive globally. The pressure of this compulsion makes the students anxious in the class. The education system where one resides also determines the level of his learning. Since the backward areas of inner Punjab and Sindh cannot provide the students with better teachers and learning environments therefore the students get anxious when they change their area of residence.

#### **4.5.2. Analysis of the Data Obtained from Diaries (TUF)**

This section analyses the data gathered from diary writing and subsequent interviews. The students were asked to keep diaries for one month and note the points where they got uncomfortable in language class. Interviews were conducted at the end of diary reading wherever required. The format of diary writing is attached as Appendix B. The themes that emerged from the analysis of diary data and subsequent interviews with NVivo11 are categorized into the following four layers:

1. Micro-system
2. Meso-system

3. Exo-system
4. Macro-system

The details of the factors in each layer are discussed below in detail.

#### 4.5.2.1. Micro System

The hierarchy chart below shows the factors that emerged at the micro level from the diary reading.

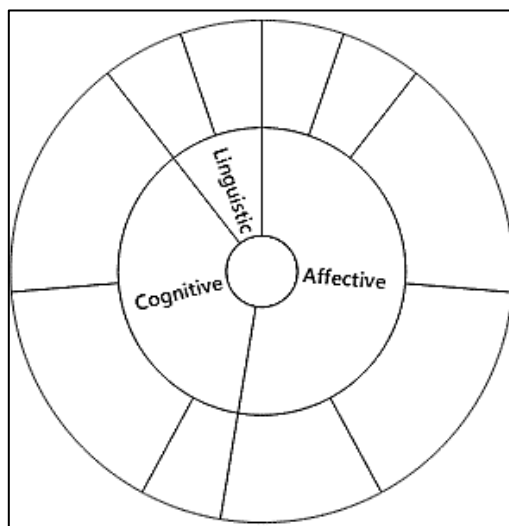


Figure 41: Anxiety Causing Factors at Micro Level (Diaries, TUF)

##### 1. *Affective Factors*

Affective factors are the emotional factors that affect learning positively or negatively. Negative affective factors are called affective filters. The diagram below shows all the affective filters that were responsible for the anxiety of the students of TUF.

The percentage of these different affective factors is given below in the form of a chart.

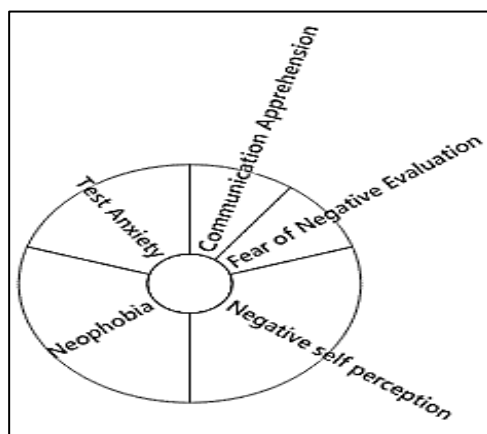


Figure 42: Affective Factors Responsible for Anxiety (Diaries, TUF)



The first prominent factor that was reported by the highly anxious students is ‘Negative Self Perception’. It is defined as a negative evaluation of someone’s worth and capabilities. Out of four participants of the research, three reported 12 times their incapability in terms of English language learning. Participant 1 mentioned it seven times in different ways such as at one place he said that he lost his concentration whenever he was unable to understand what the teacher had said. At another point, he said that English was difficult for him because he had never studied the subject in detail. In all seven statements, the participant blamed himself for the poor performance in English and she was sure that she could never get better in English. Participant 2 also mentioned the same type of low self-esteem in the following words “*Mujhy hamehsa lagta hy k sirf meri English weak hy. Sirf main he English nahi bol sakti, baqi sub mujh sy behtar hain.*” [I have never thought that only my English is weak. It is only me who cannot speak English, all others are better than me.] Participant 3 talked about his low self-esteem by saying that his English is weak which was the reason for her being worried in the class. In the second place, he said that the teacher used difficult words in the class and since she was weak in English therefore she got anxious.

The second prominent factor is neophobia i.e., the fear of new things. New topics always pose problems for the learners; some accept the challenge and accommodate themselves accordingly whereas others take it as a burden. The research participants have reported new and unfamiliar topics as a reason for their anxiety in language class. Four research participants (2 and 3) found themselves in trouble with the new topic.

The third prominent factor that the participants of the research reported is ‘Test Anxiety’. Aydin (2009) reported test anxiety to be a form of apprehension about evaluation in the subject or the fear of failing the exam. From the beginning of LLA research, Test anxiety remained one of the most anxiety-causing factors. The current research has also traced the signs of test anxiety among language learners. Two out of four participants believed that they felt uncomfortable when the teacher decided to take a test. Participants 1 and 3 mentioned this factor by saying that they are comfortable as long as the teacher teaches but when the teacher announces a test or quiz, he becomes anxious.

Another prominent factor is communication apprehension can be defined for the current research as one’s inability to speak in front of the students. Participant 2

reported six different times that she gets anxious when the teacher asks her to present in front of the class. She mentioned that she felt comfortable with the lecture but not with the participation in classroom proceedings. She felt comfortable when the teacher delivered the lecture but the time she asked the students to participate, she began to tremble. At another place, she wrote that she felt comfortable when she was supposed to sit and listen to the teacher. The moment the teacher called her, she got uncomfortable. Yet at another place, she mentioned that it was easy to sit in the class passively but not an easy one to answer a question asked by the teacher. She also showed her lack of confidence by stating that she doesn't know how to answer a question in English. Whenever the teacher asked a question, she found herself in trouble as she was unable to form ideas. At the third point in her diary, she explained her situation during classroom discussions by saying that she remained comfortable unless the teacher was delivering a lecture but when she pointed out her to ask a question, she felt shy. Her hands began to shiver and her voice stuck to her throat.

Fear of negative evaluation was reported by Participant 2. Fear of negative evaluation is one of the important factors that caused anxiety in the participants. This fear was of two types: the fear of negative evaluation by the peer and the fear of negative evaluation by the teacher. Participants feared that their peers would laugh at them and would make fun of them. On the other hand, the teachers would take them as impotent, and this will affect their grades. Participant 2 has twice expressed his fear of being laughed at if he pronounced anything wrong.

## 2. *Cognitive Factors*

The participants reported three factors i.e., Lack of Knowledge, lack of vocabulary, and lack of attention. The aggregate value of these factors is presented below in a hierarchy chart.

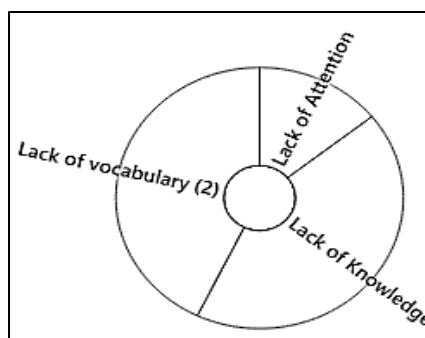


Figure 43: Hierarchy chart of cognitive Factors (Diaries, TUF)

Three out of four participants reported a lack of vocabulary as the reason for anxiety in the class. Lack of vocabulary is a very genuine issue in terms of language learning anxiety. Participant 1 expressed his discomfort in the class because of vocabulary as he mentioned in his comment that he felt difficulty in understanding the teacher only because of the lack of vocabulary. He was familiar with many vocabulary words that the teacher was using in the class on a regular basis but occasionally she used new words that made him uncomfortable. Participant 2 reported this issue twice in her writings by saying that she could not compose her reply to participate in the class as she was unable to find the appropriate words. Participant 4 also mentioned the lack of vocabulary as a reason for being uncomfortable in class

Lack of attention and concentration was reported twice by Participant 2 whereas lack of knowledge was reported by three participants. They believed that they could not form ideas whenever they tried to write something down or to speak something out. It is equivalent to concept blockage that is explored extensively in LL anxiety research.

### 3. *Linguistic Factors*

At the linguistic level, the participants reported two factors i.e., native accent and multiplicity of language rules. The ratio of the factors is clear from the chart below.

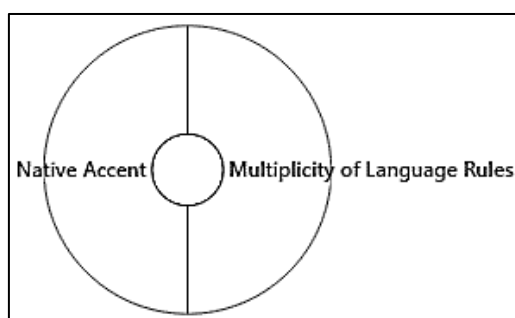


Figure 43: Hierarchy Chart Linguistic Factors (Diaries, TUF)

In a language class, teachers try to familiarize their students with their native accents. To familiarize the students with the native one has become a necessity in the globalized world. One participant in the research reported a problem with the native accent when the teacher played audio files in the class. Participant 3 talked about it by saying that the teacher had assigned them a listening task which was very difficult for them to understand because of the accent of the native speaker. Moreover, they were also unfamiliar with the summary formation of a conversation.

The second factor reported by the participants at TUF at the linguistic level was the multiplicity of language rules. Participant 4 got uncomfortable with the number of rules that one has to learn in order to have a good grasp of the English language.

#### **4.5.2.2.Meso Level**

At the meso level, the research participants reported only previous language learning as the reason for anxiety in the class. Two of the research participants reported five times that their previous experience of English language learning caused problems for them in their recent class. One participant reported that English classes were always boring for her. They were boring at the school level as well as at the college level and this trend continued at the university level too. On the other hand, the second participant had never paid attention to the language right from the beginning of his studies.

#### **4.5.2.3.Exo Level**

At the exo-level, the research found the rule of the university as a potential reason for anxiety in the class. In the university, because of the lesser number of students both the technologies were merged for general courses. The participants of the research however were not comfortable with this immersion. It was difficult for them to attend class with strangers and to use language in front of them.

The merged classes along with combined lectures were problematic for them. Participant 3 complained that the mind's acceptance decreases in double lectures. He believed that taking two consecutive lectures was boring and tiresome as, after some time, the mind refused to absorb. In the other comment, he suggested that there should be a break between two lectures because the interest gradually decreases. Participant 4 also expressed his dissatisfaction with double lectures as he thought that attending two lectures continuously was a difficult task.

Another important factor reported by the research participants was the medium of instruction. As per HEC rules, the teachers are supposed to deliver lectures in English. However, the research participants did not have any such previous experience therefore they got uncomfortable. The last factor that was reported once was teaching methodology. Participant 3 mentioned that even after trying hard, she couldn't make up with the teaching methodology.

#### 4.5.2.4. Macro Level

##### 1. *Online class because of Covid-19*

Where Covid-19 has played havoc with almost all fields of life, LL classes are no exception. The world had not suffered from any pandemic before COVID-19; therefore, nobody knew how to tackle the situation. To save the future of the youth, the decision to conduct online classes was taken; the question of “How to conduct” remained an unsolved riddle. The classes were conducted sometimes on IMO and at other times on Google Classroom. WhatsApp groups and Zoom were other options available. Nothing was definite and the same was the teaching methodology. Teachers were not trained in handling such online classes, therefore the problems of students multiplied. Participant 3 reported three times online classes to be the reason for being uncomfortable in the class, Participant 4 however reported it once. The important point to note here was the reason for being anxious was not the classroom proceedings but the poor network. The students faced more issues as compared to the classes of other subjects as the focus was not only on the content but also on the language of conveying the content.

#### 4.5.3. Analysis of Teacher’s Perspective (TUF)

At TUF, one teacher was teaching in both departments of BBA and CS. Since there were a lesser number of enrollments in these departments therefore a combined class was conducted for both sections. The teacher reported six different factors to be the potential reasons for students’ anxiety in the class and these belong to all the levels

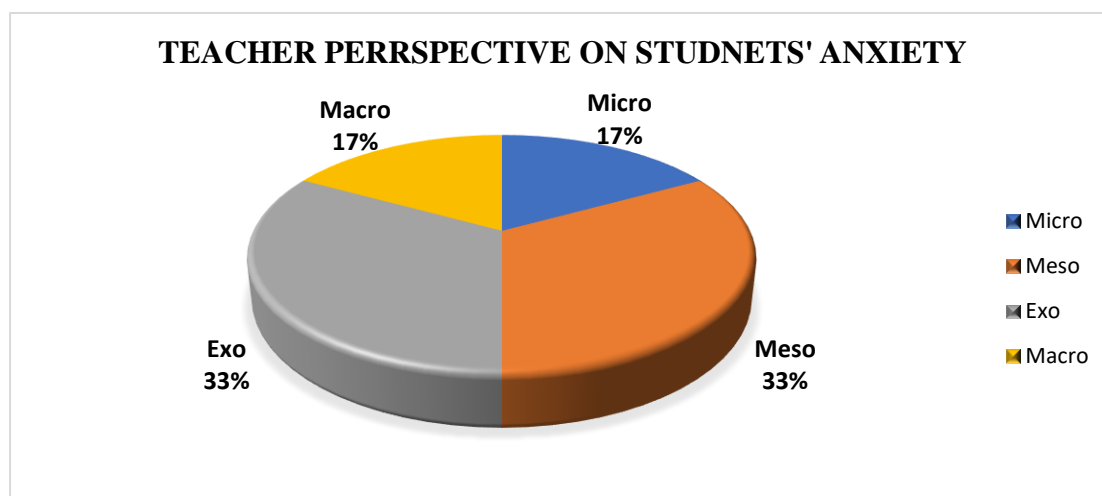


Figure 44: Teacher Perspective on Students' Anxiety (TUF)

of the nested ecosystem model. The presence of factors against all the levels called for an ecological solution to the problem.

The details of the factors reported by the teacher are given below.

### ***Non-serious Attitude of the Students***

Non-serious attitude toward studies leads to a lackadaisical mindset towards language learning. They disregard the importance of language learning and tend to fall behind their peers. As a result, a sense of apprehension engulfs these students in their language classes. The teacher at TUF reported that the majority of the students get admission on a financial basis. They think they can get a degree the way they have been admitted to the university. This non-serious attitude towards the study is the reason for poor performance in the subject. Since they are weak in studies, therefore, they feel uncomfortable in class.

#### ***1. Poor Academic Background***

The first priority of a student is always to get admission to a government university as they are established comparatively and there is a lesser number of private universities in Pakistan. If they fail to get admission to public sector universities, they avail the opportunity to be in the private sector. The lot that a private university gets is generally weak and mostly comprises those students who do not meet the merit criteria. Therefore, it is quite natural for such students to be weak in all the subjects including English.

#### ***2. Family Educational background***

Language learning is different from other subjects as a language is learned from the environment. Since second language learning is different from first language acquisition, even then the environment of a student determines the language proficiency. The students who come to this university, do not have financial issues however their parents aren't educated enough to provide their children with language language-supporting environment. As a result, they try to learn it in a purely artificial environment which causes anxiety.

### 3. *Lack of Trained Teaching Staff*

Private universities generally do not spend on faculty development programs. They do not offer pay leave that may motivate the faculty members to study further. In a crisis-ridden society like Pakistan, a teacher cannot dare to leave a job to study. Therefore, the teachers do not try to equip themselves with new techniques and the old worn-out techniques of teaching fail to maintain the interest of the students in language class.

### 4. *Cultural Factors*

Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and it affects English language learning in many ways. First cultural and societal emphasis on Urdu leads to a lack of exposure to the English language in everyday conversation. The linguistic dominance of Urdu can create a psychological barrier by apprehension about actively participating in English language environments and lastly, the cultural comfort with Urdu may lead to discomfort with English usage. The teacher at TUF reported that students get anxious in class because of their heavy reliance on Urdu for the accomplishments of daily tasks. Since all the other teachers were using either Urdu or hybrid languages, therefore, they got anxious in language class where they were supposed to use as well as listen to English all the time.

### 5. *University Policies*

The policies of the university have an impact on students' anxiety in language classes. the university allows a separate teacher against a certain number of students. When the classes are combined for a course, students do not feel comfortable with the students from another faculty. The issue gets grave when it comes to language class as they fear that the students from other faculty may laugh at them if they are pronounced incorrect. Therefore, they get nervous and try not to participate.

#### 4.5.4. Section Summary

This section of Chapter 4 has discussed the data obtained from the students of TUF to find out the reasons for anxiety in the English language. The first part discusses the data obtained from the students based on the Mwanza Model Activity theory. The data proved that students get anxious because of multiple factors that stretch across all

four layers of the nested ecosystem model. The second part is about the data obtained from anxious students from the diaries. Diary data also proved the presence of all four systems of the layers of a nested ecosystem. The last part discusses the data gathered from the teacher who was teaching these students who reported a non-serious attitude toward the students, poor academic background, cultural factors, and university policies to be the reason for their anxiety in the class

#### **4.6. Analysis of the Data from the Students of NUML**

The section is divided into three different parts. The first part introduces the data analysis of activity-based interviews. The second deals with the data obtained from the diaries of the students. The last part talks about the views of the teachers on students' language learning anxiety.

##### **4.6.1. Analysis of the Data Obtained from Activity-based Interviews (NUML)**

The analysis of the data obtained from the students of NUML, through interviews based on Activity Theory (Mwanza Model, 2002) revealed that several factors cause anxiety at the graduate level among the students of NUML. These factors belong to different domains and can be categorized into four levels of Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystem model (1979; 1993). The demographic information of the research participants is as under:

*Table 14: Scores on FLCAS (NUML)*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Student ID</b>	<b>Score at FLCAS</b>
1	Participant 1	125
2	Participant 2	125
3	Participant 3	126
4	Participant 4	127
5	Participant 5	127
6	Participant 6	127
7	Participant 7	128



8	Participant 8	129
9	Participant 9	129
10	Participant 10	129
11	Participant 11	129
12	Participant 12	130
13	Participant 13	132
14	Participant 14	132
15	Participant 15	134
16	Participant 16	135
17	Participant 17	136
18	Participant 18	136
19	Participant 19	136
20	Participant 20	136
21	Participant 21	136
22	Participant 22	136
23	Participant 23	149
24	Participant 24	150

Out of 24 students, only five were girls with anxiety; all the rest were boys. This was evident in the data obtained from the other universities as well. Generally, it is believed that girls develop language skills earlier comparatively. The data has confirmed the generally accepted view. The twenty-two participants of the research are of Punjabi ethnicity and only two are from KPK. Other ethnicities are missing, and the reason is the absence of these ethnicities in the class. It may be because of the geographical location of the university. Moreover, NUML is famous for language studies, therefore, the students come here from far-flung areas for language studies.

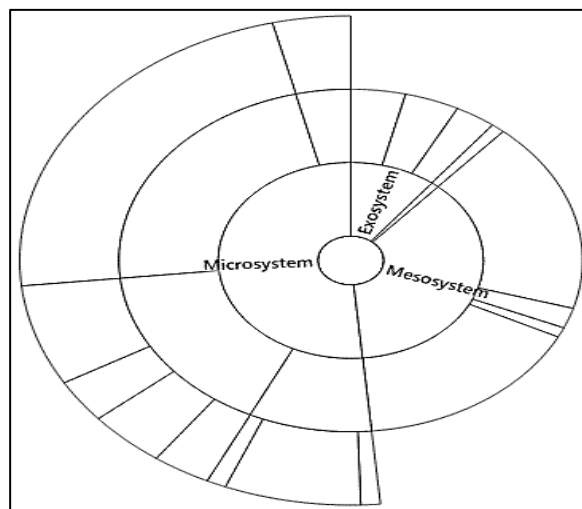


Figure 45: Hierarchy Chart of Anxiety Causing Factors (INTVW, NUML)

The participants of the research reported the following factors that stretch across all four layers of the Nested ecosystem model. The hierarchy chart below shows the presence of all the factors reported by the research participants.

#### 4.6.1.1. Microsystem

At the micro level, the students of NUML reported the following factors:

1. Affective
2. Classroom Environment
3. Cognitive
4. Linguistic

The aggregate value of these factors is presented below in the form of a hierarchy chart.

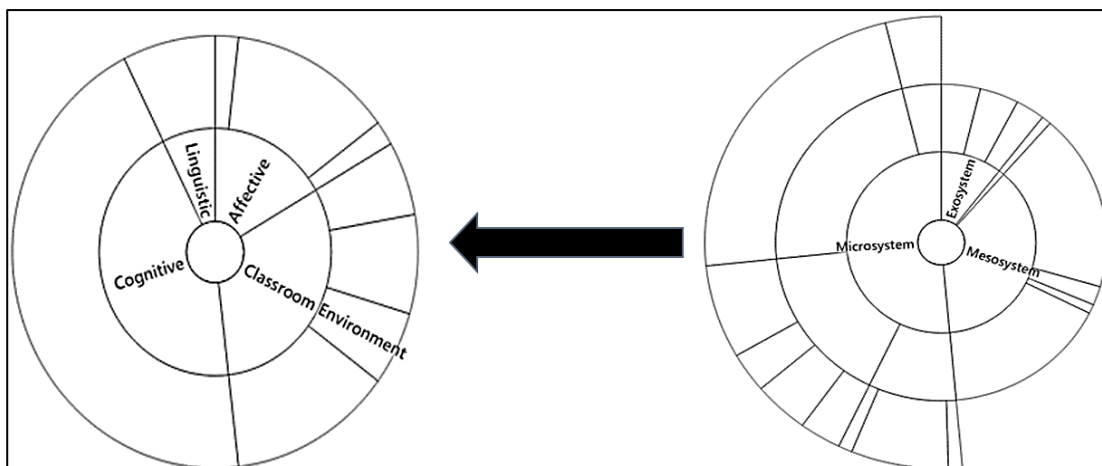


Figure 46: Hierarchy Chart of Anxiety Causing Factors (INTVW, NUML)

### 1. *Cognitive Factors*

The following cognitive factors were reported by the anxious students at NUML.

a. ***Familiarity with Objective.*** If one knows the objective of doing something, things become acceptable, and he puts his efforts into accomplishing that. The data obtained from activity-based interviews revealed that all twenty-four participants were not familiar with the objective of learning the course of English. Those who had mentioned the objective of learning the course had made a wild guess. Eleven participants reported thirteen times that they didn't know why they were learning this course. Participants 8, 6, and 10 stated clearly that they did not know the purpose of studying the course of English. Participant 12 and 13 tried to guess the objective that might help them in their future business. Participant 14 on the other hand said that if he went abroad then it'd help him.

An important difference in the views of the BBA and BSCS students was observed here. The students of BSCS thought it to be irrelevant therefore the objective of studying this course was incomprehensible to them. The students of BBA tried to develop a link that might help them but the students of BSCS remained unable to get the purpose. Participant 15 said, *"This subject improves our language skills but it is not required in computer studies."* Participant 17, on the other hand, said that the role of this subject in our degree is nothing. The rest of the participants thought it to be a part of the syllabus therefore they are bound to learn it irrespective of whether they know the objective or not.

## 2. *Classroom Environment*

a. *Size of the class.* The number of students in a class affects learning especially language learning where the teachers need to interact with the students. The students of BBA at NUML had reasonable strength of students in classes. There were 22-25 students in a class whereas in BSCS the class strength reached 48. In such a large class it is difficult to interact with the students individually. Five of the students from the CS department reported that they didn't get time to interact with the teacher because of the strength of the class. Participants 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 24 were uncomfortable with the strength of the class. Participant 17 said that he preferred to study in small classes. Participant 20 suggested that in small classes students get the opportunity to interact with the teacher while 23 mentioned the size of the class as 48 to tell his discomfort with the number.

b. *Relationship with the language teacher.* Lack of relationship between teacher and students has an impact on the classroom performance of the students. The lack of collaboration between the teacher and the learner resulted in anxiety in the participants. The nature of the relationship between a student and a teacher is categorized into three: Good and productive, good and nonproductive, and no relationship.

Five of the research participants reported no relationship with the teacher whereas the rest of the participants had normal and unproductive relationships with the teachers. Participants 7, 8, 14, 15, and 20 mentioned that didn't have a relationship with their English teacher. They reported that they didn't have a relationship where they could discuss language-related issues with her. Participant 20 however provided the reason for this lack of relationship with the teacher in these words, "*We are freshers so we don't have good bonding with the teachers.*"

c. *Relationship with peers.* Relationships with peers might affect language practice and indirectly language learning process. One of the research participants reported a poor relationship with his peers and reported it as a reason for his being uncomfortable in class. he was unable to practice language in the presence of his peers. The rest of the research participants had a normal relationship with their classmates as they were in their first semester therefore, they didn't have a good bond with them.

### 3. *Affective Factors*

The following affective factors were reported by the research participants:

- a. Negative Self Perception
- b. Negative Perception of the Subject
- c. Lack of Interest

a. ***Negative Self Perception.*** Language learning has a strong positive correlation with the perception of the self in the class. Achievement in language depends on how one perceives oneself in the class. The results of the data showed that participants had a low perception of their selves in the class. four of the research participants reported a negative perception of their selves in the class. Participant 7 said, “*I see myself as a silent student in the language class. I don’t speak in the class until and unless the teacher calls me.*” Participants 15 and 16 found themselves introverts and backbenchers whereas participant 24 described himself to be a normal student: a student who is neither silent nor active. Although the majority of the research participants didn’t show a negative perception of the self, however, it still can be considered a factor that may cause anxiety among the students.

b. ***Negative Perception of the Subject.*** One of the research participants had a negative perception of the subject and reported it to be a boring subject. He believed that there wasn’t any need to learn it as the students of computer sciences have nothing to do with it. He believed English language learning to be a waste of time.

c. ***Lack of Interest.*** The research participants especially from the CS department of NUML showed their lack of interest in English language classrooms. They had come with the intention to learn computer languages. Learning other supporting subjects such as mathematics made sense to them as it was directly linked to their field. They, however, were unable to develop a connection between the English language and the technology that they wanted to master. This lack of interest in the subject ultimately leads to their anxiety in the language classroom.

### 4. *Linguistic*

From the linguistic factors, the rules of grammar were found to be the reason for anxiety in English language classrooms. Participant 1 found grammar to be very boring and found himself in trouble when he was supposed to use the rules of grammar. Three times, grammar is reported as a boring stuff by the anxious students. Whereas

fifth time, the multiplicity of grammatical rules caused problems for the research participants.

#### **4.6.1.2.Meso System**

At the meso level, the following factors were reported:

1. Previous language learning Experience
  2. Activity of Leisure
  3. Family Educational background
  4. Area of Residence
1. ***Previous Language Learning Experience***

Previous language learning experiences exert a serious influence on the language learning of the students. 16 participants had mentioned their previous experience to be the reason for their anxiety in the class. The research participants have reported two types of issues related to their previous LL experience first the methodology at their previous institutes was different from the recent methodology. At school and college, the teachers used to read the text and then translate that into Urdu to make that comprehensible. In other words, the grammar translation method was used in their previous institutes. Second, the students had problems with the teaching style of the teacher at the university participant 1 mentioned that the classes of English are quite boring as the teacher isn't good at explaining the rules of grammar.

The participants have also reported their previous experience of LL at school and college as boring and this was the reason for their being uncomfortable in the language classes at the university. Participant 15 mentioned it in his comment in these words: "*Teachers did not teach us accurately Matric and FSc, so it was boring*".

2. ***Activity of Leisure***

Previous research has proved that activity of leisure also has an impact on the learning of language. The details of the activity of leisure of the research participants are given below which clearly shows the nature of the activity in which the participants had engaged themselves in their leisure. The table clearly shows that except for 2 participants, all the rest are engaged in such activities that do not contribute to the language learning process. Reading is considered a positive activity in terms of language learning.

*Table 15: Activity of Leisure Adopted by the Research Participants (NUML)*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Student ID</b>	<b>Activity of Leisure</b>
1	Participant 1	Video Games
2	Participant 2	Using social media
3	Participant 3	Watching Movies
4	Participant 4	Self-Study
5	Participant 5	Snooker
6	Participant 6	Football
7	Participant 7	Watching Youtube Videos
8	Participant 8	Sleep
9	Participant 9	Snooker
10	Participant 10	Freelancing
11	Participant 11	Using Social Media
12	Participant 12	Playing Outdoor Games
13	Participant 13	Playing Games
14	Participant 14	Reading Books and Teaching Students
15	Participant 15	Reading Books
16	Participant 16	Playing Games
17	Participant 17	Nothing
18	Participant 18	Playing Games Online
19	Participant 19	Playing Games
20	Participant 20	Cricket
21	Participant 21	Playing and Watching Cricket
22	Participant 22	Freelancing

23	Participant 23	Don't get spare time
24	Participant 24	Using Social Media and Watching TV

### 3. *Educational Background*

*Table 16: Family Educational Background of the Participants (NUML)*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Student ID</b>	<b>Father's Terminal Education</b>	<b>Mother's Terminal Education</b>
1	Participant 1	Matric	Matric
2	Participant 2	BA	Matric
3	Participant 3	BA	Matric
4	Participant 4	Matric	Matric
5	Participant 5	MA	BA
6	Participant 6	MA	MA
7	Participant 7	BA	BA
8	Participant 8	MA	MA
9	Participant 9	MA	Matric
10	Participant 10	MA	Matric
11	Participant 11	Matric	MA
12	Participant 12	MA	MA
13	Participant 13	Matric	Matric
14	Participant 14	Matric	Matric
15	Participant 15	Matric	uneducated
16	Participant 16	BA	uneducated
17	Participant 17	Matric	Matric



18	Participant 18	BA	Matric
19	Participant 19	MA	BA
20	Participant 20	BA	BA
21	Participant 21	Matric	Matric
22	Participant 22	MA	uneducated
23	Participant 23	BA	Matric
24	Participant 24	Matric	MA

The table above shows that half of the research participants had either one or both parents who had attended just school and three of the mothers were uneducated. Eight of the participants had both parents qualified. It is a fact that cannot be neglected. When these participants were asked about the role of their parents in the language learning process, they expressed the lack of concern of their parents with language: some had different subjects that had nothing to do with language; others didn't have time for their children in the language development phase.

#### **4. Area of Residence**

Two of the research participants mentioned the area of their living as a determinant of their poor performance in language. One of the participants was from DIG Khan and he didn't have an educated lot around him there. The second, participant 7 said: *"People around us are not educated and they cannot speak or understand English."*

#### **5. Socio-economic status**

The table below shows the socio-economic status of the students from NUML, Islamabad. The data showed a different pattern from the students of Faisalabad. The majority belonged to the upper middle class whereas the majority belonged to the lower middle class in the public sector university of Faisalabad.

Table 17: Socio-Economic Status of Students of University

No.	Student ID	Father's Terminal Education	Father's Occupation	Score on Kuppuswamy's scale	Socio-economic class
1	Participant 1	Matric	Retired Typist	15	Lower Middle
2	Participant 2	BA	Manager at Suzuki Motors	18	Upper Middle
3	Participant 3	BA	Businessman	19	Upper Middle
4	Participant 4	Matric	Shop keeper	15	Lower Middle
5	Participant 5	MA	Government Teacher	21	Upper Middle
6	Participant 6	MA	Bank Manager	22	Upper Middle
7	Participant 7	BA	Works with Insurance Company	15	Lower Middle
8	Participant 8	MA	Personal Business	22	Upper Middle
9	Participant 9	MA	Government Job at FBR	23	Upper Middle
10	Participant 10	MA	Government Job	21	Upper Middle
11	Participant 11	Matric	Business	15	Lower Middle
12	Participant 12	MA	Government Teacher	21	Upper Middle
13	Participant 13	Matric	Clerk	14	Lower Middle
14	Participant 14	Matric	Private job	14	Lower Middle
15	Participant 15	Matric	Sales manager	14	Lower Middle
16	Participant 16	BA, LLB	Lawyer	21	Upper Middle
17	Participant 17	Matric	Business	18	Upper Middle
18	Participant 18	BA	Property Dealer	22	Upper Middle
19	Participant 19	MA	Analyst	22	Upper Middle
20	Participant 20	BA	Real State Business	22	Upper Middle
21	Participant 21	Matric	Motor workshop	15	Lower Middle

22	Participant 22	MA	Administrative officer	22	Upper Middle
23	Participant 23	BA	Bank Accountant	20	Upper Middle
24	Participant 24	Matric	Police officer	14	Lower Middle

#### 4.6.1.3.Exo level

At the exo level, three factors were mentioned by the research participants as the reason for anxiety. The details of the factors are given below:

##### 1. *Teaching Methodology*

Teaching methodology can play a pivotal role in reducing the anxiety of the students. The teaching methodology is perhaps the important factor that can increase or decrease the anxiety of language learners. Students have highlighted the issues they faced related to teaching. Out of all the mentioned factors, the most frequent one is the medium of instruction. The analysis of observation revealed that the teacher had used English throughout while the students put their queries in Urdu i.e., an indication of the fact that they are not comfortable with the language and cannot speak it. Most of the research participants recommended that the teacher should use Urdu along with English so that they may understand the concepts well. One of the participants said, “*The teacher should use the language according to the level of the students and teach them according to their perspective*”.

##### 2. *Views about Curriculum*

Five of the research participants found themselves dissatisfied with the syllabus or curriculum. Participants 13, 14, 18, 21, and 24 showed their state of being uncomfortable with the curriculum. Participant 18 found the curriculum boring, and Participants 14 and 21 mentioned it as boring as there was nothing new for them in the course. In the words of Participant 21, “In this book, all things are those we are studied in school life.” Participant 24 however found the course to be the most difficult of all the courses offered in the semester.

The grammar included in the curriculum posed serious problems for the students. Five of the research participants reported grammar in the curriculum to be the reason for anxiety in the class. Participants 1 and 13 found grammar to be boring,

Participant 20 was dissatisfied with the grammar and specifically with parts of speech. Participant 18 was uncomfortable with novels that the teacher used to assign to her students. They think that they have come to take a degree in a specific domain and they shouldn't be taught anything except that.

### 3. *Rules of the Institute*

Three rules of the institute were mentioned by the research participants as the reason for their being worried in the class. Four participants mentioned three rules i.e., the rule of 75% attendance, the rule of 30% of sessional activities, and one lecture against three credit hours of the course.

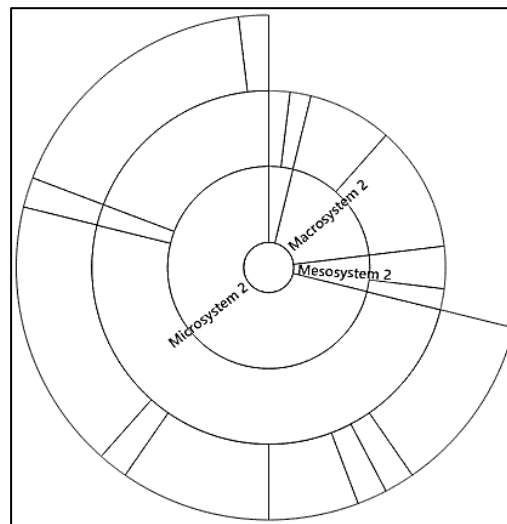
The rule that caused a problem for the research participants was the double slot for English. Three of the participants reported double lectures as the reason for their anxiety in language class. For a course of three credit hours, the lectures of English were conducted once a week, for three hours continuously. This was a practice in the institute as all the classes of English followed the same pattern. The students found it difficult to listen to a foreign language for three hours continuously. They had lost their interest in the subject after 30 to 40 min; the rest of the lecture they attended just for the sake of attendance without learning anything. The second rule that caused problems for the students was the rule of 75% attendance. Language cannot be learned without interest and with this rule of 75% attendance, the students are bound to attend the classes whether they are willing to attend or not. Such a forced class can add nothing to the knowledge of a person. The third rule is 30 percent marks for sessional activities. Although the same rule is applicable in other classes as well in language class it poses a serious issue because of the marks assigned to presentations. Students didn't have any previous experience of presentations but in language class, this is difficult as these presentations are supposed to be delivered in English.

#### **4.6.1.4. Macrosystem**

At the macro level, the anxious students reported the lack of an English-speaking environment in the country to be responsible for their anxiety in the class. Language can be learned only in the environment in which learners live. In the artificial classroom environment, they can gain information about the language but they cannot learn it.

#### 4.6.2. Analysis of the Data Obtained from Diaries (NUML)

The analysis of the diaries revealed that students get anxious in language class because of multiple factors that can be classified into four layers of the nested ecosystem model of Bronfenbrenner. The details of the anxiety-causing factors are presented below in the form of a hierarchy chart.



*Figure 47: Hierarchy Chart Anxiety Causing Factors (Diaries NUML)*

The chart clearly explains that students believe that they get anxious in language class because of the factors at the microsystem level. If the aggregate ratio of the factors is calculated, it is 51:18. Only 18 times the students reported that they get anxious because of meso, exo, or macro level, and 51 times they reported issues related to microsystem. The detail of the factors at the micro level is provided below.

##### 4.6.2.1. Microsystem

At the micro level, the students of NUML reported the following factors:

1. Affective
2. Linguistic
3. Cognitive

The aggregate value of these factors is presented below in the form of a hierarchy chart.

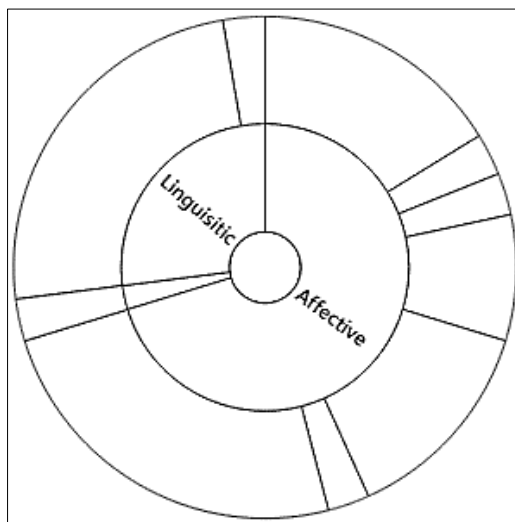


Figure 48: Hierarchy Chart Anxiety Causing Factors at Micro level (Diaries, NUML)

### 1. *Affective Factors*

The hierarchy chart above shows that students get anxious in language class largely because of affective factors. The factors that are related to the feelings and emotions of the learners and cause anxiety in language classrooms will be discussed here. Students reported seven different affective factors to be responsible for their anxiety. These factors are discussed below according to their aggregate value.

- a. Overestimation Bias
- b. Communication Apprehension
- c. Negative perception of the subject
- d. Lack of Interest
- e. Fear of Making Mistakes
- f. Lack of Confidence
- g. Negative perception of the self

a. **Overestimation Bias.** According to the American Psychological Association (2018), if a person overestimates his ability to perform a task or is excessively certain of the accuracy of his thoughts about that task, he is called overconfident. The most prominent of the affective factors that were reported ten times by the participants is they don't have any problem with English or English is not a difficult subject. Participants 5, 7, 11, 12, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, and 24 reported that they don't have any issues with English language. Although they claimed not to have any issues with the language, their writing, their interviews, and even their teachers

confirmed that they have language issues. This overestimation bias can be traced in their statements such as participant 11 said, “*English is not difficult for me. I am confused in speaking English. But I am writing English quite well.*” (I can write English well but I face problems when it comes to speaking). The language used by the participant clearly shows that he has issues with writing as well but he overestimated his skills. All the other participants except Participant 7 used more or less the same statement that English is not a difficult subject. Participant 7 went too far and claimed that his English is good. The FLCAS score of 128 confirmed his anxiety in language class, but he persisted that language is not his problem. He questioned the authenticity of the questionnaire which again shows his overestimation bias.

**b. *Communication Apprehension.*** The second most prominent factor which was reported by the participants is communication apprehension. Six of the research participants reported communication apprehension to be the reason for being worried in the class. Participants, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 14 found themselves in trouble whenever they tried to speak with others or when they spoke in front of others. Participant 7 talked about social anxiety twice in his diary in the following words: “*I am good English, but I do not have the confidence to speak publically.*” And the second time he wrote in Urdu: “*Likhny main asan hy lakin bolny main mushkil hy*” (I feel comfortable when I write but when it comes to speaking, it is problematic). The switch from English to Urdu shows his lack of proficiency in the English language. Participant 8 expressed his social anxiety more or less the same way: “*I am good, but I have an anxiety to spoke English with others*”. Participant 14 talked about his social anxiety in a clear way in these words: “*My English acsent is good but due to uncomfortable in front of others I cannot do as much better as I can do*” (I know the good pronunciation of words, but I cannot speak in front of others, and I lose confidence). The rest of the research participants also reported the same type of issues.

Two of the research participants reported this fear of foreign languages to be the reason for their worry and poor performance in class. Participants 20 and 22 faced this issue and reported it in the following words respectively: “*Englis is difficult in the way as it is a foreign language and English aik bain al aqwami zuban hy is liye isy sahi sy bol nhi paaty*” [English is an international language, therefore, we are unable to speak it out proficiently.]

c. **Negative Perception of the Subject.** Negative perception about a subject affects the learning process severely especially when it comes to language learning. Students may feel a lack of motivation and lack of interest to engage themselves in the subject. It may also lead to stress and anxiety which indirectly affect the language learning process. The four participants of the research reported at eight places their lack of interest and motivation with the subject because of their negative perception of the subject. Participants 3 and 4 found it time-consuming. Time-consuming means they did not find it of any worth that they took it as a waste of time. They neither had analysed the importance of the subject nor they were guided by the teacher therefore it was pointless for them to spend time on its learning. Another factor that the same participants reported is the lengthy process of mastering this language. Both the participants had the same sort of experience which means they had either studied together or had a discussion about it. They believed that to master this language, one has to pass certain levels which is very hectic. They may be referring to IELTS where one is supposed to attain certain bands but they did not understand that all the languages require the same sort of effort to master. This shows a lack of understanding of the language learning process in general and a negative perception of the subject specifically.

d. **Lack of interest.** Interest in the learning process makes it easy for the learners to grasp and the lack of interest makes the language learning process a challenge. Two of the research participants blamed the lack of interest for their lack of interest in the class. Participant 17 said that he had enrolled himself in BSCS with the mind that he would learn about programming but when he joined, it dawned upon him that he had to learn other subjects such as English, Islamyat, etc. Since he wasn't expecting this subject, therefore, he wasn't able to develop an interest. Participant 21 expressed his lack of interest in a blunt way. In his words: *“English is not a difficult subject or language. It is purely a matter of interest. Since I am not interested in this language therefore, I don't feel good with this language”*.

e. **Lack of Confidence.** Lack of confidence is another important factor that was reported by the research participant as a reason for anxiety in the class. Participant 7 and participant 14 get worried in language class because of a lack of confidence. Participant 7 said that he did not have the confidence to speak this language whereas participant 14 expressed his issue elaborately in this way: *“Because I find it a difficult language not too much difficult but due to some of my anxiety issues. I can't talk in front*



of the teacher and find difficulty in talking in front of teacher and talking teacher about my problem.” He couldn’t develop confidence to tell the teacher if he couldn’t understand any of the things in class moreover, he wasn’t able to contribute something even when he knew the answer to something.

**f. Fear of Making Mistakes.** To learn a language effectively, a trial and error method is essential. If someone fears making a mistake, he won’t be able to master the language. Participant 13 got anxious in the class because he feared that people would laugh at him if he committed any mistake. Since he wasn’t proficient in language, he was sure to make mistakes.

**g. Negative Self-Perception.** Participant 9 found himself in trouble because he was not sure of his own self. He mentioned twice in his diary that his English is weak. In the first statement, he said that his English is weak and in the second statement he elaborated: “*I am very weak in English. English is difficult me speaking and my writing grammar, noun, pronoun mistake*”

## 2. Linguistic Factors

At the linguistic level, two factors were reported in the diaries as the potential reasons for their anxiety in language class. The details of the factors are given below in the form of a diagram.

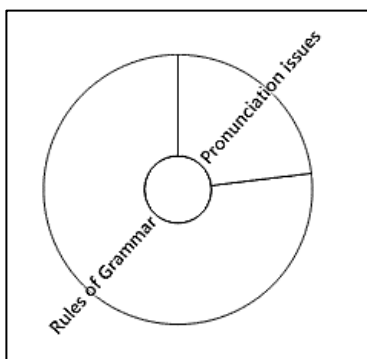


Figure 49: Aggregate Value of Linguistic Factors

a. **Rules of Grammar.** At the linguistic level, nine participants reported ten times that they found themselves in trouble because of the rules of grammar. The participants who have reported grammar to be the reason for anxiety in the class can be categorized into three sections: one who believed that the rules of grammar are difficult, second who found the multiplicity of grammatical rules as problematic, and third who were facing problems in their implementation. The details of the participants and the aggregate of their statements are presented below in the form of a graph.

The most noticeable contribution was provided by Participant 16. He made an elaborated statement in these words, “*English is easy when it is considered as a way of communication but the grammatical part of the part that you have to learn is actually an issue.*” He mentioned learning grammar to be problematic. Participant 3 believed the multiplicity of grammatical rules was his real problem. Participant 9 mentioned it in the following words, “*English is a very heard language due to its complex grammar rules and prancaition*” (English is difficult because of the complex rules of grammar and pronunciation).

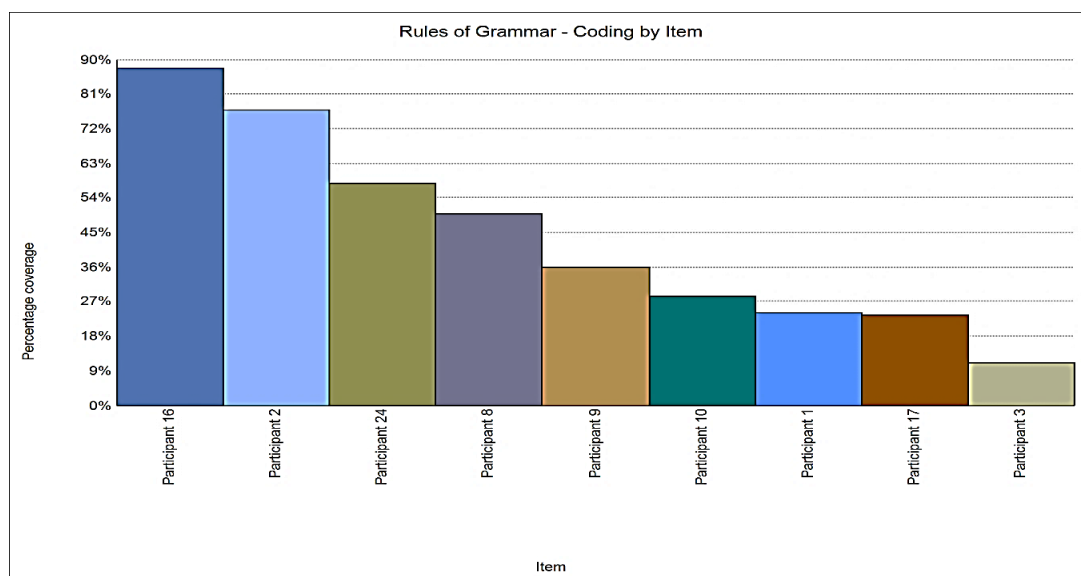


Figure 50: Rules of Grammar as Anxiety Causing Factor (Diaries, NUML)

b. **Pronunciation Issue.** The second issue, reported at the linguistic level by a participant is that of pronunciation. Participant 1 reported the issue three times in his diary which tells the severity of the issue. All the three statements are given below:

1. It is very difficult to pronounce a few words in English

2. It becomes difficult when a word is written with different words and has to be pronounced with different words.

In hearing, it becomes difficult when someone is speaking properly or hides the words during conversations to shorten the length of sentences and it is difficult when the letters of a word are not pronounced properly. The rule of silent letters was hard to understand for participant 1 which also implies less exposure to the English language.

### 3. *Cognitive Factors*

At the cognitive level, only one factor was reported by the research participant i.e., Lack of vocabulary. Three of the research participants 1, 10, and 11 found themselves in trouble because of the lack of vocabulary. All these participants believed that English was deemed difficult to them when they were unable to understand the vocabulary words used by the teachers. The lack of vocabulary leads to a lack of cognition which in turn creates discomfort among the students in the language class.

#### 4.6.2.2. Mesosystem

At the meso-level, only one factor was reported by research participant 15 as the reason for his anxiety in the class. He found himself in trouble as his previous language learning experience at school wasn't good. He had studied at a government school where there wasn't any focus on language. The same situation prevailed at the college level too therefore he could not develop his confidence in the language. His statement is a clear indication of a problem with the language: "*English is difficult for us because it does not teach us properly in matric and FSc so our base are not good. So, it demand more attention from us.*" (English is difficult because it wasn't taught to him properly at school and college level therefore it requires more attention now.)

### 4.6.2.3.Exosystem

The issues that the research participants reported at the exo level are presented below in the form of a hierarchy chart.

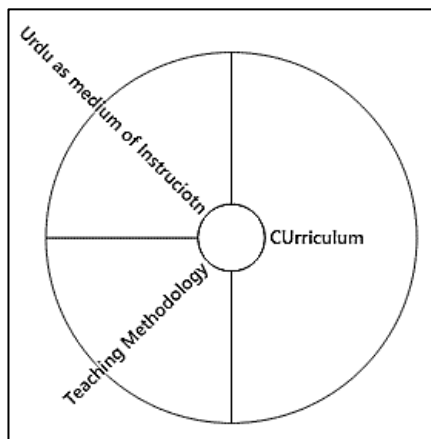


Figure 51: Hierarchy chart: Anxiety Causing Factors at Exo level (Diaries, NUML)

#### 1. Curriculum

Dissatisfaction with the curriculum causes anxiety among the research participants. Participant 18 found himself in trouble because of a novel that was included in the syllabus. The students who had enrolled themselves in BSCS, had a technical bent of mind as they were more interested in programming and computer-related stuff. The lack of interest in literature leads them to be dissatisfied with language learning. The same was expressed in the statement given by participant 18. Since the issue was reported by only one participant, therefore I shouldn't be given consideration. However, the dissatisfaction with the curriculum may be attributed to the lack of understanding of the objective of the course.

#### 2. Teaching methodology

Participant 13 reported his problem with the teaching methodology. Although only one of the participants reported this issue in the diary, in the interviews most of the students had problems with the teaching methodology of their teachers at school and college level. They might not have highlighted the issue with the teaching methodology at the university level as a teacher is considered all in all in a university in terms of student results.

### 3. *Urdu as Medium of Instruction*

The national language of Pakistan is Urdu and a medium of instruction at educational institutes. As per HEC, at the university level, the medium of instruction should be English whereas at the school and college level, classroom proceedings are conducted in Urdu or a combination of Urdu and English. The students who had studied at Urdu medium school find themselves in trouble when the teachers at the university level use English or a hybrid version. Participant 5 reported that he faced problems in language class as the school that he had visited was Urdu medium as the majority of schools in Pakistan are.

#### 4.6.2.4. Macro Level

At the macro level, the following issues were reported by the students as the reason for their anxiety in the class:

1. Lack of English-speaking Environment
2. Societal Beliefs about English Language
1. *Lack of English-speaking Environment*

Language can be learned in its natural environment. The artificial environment can help in understanding a language but it cannot make one proficient in the language to the extent of compete the speakers who had learned that in natural settings. Seven times the issue of the lack of a speaking environment was reported by the six participants of the research. Participants 3, 4, and 5 found themselves in trouble as they did not have an environment where they could practice the language. Participant 13 complained that the environment is not supportive of language learning. Participant 20 said that he faced problems because the environment supports the development of the Urdu language. Participant 22 reported this issue twice in his diary in Urdu. First, he said: “*Angraizi k bohat saary elaqon main bolny nahi diya jata kion k bohat sy log isy nahi smjhty*” we cannot use the English language in many places as many people do not understand this language. Even when the students are ready to apply whatever they have learned, they remain unable to use it as the basic purpose of communication is to transfer information which requires a mutual language that in such cases is not available. In second place, he mentioned the same sort of issue by reporting that English is not understood in the small cities of Pakistan. Therefore, the students get anxious in

language class as there is not any practical implementation of the thing that they learn in the class.

## 2. *Societal Beliefs about English Language*

How a society takes a language or thinks about, it exerts an influence on its development. Five students reported six times that they think English is a difficult language that cannot be mastered easily. With this belief in mind, whenever a student enters a class, he thinks he just needs to attend the lecture, there isn't any need to pay attention to it as he cannot fully grasp it.

### 4.6.3. Analysis of Teachers' Perspective (NUML)

To take the perspective of English teachers of NUML regarding the students' anxiety in the English language, interviews with two teachers teaching in the departments of Management and Computer Sciences were conducted. The graph below shows that students get anxious because of multiple factors that stretch across all four layers of the nested ecosystem model which emphasizes the need to deal with the issue of language learning anxiety from an ecological perspective.

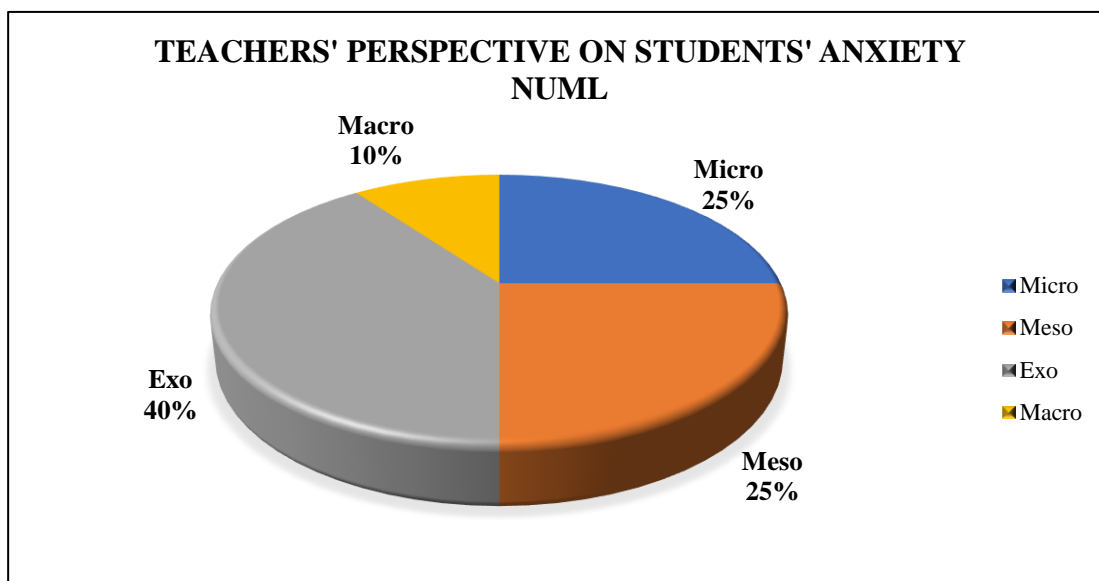


Figure 52: Teachers' Perspective on Students' Anxiety (NUML)

The interviews with both teachers revealed the following reasons for anxiety among the students of NUML:

1. Previous language learning experience
2. Diverse Educational background
3. Lack of confidence in speaking English

4. Cultural comfort with the Urdu language
  5. Socio-economic status
  6. Challenges in English language education at school and college level
  7. Perception of English as a subject not as a language
  8. Outdated syllabus
  9. Overburdened English teachers
  10. Lack of motivation among the students
  11. Insufficient language labs
  12. Overconfidence
1. ***Previous Language Learning Experience***

The teachers reported previous language learning background to be the reason for students' anxiety in the class. Both teachers believed that their poor background in language learning haunts them at the university level as well.

One aspect related to previous language learning that contributed to the anxiety of students at the university level was the number of students at government schools. For an ideal language class, the number of students should be kept minimum. Whereas in government schools and colleges, there is no difference between a language class and the classes of other subjects. Teacher 2 highlighted this issue in the following words: "In government schools and colleges, there are too many students in the classes, and teachers are unable to pay attention to individual students according to their problems."

2. ***Diverse Educational Background***

The teachers reported diverse educational backgrounds to be a reason for students' anxiety in the class. Students at NUML come from different educational backgrounds; some come from government schools and some from private schools. Again, among private schools, there are different categories that impact students differently. These students bring different language learning experiences to the class. Whatever strategy a teacher adopts, it facilitates some, and some get into trouble because of that. Teacher 2 reported the issue in the following words: "Different Educational backgrounds have made them poor speakers and writers of the English language".

### **3. *Lack of Confidence in Speaking English***

The teachers of English at NUML reported that some of the students get worried in language class as they do not have the confidence to speak. They exhibit hesitancy and lack of confidence in speaking English potentially because of inadequate language proficiency or fear of making mistakes. Teacher 1 has highlighted this issue in the following words, “Students are hesitant to speak in front of others. Lack of confidence is another hurdle in their use of language effectively.

### **4. *Cultural Comfort with the Urdu Language***

Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and is used as a medium of instruction in most schools and colleges. As a result, most of the students feel comfortable expressing themselves in the Urdu language. They prefer to conceptualize and deliver their ideas in the Urdu language. The teachers reported that students feel comfortable if they are provided with the opportunity to express themselves in class. The prevalent culture of Urdu makes it easy for them to express themselves in English.

### **5. *Socio-Economic Status of the Students***

The socioeconomic status of the students also has an impact on their language learning and performance of the students. Teacher 1 has reported it to be the reason for students’ being anxious in the class in the following words, “Students who come from lower middle class are more anxious in the class comparatively.”

### **6. *Challenges in English language education at school and college level***

The teachers of NUML believed that the challenges at the school and college level with reference to English language teaching are many. The teachers are not trained for language teaching, schools are colleges are not equipped with language learning facilitating tools,

### **7. *Perception of English as a subject not as a language***

English is not treated as a language rather it is taken as a subject. These are not the students who take it as a subject but the teachers too. The techniques that are used to teach technical subjects are also used for teaching the English language. Language learning is different from learning other subjects that can be mastered by understanding



a few concepts. Language learning is purely a matter of use. However, teachers and students both treat it as an ordinary subject at school and college level and when the teachers at university level try to teach language in the way it should be taught, they get anxious.

#### **8. *Outdated syllabus***

The syllabus that is taught to the students is outdated and does not offer anything new, interesting, and up-to-date. As a result, the students cannot develop interest in the class. The teachers recommended revising the course content on a regular basis so that it may develop interest among the students.

#### **9. *Overburdened English teachers***

The teachers at NUML reported that English teachers remain overburdened at school, college, and university levels. Being language teachers, they are assigned tasks of reviewing and editing different documents. Because of this extra burden, they cannot devise such activities that may develop the interest of the students. Teacher 2 reported the issue in the following words, "The syllabus is outdated; therefore, the students are not able to develop an interest in such outdated materials."

#### **10. *Lack of motivation among the students***

Lack of motivation among the students serves as a fundamental factor that contributes to the anxiety of the students in language class. The absence of intrinsic motivation can exacerbate feelings of unease leaving the students with a sense of aimlessness and uncertainty. The teachers of NUML also reported a lack of motivation among students as the reason for being uncomfortable in the class.

#### **11. *Insufficient Language Labs***

Another factor that triggers a sense of unease and apprehension in students of English language learning is the inadequacy of language laboratories. The absence of such an essential facility hampers students' ability to engage in practical language exercises which makes the process of language learning as something impractical and boring. At the school and college levels, there is hardly any concept of language laboratories whereas, at the university level, there are hardly some institutes that offer language labs. Even in such institutes, the facilities of the labs are not sufficient to meet

the needs of the students. The absence of opportunities to use language practically is largely responsible for the student's lack of interest in the class.

## **12. *Over Confidence***

Overconfidence in some of the students was reported as the potential reason for being uncomfortable in the language class. Teacher 2 reported this issue with the students who have worked before their admission to the degree in the following words: "They think they already know sufficient English for the working environment so they take the classes of English as a burden."

### **4.6.4. Section Summary**

In this section of chapter 4, the data obtained from the anxious students and teachers of NUML is discussed to find out the reasons for anxiety among university students in Pakistan. The section is divided into three sub-sections: the first deals with the data obtained from activity-based interviews and the data proved the presence of factors in all four levels of the nested ecosystem model. The second subsection discusses the data obtained from the diaries of the students. The analysis also proved the presence of factors in all four layers of the nested ecosystem model. However, the factors at the micro level were reported more by the research participants. The third section discusses the data obtained from the teachers, teaching anxious students. They also reported the factors at all the levels of the nested ecosystem model which confirmed that anxiety is multifaceted in nature and should be dealt with in the same way.

## **4.7. Analysis of the Data Obtained from the Students of RIU**

This section of chapter 4 discusses the data obtained from the students of RIU, Islamabad. Following the pattern set in the previous three sections, this section is also divided into three distinct parts: the first section discusses the findings of the interviews based on activity theory, the second discusses the findings obtained from diaries and the third part analyses the perspective of the teachers on students' anxiety.

### **4.7.1. Analysis of the data obtained from Activity theory based Interviews (RIU)**

The data gathered through activity-based interviews (Mwanza Model, 2002) is discussed in this part of the chapter. The data analysis confirmed the presence of three factors in Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystem model. At the microsystem level, seven

factors were reported by the research participants. These factors include non-familiarity with the objective, low self-perception, non-productive relationship with the teacher or friends, negative views about language class and the activity of presentation are responsible for anxiety. At the meso level, the data brought forward the following six factors: previous LL experience, area of residence, the activity of leisure, family education background, the concern of the parents, and social class. The teaching methodology, curriculum, and assessment method were held responsible for anxiety at the exo-level whereas, at the macro level, the students did not report any issue. The absence of the macro system may be attributed to the absence of students from other provinces. The information on the scores of research participants is as under:

*Table 18: Demographic Information of the Research Participants (RIU)*

<b>No</b>	<b>Student ID</b>	<b>Score at FLCAS</b>
1	Participant 1	127
2	Participant 2	128
3	Participant 3	130
4	Participant 4	131
5	Participant 5	132
6	Participant 6	133
7	Participant 7	133

The interviews with the students of Riphah International University, Islamabad revealed the following themes as the potential reasons for anxiety:

#### 4.7.1.1. Micro level

At the micro level, seven factors were reported by the anxious students which can be categorized into three affective, cognitive, and linguistic. The hierarchy chart below shows the presence of the factors at the micro level.

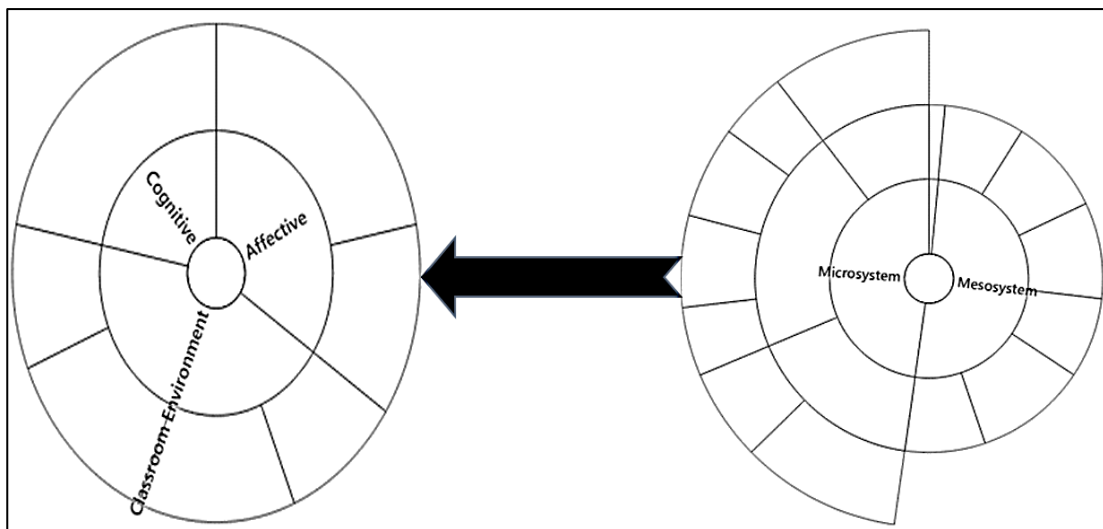


Figure 53: Hierarchy chart: Anxiety Causing Factors at Micro level (INTVW, RIU)

#### 1. *Affective Factors*

The following factors were reported under the heading of affective factors:

- a) Negative Perception of the Self
- b) Negative Perception of the Subject

**a. *Negative Perception of the Self.*** Three of the anxious students think low about themselves in language class. This negative perception of their selves leads to a lack of confidence which is detrimental to language learning. Two of the participants believed that they were not active participants in the class whereas the third participant used the term “average” for himself.

**b. *Perception about the Subject.*** Three of the research participants reported four times having a negative perception of the English language. These participants found English language learning to be a boring activity and they provided different reasons for being bored in the class. Participant 1 found it boring because of the lack of communication or practical activities. Participant 6 also found it boring because of no reason whereas for Participant 7 it was boring as it made less sense to him.

## 2. *Classroom Environment*

a. *Amount of Work.* The students at Riphah University believed that they were not able to perform well in class because of the amount of work that was assigned to them. Three of the participants reported the amount of work to be problematic: two were dissatisfied with the workload of the other subject because of which they were unable to focus on English; one found the work assigned by the English teacher to be troublesome. There must be some rule for the assignment of work so that the students may give all the subjects their required due.

b. *Relationship with language teacher.* The students at Riphah International University did not have a good relationship with their teachers. Since it was their first semester, therefore, they had not built any relationships with their teachers. Five of the research participants reported they did not have any relationship with their English teacher. Participant 1 found it easy to communicate with the English teacher now as compared to his previous experience at school. Although he reported it easily, he never approached his teacher to get his queries answered. Participant 2 was unable to share his issues as he was not frank enough to share. Participant 3 said to had no relationship with the teacher at the university level and the reason he provided was being a student in the first semester. He also added that he did not have any relationship with the language teacher at school as well. It confirms that he had not tried to make any relationship and that was the reason for not approaching the teacher at this level too. Participant 7 on the other hand had a very negative perception of the teacher as is clear from his statement, “*Agar ap English k teachers say kuch kaho b to wo apki baat nahi sunty*” (they won’t listen to you even if you say something).

c. *Relationship with the Peers.* The environment of a class helps a lot in attaining language proficiency. If the students cooperate with one another, they learn fast. The participants of the current research reported not to have a good relationship with their peers. Some of the participants reported having no relationship with their peers and some reported having unproductive relations. Participant 2 said to has no relationship with his peers as he said, “*main apny class fellows say baat nahi karta*” (I don’t talk to my fellows). Participant 4 on the other hand had a very good relationship but they never tried to study together and the same was reported by Participant 5.

d. *Size of the class and Number of students.* The general strength of a class at Riphah International Islamabad was between 45-50. The size of the room was small compared to the number of students. Four of the research participants believed

that they could improve their language if there were fewer students in the class. Participants 1, 2, and 3 had studied at private colleges where the number of students was 70 plus whereas participant 4 had completed her Intermediate from Degree college where one section comprised of 100+ students. The rest of the three went to Punjab Group of Colleges which is a famous private college. Here again, the number of students crossed 50 in every section which is not considered a language-facilitating environment.

### 3. *Cognitive Factors*

a. *Familiarity with the objective.* Confirming the findings of the data from the other three universities, the students at Riphah International were also not familiar with the objective of learning the course. Five out of seven research participants reported their non-familiarity with the objective of learning English. They were not informed by the teachers about the objectives of the course, nor they had set any goals for themselves from the course. When they were asked why they were learning this course, they either said they didn't know or they tried to think of the reason. The statement such as "Perhaps this is required for future work" is proof that they were not familiar with the objective.

#### 4.7.1.2.Meso Level

##### 1. *Family Educational Background*

The table below shows that the parents of anxious students were not highly qualified which may be a reason for their lack of English-speaking environment at home. These research participants have reported that they do not get any assistance from their homes in terms of English language learning.

*Table 19: Family Education Background of the Participants (RIU)*

No.	Student ID	Father's Education	Mother's Education
1	Participant 1	FA	BA
2	Participant 2	FA	BA
3	Participant 3	BA	Matric
4	Participant 4	Matric	Matric

5	Participant 5	FA	Uneducated
6	Participant 6	Matric	Matric
7	Participant 7	Matric	FA

## 2. *Activity of Leisure*

The Participants of the research showed that they were not engaged in language-facilitating activities in their spare time. Only one of the research participants mentioned book reading to be an activity of spare time. This thing needs to be noted that the activity of book reading was found only in the students at Islamabad. The anxious students from Faisalabad however did not exhibit any such activity to pass their leisure. The details of the activities of leisure are provided below in the form of table:

*Table 20: Activity of Leisure Adopted by the Research Participants (RIU)*

No.	Student ID	Activity of Leisure
1	Participant 1	Watching TV
2	Participant 2	To spend time with friends
3	Participant 3	Reading Books
4	Participant 4	Playing Cricket
5	Participant 5	Mobile and social media. Gup shup
6	Participant 6	Social media
7	Participant 7	Social media

## 3. *Area of Residence*

Area of residence exerts influence on one's language as language is a social phenomenon. The participants of the research from Riphah International reported that they did not belong to an area where they could find fellows who might have helped them in their English language learning. Five out of seven participants mentioned it to be the reason for their poor performance in the class. Participant 5 said, "*Jis elaqy main rehta hun wahan log Punjabi bolty hain, is wajh sy main Urdu ya Punjabi main achy sy communicate ker skta hun*" (the area in which I live, people mostly speak Punjabi

that is why I feel comfortable with Punjabi and Urdu). Participants mentioned the same. Participant 4 was from Attock and he believed that his area has affected his English language learning whereas Participant 3 was from Pindi Gheb, a small town near Islamabad. Participant 2 said, *“I live in a backward area of Rawat and I do not get opportunity to communicate with someone in English”*

#### **4. Previous LL Experience**

The most prominent of all the factors reported is the factor of previous LL experience. All the anxious participants from Riphah International University reported that they are poor in terms of the English language because of their poor previous background. They believe that they had a poor experience of language learning at school or at the college level. Participant 1 said that he had a very ordinary experience of language learning at the school and college levels. In his comment, he wrote: *“Urdu medium school main parhna he meri language weak hony ke asal wajah hy”* [the real reason for being poor in the class is my previous background of Urdu medium schools]. Participant 2 said that at his school, it was not mandatory to speak English therefore I didn't get any help from school in terms of English language”. Participant 5 reported this issue in these words, *“mera yaqeen hy k institute matter kerta hy. Garrison main meri English improve ho age thee kion k teachers achy thy lakin college main aa ker wo sub bhool gaya jo pehly parha tha”* [I believe institute matters a lot. Garrison improved my English as the teachers were good. But college made me forget what I had already learned]. Participants 6 and 7 also reported more or less the same.

#### **5. Parental Concern**

Another factor that was reported by the students at Riphah International Islamabad was the lack of concern of the parents. Five of the research participants reported that their parents were not concerned about their studies. It was sufficient for them that they were studying. Moreover, their parents were not highly qualified which might be a reason for their lack of concern.

#### **6. Financial Background**

Although the students at Riphah International University took admission based on their finances, these students were sharing the financial burden with their parents. Four of the research participants reported that they were working to meet their expenses



and they had started their degree to get a promotion. Participants 1 and 6 were doing online jobs as Participant 1 added “*It’s a kinda business*”, participant 7 reported being a freelancer. Participant 2 on the other hand was doing a physical job from 2 pm to 9 pm as an SEO expert. To manage work and studies at the same time was a difficult job therefore minor courses such as functional English are often ignored by such students. The table below shows the details of the scores attained by these participants on the socio-economic scale.

*Table 21: Scores attained by Participants on the Socio-economic Scale*

No.	Student ID	Father’s Education	Father’s Occupation	Score on Kuppuswamy’s scale	Socio-economic class
1	Participant 1	FA	Quality Checker at Masood Textiles	12	Lower Middle
2	Participant 2	FA	Works at Nestle	12	Lower Middle
3	Participant 3	BA	Timber Business	18	Upper Middle
4	Participant 4	Matric	Runs school and college van	12	Lower Middle
5	Participant 5	FA	Runs Book Store	17	Upper Middle
6	Participant 6	Matric	A guard at a factory outlet	11	Lower Middle
7	Participant 7	Matric	Driver	11	Lower Middle

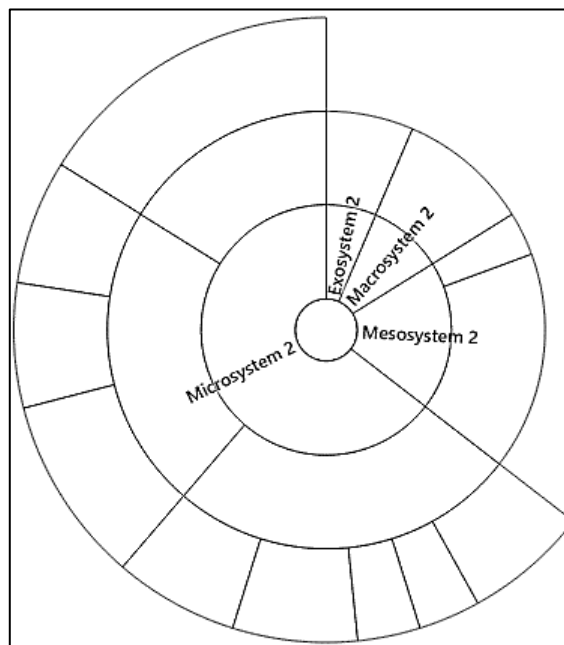
#### **4.7.1.3.Exo System**

At the exo level, three factors were reported by the research participants: Teaching Methodology, curriculum, and assessment method. Three of the participants were dissatisfied with the teaching methodology. Participant 3 said that he did not feel comfortable in the class as it was his first experience taking classes in English. At school and college levels, he was taught with grammar translation method. Participant 4 was uncomfortable with the teaching methodology, and he suggested that the teacher should explain things in depth. Participant 7 suggested that the teacher should use more Urdu as compared to English.

Participant 6 was uncomfortable with the long syllabus that he was supposed to cover. It may be because of the anxiety. Since he was uncomfortable with the English language therefore it appeared problematic to him. The same participant showed his dissatisfaction with the assessment method. He believed that English shouldn't be assessed the way it is assessed like regular subjects.

#### 4.7.2. Analysis of the Data Obtained from Diaries (RIU)

The themes that emerged from the diaries of the students are presented below in the form of a hierarchy chart below.



*Figure 54: Hierarchy Chart Anxiety Causing Factors (Diaries, RIU)*

The chart shows that the microsystem is reported to be largely responsible for the anxiety of the students in the class. The second prominent system is that of the mesosystem, then the macro, and at the end the exosystem.

#### 4.7.2.1. Microsystem

At the microsystem level, seven factors were responsible for the anxiety of the students in the class; two of the factors belonged to linguistic factors whereas five of the factors were of an affective nature. The detail of the factors is given below.

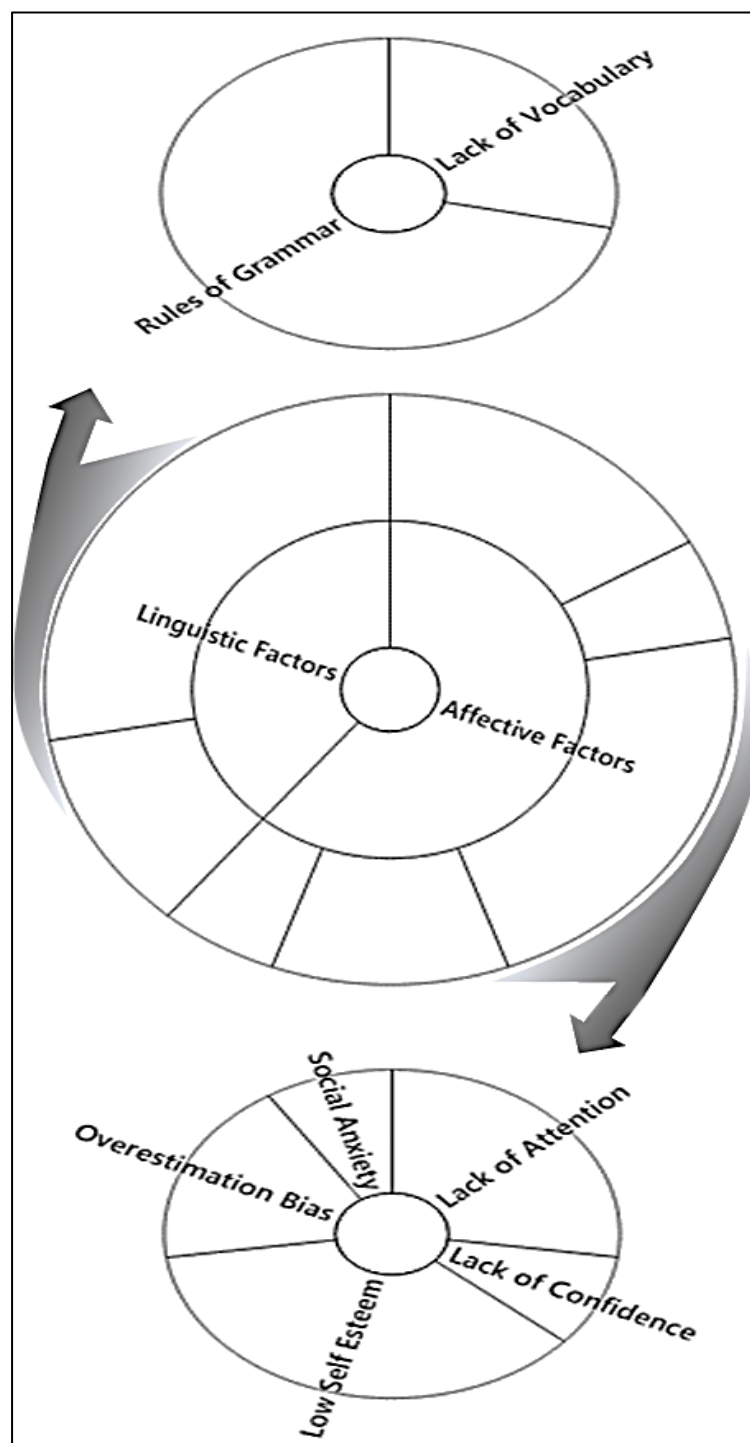


Figure 55: Hierarchy Chart Anxiety Causing Factors at microsystem level (Diaries, RIU)

### 1. *Affective Factors*

At the affective level, the students reported the following six factors:

- a. Low self-esteem
- b. Lack of Attention
- c. Overestimation Bias
- d. Lack of confidence
- e. Social anxiety

a. **Low Self-Esteem.** The most prominent factor that was reported by the students at Microsystem was low self-esteem. Three of the students reported at four different places that they have low self-esteem. Participant 2, participant 5, and participant 7 had low self-esteem. Participant 2 talked about his low self-esteem in the words: “Meri Angraizi Kamzor hy” (My English is weak).

Participant 5 talked about his low self-esteem at two places in his diaries and his writing was a clear expression of his weak English. First, he wrote: “*I cannot understand the tense in English. I know all the tenses but when I right I am confused that which tense is applied here.*” Then he expressed in the following words: “*I think that I have week in English spelling that’s why I do not achieve full marks.*” He believed that he was weak in English therefore he was able to attain good marks in the subject. Moreover, whenever he tried to write something down, he got confused as he did not know how to write correct sentences. The important point to note here is, that he neither tried to improve this condition nor showed his willingness to improve. Participant 7 almost reported a similar issue and he believed he could never speak or write.

b. **Lack of Attention.** The second prominent factor that was reported by the students as the reason for their being worried in the class was lack of attention. Three of the students reported that they were not able to pay full attention to whatever the teacher said in the class. Participant 1 blamed his own careless attitude for being worried in class. Participant 3 reported: “*I could not understand today’s lecture because I should not pay full attention on it.*” [I could not understand the lecture because I could not pay full attention to it.] He was not able to understand the lecture because of his own carelessness. Participant 7 said that he had never paid the required attention that why he lagged behind. In his words, “*Main English ke class main is liye parishan hota*

*hun kion k main ny English ko kabhi b dyhan sy nahi parha tha*” [I feel uncomfortable in my English class as I have never taken English seriously.]

c. **Overestimation Bias.** This factor was found among the students of Islamabad alone. Overestimation bias means an individual overestimates or overstates certain traits. Two of the research participants reported that they feel good and comfortable with the subject but in reality, this is not the case. They reported their overestimation bias in the following words: “*English subject is not too much difficult for me but a little*” [English is not that much difficult for me.] whereas Participant 3 said: “*English is an easy subject but I do not know its speaking method*” [English is not a difficult subject but I do not know how to speak it.] When the students were asked about the clarification, they insisted that English is not their problem and it is a very simple language. It is their overestimation bias at school and college levels that created problems for them at the advanced level. They are in trouble but since they haven’t realized the issue, therefore, they are unable to sort it out.

d. **Lack of Confidence.** One of the research participants reported his lack of confidence to be responsible for his anxiety in class. His expression is proof of his problem with the language. In his words: “*I cannot speak English with a lot of speed. That’s why I have loose my confidence*” [I am not fluent in English that is why I lose my confidence.] He was unable to speak fluently and whenever he tried to speak fluently, he lost his confidence.

e. **Social Anxiety.** Participant 5 reported social anxiety in the following words “*I learn all the words by Google etc. but when someone speak with me in English, I will be confuse*” [I can understand written text by searching on Google but when someone talks to me, I get confused.] He was unable to find the meanings of the words when he wasn’t available with Google moreover, he explained his state of confusion during speaking.

## 2. **Linguistic Factors**

At the linguistic level, the students reported two variables to be responsible for their anxiety in the class: Rules of Grammar and Lack of Vocabulary.

a. **Rules of Grammar.** Four participants reported five times that they get anxious in language class because of the multiple and difficult rules of grammar. Participants 2, 3, 6, and 7 found the rules of the English language especially grammar to be problematic for them. Participant 2 reported that he couldn’t understand the lecture

as his grammar was weak whereas Participant 3 expressed his concern in these words: *“The main reason is I does not know the basics like as grammar etc.”* [The main reason is that I do not know the basics of English grammar.] He did not know the rules of grammar which is why he got anxious in class. Participant 6 and 7 also reported that they had problems with the English language because of the multiplicity of the rules of grammar and because of their incomprehensible nature.

**b. Lack of Vocabulary.** Two of the research participants, participants 5 and 6 reported that they were unable to understand the difficult words used by the teacher. Participant 6 however described his state elaborately in these words: *“FSc main b English main kitaabin theein or bohat mushkil sy un ke smjh aati thee oor un ko parhny sy dar lgta tha kion k shuru sy he English k bohat saary alfaaz k maani nhi pata hoty thy.”* [the books in FSc were also in English and it was difficult to understand those books. I had always feared reading those books as I was unfamiliar with a lot of vocabulary words.] He was unable to understand his books in English and had the fear of unknown words right from his FSc where he received English as a medium of instruction for the first time. The same issue he was facing now as there were many difficult words that were incomprehensible.

#### 4.7.2.2.Mesosystem Level

At the meso-level, the research participants reported two factors to be responsible for their anxiety in the class: area of residence and previous language learning experience.

Previous language learning experiences exert a serious influence on the current language learning of the student. Five research participants reported at eight points that they get anxious in language class because of their previous learning background. Participant 1, 2, 4, 6 & 7 reported the medium of instruction at the school and college levels, the focus on getting good grades, and the teaching methodology to be responsible for their poor performance and anxiety in the class. Participant 1 blamed his previous teachers for being an ineligible language user in the current class in these words: *“Mine past teachers were also a reason for my difficulty in English language or subject because of their ineligibility.”* Participant 2 expressed his issue with a previous language learning experience in these words: *“Aj present continuous tense parhaya teacher ny lakin mujhy smjh nahi aya kion k main ny school main English per focus nahi kiya tha jis ke wajh sy meri angrazi kamzor hy.”* [the teacher taught present

continuous tense in today's class but I couldn't understand because English wasn't taught well at the school level.] Participant 4 blamed his previous language learning twice: once he blamed his school and second time, he blamed the use of Urdu as a medium of instruction. Participant 7 again found fault with his previous language learning experience and said that his teachers never tried to use English as a medium of instruction and whatever they had taught him, he was unable to implement.

The area of one's residence was also reported as a possible reason for poor performance in the class. Participant 3 believed that he gets anxious in class because he had studied at a village school and college. He was residing in a village and he had attended schools and colleges in the village. The local environment had an impact on his language and the result is his inability to perform well in the class.

#### 4.7.2.3.Exo-level

At the exo level, two factors were reported i.e., theory-practice gap and teaching methodology. The aggregate value of the factors is presented below in the form of a hierarchy chart.

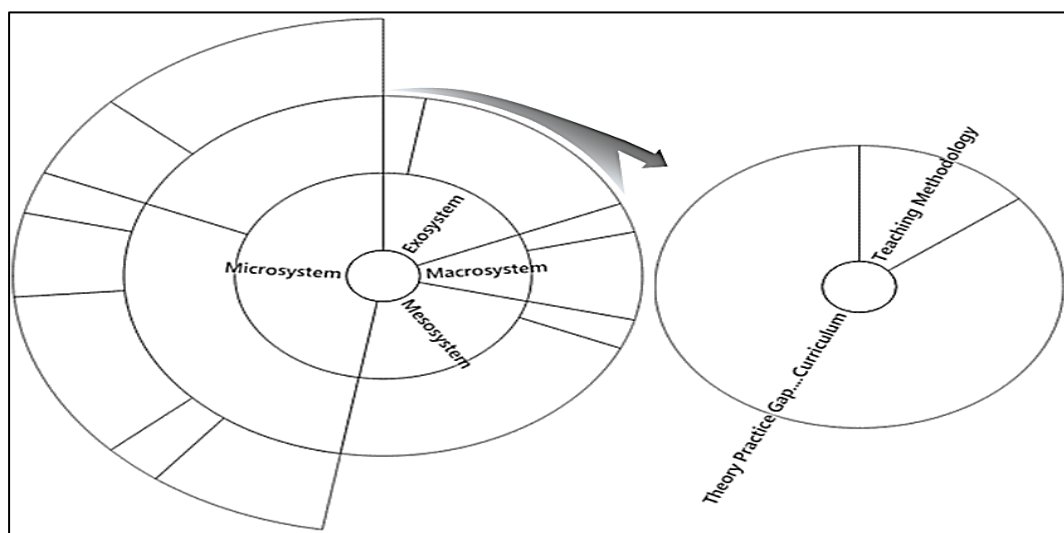


Figure 56: Hierarchy Chart Exosystem (Diaries, RIU)

#### 1. Theory-Practice Gap

Six of the research participants found themselves in trouble in language classes because of the gap in theory and practice. Participants 1,2,3,5,6, and 7 reported that they were taught language theoretically and they remained unable to apply whatever they had learned in practical situations. Participant 1 said that he has an understanding of tenses but he doesn't know how to apply those tenses in real life. Participant 2

expressed the issue in the following words: “*Main ny anraizi ko kabhi apni baat cheet main istemal nahi kiya*” [I have never used English in my conversation.] A participant said: “*I know all the tenses but when I write I am confuse that which tense is applied here.*” (I had a theoretical understanding of tenses but I was unfamiliar with the practical aspect.) The statement shows that he had received less opportunity to practically apply the language. Participants 6 and 7 also expressed the same sort of inability to apply language to practical life. These students were taught grammar and rules but they did not get the opportunity to apply those rules in real-life situations.

## **2. Teaching Methodology**

The second reported factor at the exo-level is teaching methodology. Participant 2 was dissatisfied with the teaching methodology of the teachers at the school and college level in the following words: “*Mujhy English is liye be mushkil lagti hy k mery ustad school/college mian acha nhi parhaaty thy. Wo aksar hansy mazaq main lagy rehty thy or class ko b is k elwa koi kaam nhi hota tha*” [English is difficult for me as my teachers at school/college level hadn’t taught us well. They always remained non-serious in the class and class also wasn’t different].

### **4.7.2.4. Macro-level**

At the macro level, the following factors were reported:

1. Societal Beliefs about Language
2. Lack of English-speaking Environment



The aggregate values of the factors are presented below in the form of a hierarchy chart

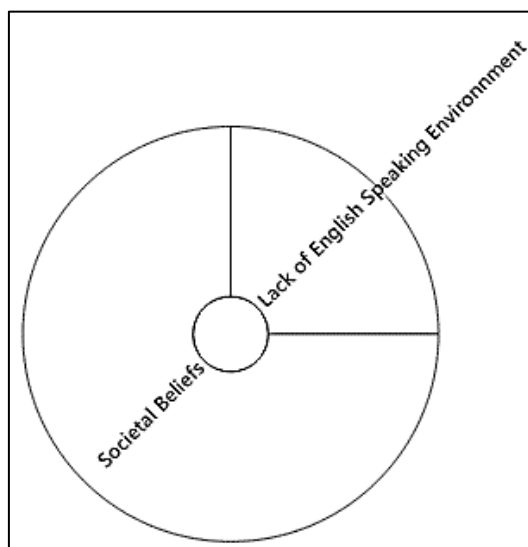


Figure 57: Hierarchy Chart Macro level (Diaries, RIU)

### ***:Societal Beliefs about Language***

Societal beliefs about language exert a serious influence on language learning. These beliefs can shape the attitudes, motivations, and expectations of learners. Two of the research participants reported three times that their societal beliefs are responsible for their being worried in class. Participant 1 believed that Pakistanis cannot master a foreign language and they can never be proficient in that.

Participant 4 reported this issue two times in these words: “*Wesy English zuban per zayda tawaju nhi dee jati kion k Pakistani ke qoumi zuban urdu hy or urdu hamari theek hy. Hum ko chahaye k English per b tawajo dain*” [because Urdu is the national language of Pakistan, therefore, English is not given that much importance. We should also pay attention to English as well.] And the second time he said, “*English bolty waqt bohat ehtayat kerna perti hy k koi lafz galat na ho jaye. Or b is trha ke bohat sari cheezain hain jo English ko mushkil bna deti hain*” [we will have to be cautious while speaking English so as to avoid mistakes. There are certain things that make the English language difficult.]

### 1. *Lack of English-speaking Environment*

Language conducive environment is essential for language learning, especially for new language learning. A conducive environment creates opportunities for language learning. Participant 3 reported the lack of language language-conducive environment as the reason for being anxious in class. He believed that it was because of the lack of an English-speaking environment that he couldn't develop English language.

#### 4.7.3. Analysis of Teachers' Perspective (RIU)

The teacher at Riphah International University, Islamabad mentioned ten different factors to be the potential reasons for anxiety Language class. The chart below shows the presence of all the factors reported by the teacher.

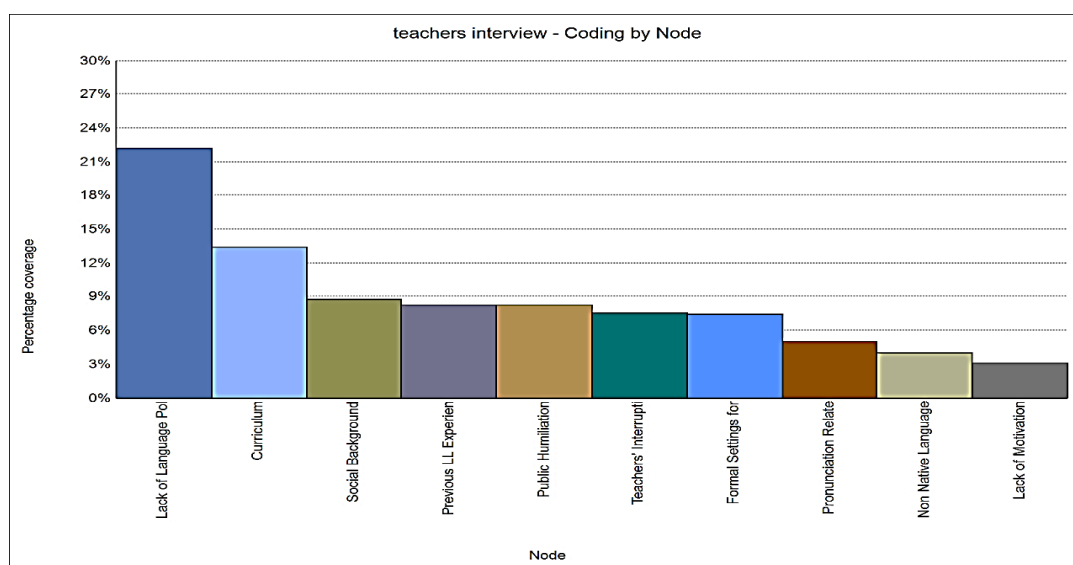


Figure 58: Hierarchy Chart of anxiety Language reported by teachers

These ten factors stretched across the four layers of the nested ecosystem model. The hierarchy chart below shows the presence of all the levels.

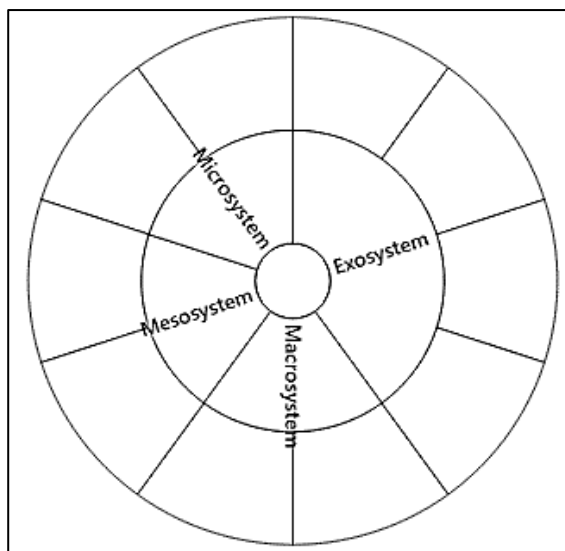


Figure 59: Anxiety Causing Factors Reported by the Teacher (RIU)

#### 4.7.3.1. Microsystem

The hierarchy chart below shows that students at Riphah International Islamabad get anxious largely because of the factors that are not in their hands as they belong to Exosystem. At the microsystem level, the teacher reported the following factors to be responsible for their anxiety in the class:

1. Pronunciation Issues
  2. Lack of motivation
- 1. *Pronunciation Issues***

It is completely normal to get anxious while dealing with language pronunciation. Since the English language follows different pronunciation rules as compared to Urdu therefore students may feel uncomfortable. The teacher at Riphah International reported that the majority of English language teachers at the school level stress so much on the right pronunciation of the words that their students cannot become proficient in the language. Whenever they try to speak something out the teachers correct them. As a result, they always look towards their teachers for correction and cannot be independent speakers of the language. The teacher recommended that teachers should explain pronunciation-related issues privately and at a later stage when they have already gained confidence in speaking English.

## 2. *Lack of Motivation*

Another factor reported by the teacher at the micro level was a lack of motivation. Students are not motivated to learn this language which is why they get anxious in language class. The important point to note here is the teacher has not only highlighted the issue of motivation to be the reason for anxiety but she also blamed the teachers for this lack of motivation. In her words “*Teachers don’t motivate their students*”.

### 4.7.3.2. Mesosystem

At the meso level, the teacher reported previous language learning experience and social background to be responsible for their anxiety. She mentioned at two points that students’ previous language learning experiences cause anxiety in their classes at an advanced level. Once she said that teachers do not motivate the students to learn the language at the school level and for this reason, they take it as an ordinary subject at another point she mentioned that at initial stages such as school, teachers develop a fear of pronunciation among their students.

The second factor that the teacher reported is the social class of the students. The teacher believed that students come from different linguistic, social, and cultural backgrounds. It is not possible for a teacher to treat every individual by keeping in mind their social, linguistic, and cultural background. This diversity should be considered when the sections are formed.

### 4.7.3.3. Exosystem

At the Exo level, the teacher reported the following three factors to be responsible for the anxiety of the students at Riphah International:

#### 1. *Curriculum*

Curriculum plays an important role in reducing or increasing the anxiety of the students. If the content is interesting, the students enjoy the classes but if the content is boring, they try to avoid taking classes. The teacher of the university however did not mention the content to be responsible for the anxiety but she reported the length of the syllabus. She reported that the management of the university stresses so much on completing the content of the course that teachers pay more attention to completing the course instead of making the students learn. In her words, “*Language teachers are*

*pressurized by the university management to cover the course content within the time limit and this affects the learning process of the students.”*

## **2. Formal Settings of Language Class**

The teacher at Riphah International believed that language cannot be learned in formal settings. Language learning needs an environment that is completely missing in the Pakistani context. The artificial way of teaching English creates a lot of problems for the students. The question automatically comes to one's mind if this is a problem for anxious students then why do those who are not anxious learn in the same environment? The answer is very simple, the one who is in a problem needs a proper environment to sort this issue out.

## **3. Teaching Style**

The teaching style of the teachers poses serious problems for the students. The teacher reported that the students get anxious because of the wrong methods used by the teachers for their language improvement. She mentioned twice that the students get into trouble because of the teachers' style. First, she blamed the teachers for correcting the mistakes of the students in front of other students. She felt that this way of error correction damages the self-confidence of the students which is essential to language learning. Secondly, she mentioned the interruption of the students by the teachers, time and again. When a teacher interrupts a student and corrects the mistakes, the student never develops the courage to speak freely and always looks towards the teacher for correction. This again leads to lowering the self-confidence of the students which is detrimental to the language learning process.

### **4.7.3.4. Macro level**

At the macro level, the teacher of Riphah International reported two issues Lack of language learning policy and the societal belief that a second language cannot be mastered the way one has mastered the first language.

Language learning policies determine how and what to learn in a language. In Pakistan, the English language learning policy was introduced for the very first time in 2000 which still needs to be implemented. In the absence of a language learning policy, it is not possible to make this situation better. The issue of variation in students on the basis of cultural and social background is the outcome of the absence of language

policy. The teacher recommended that the implementation of language policy can help alter the current pessimistic picture of LLA.

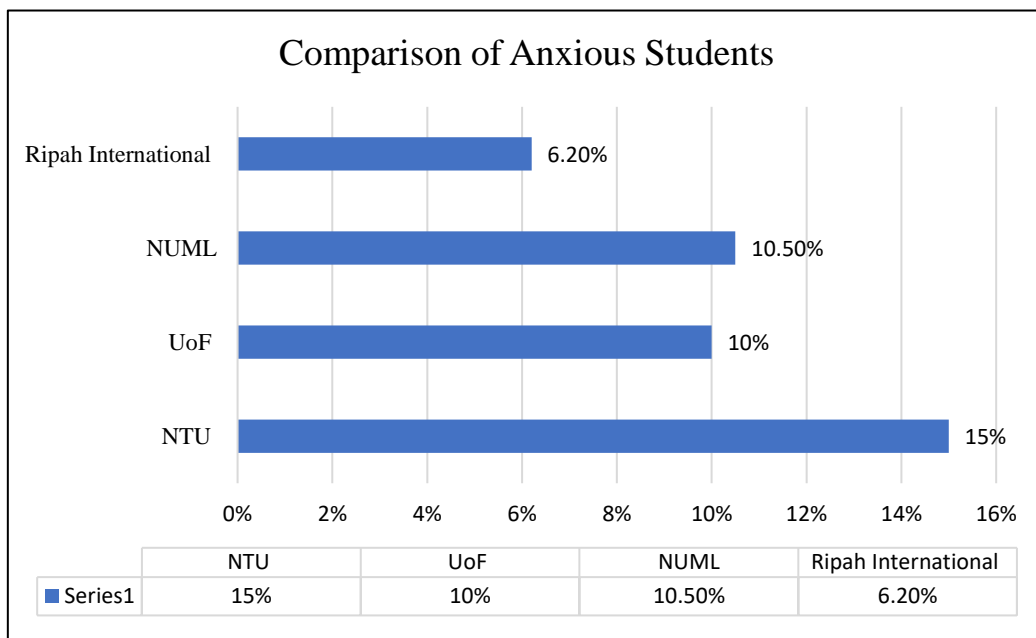
The second issue at this level was the societal belief that the English language cannot be mastered the way one can master his first language. With this belief in mind, one can never think of getting a good grasp on language and after attaining a certain level, he surrenders. This attitude of the society needs to be changed in order to reduce LLA.

#### **4.7.3.5. Section Summary**

This part of the Section provides the issues reported by the students of Riphah International University, Islamabad. The issues that students reported belong to all four layers of the nested ecosystem model. At the microsystem level, the students reported linguistic and affective factors to be responsible for their anxiety in the class. at meso level, the area of residence, and previous language learning experience to be responsible. At the exo level, the teaching methodology and the curriculum were reported as the possible reasons for anxiety while the lack of a speaking environment at the macro level was held responsible. Similar issues were reported by the research participants in their diaries as well. The teacher who was teaching these anxious students also reported issues that belong to all the layers of the nested ecosystem model.

#### 4.8. Comparative Analysis of the Data Obtained from the Universities

The comparison of the data obtained through FLCAS is presented below which clearly explains the ratio of anxiety among the public and private sector universities.



*Figure 60: Comparison of Anxious Students of Different University*

The graph clearly shows that the students of public sector universities i.e., NTU and NUML have more anxious students as compared to the public sector universities i.e., TUF and RIU. If the students of the universities from Faisalabad and Islamabad are compared, the following results emerge.

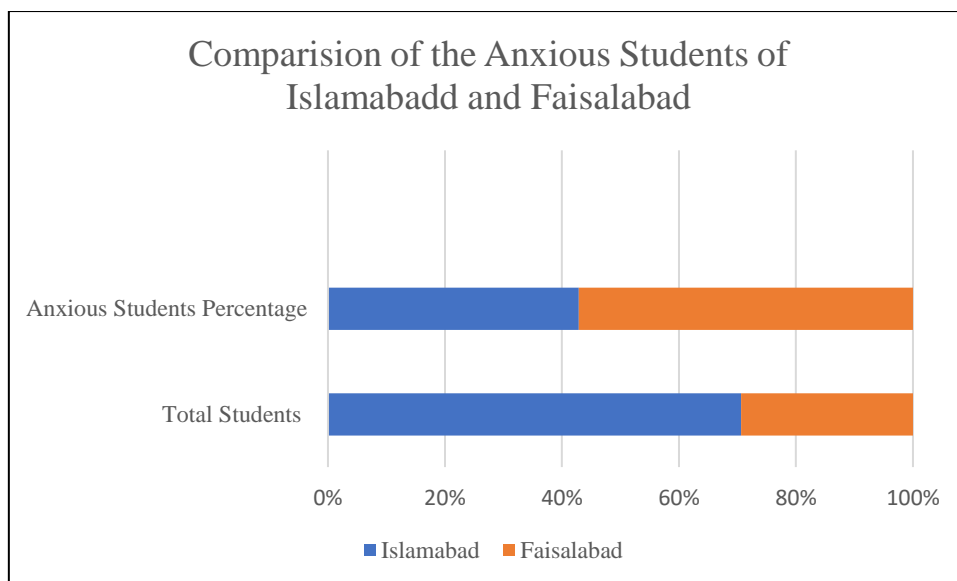


Figure 61: Comparison of Anxious Students of Faisalabad and Islamabad

The graph shows that the students from Islamabad are comparatively less anxious. If very anxious, anxious, mildly anxious, relaxed, and very relaxed students are compared from all these four universities the following results appeared.

Table 22: Level of Anxiety of Students of Different Universities

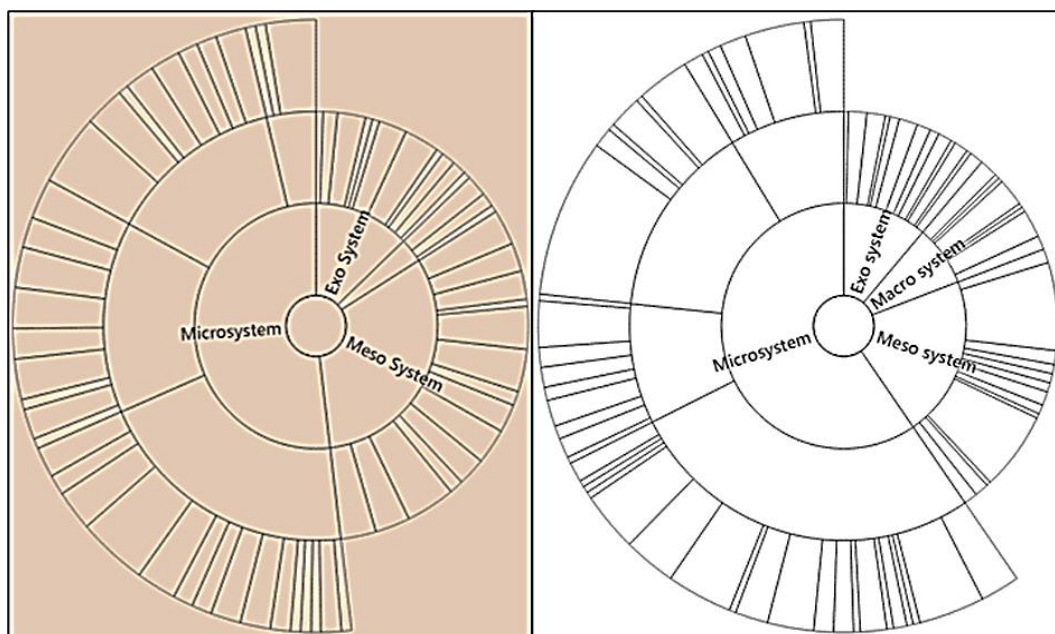
Level of Anxiety	NTU	TUF	NUML	Riphah
Very Anxious	15%	11%	10.4%	6.2%
Anxious	28.5%	43%	42%	28%
Mild Anxious	45%	46%	42%	50%
Relaxed	11.5%	0	5.2%	15%
Very Relaxed	0	0	0.4%	0.8%

The highest number of anxious students was at NTU whereas the lowest number of anxious students was at Riphah International. In terms of relaxed students, the ratio of relaxed and very relaxed students is higher at Riphah than at any other university. As far as the anxious students are concerned, the results are similar in TUF and NUML whereas the ratio of the students of NTU and Riphah International is similar. So cumulatively, the universities of Faisalabad and that of Islamabad have similar results. Mild anxious students were similar in number in all four universities. The difference



was in terms of very relaxed students or the students who didn't have any issue with the English language. In both universities of Islamabad, there were students (one in each) however no such relaxed student was found in the universities of Faisalabad.

Comparison of Public and private sector universities has shown that almost similar results were reported by the students at both public and private sector universities. All four layers of the nested ecosystem were reported by the anxious students. The diagram below shows that there wasn't any important difference in the factors reported. the diagram below shows that the students of private universities have reported factors from the exo system more as the hierarchy chart of private sector universities below shows the presence of an exosystem that is missing in public sector universities. The individual analysis of these universities has proved that all the levels were reported by the anxious students as well as by the teachers. However, the cumulative chart has shown the visible factors only.



*Figure 62: Comparison the results of Public and Private Sector*

The chart shows almost similar results however the research participants from public sector universities reported more issues at the micro level. When the affective factors were compared from both, the results were confirmed.

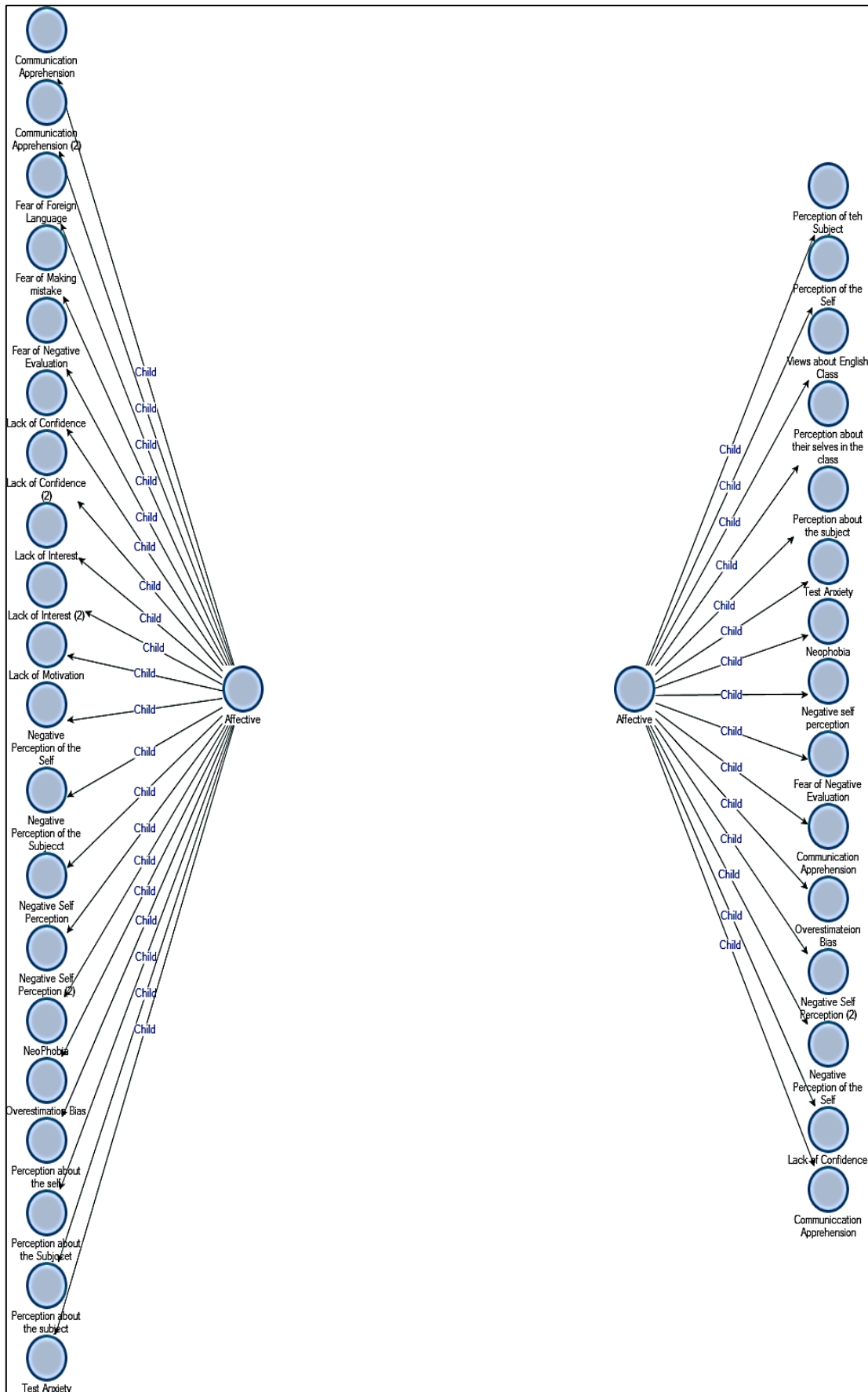
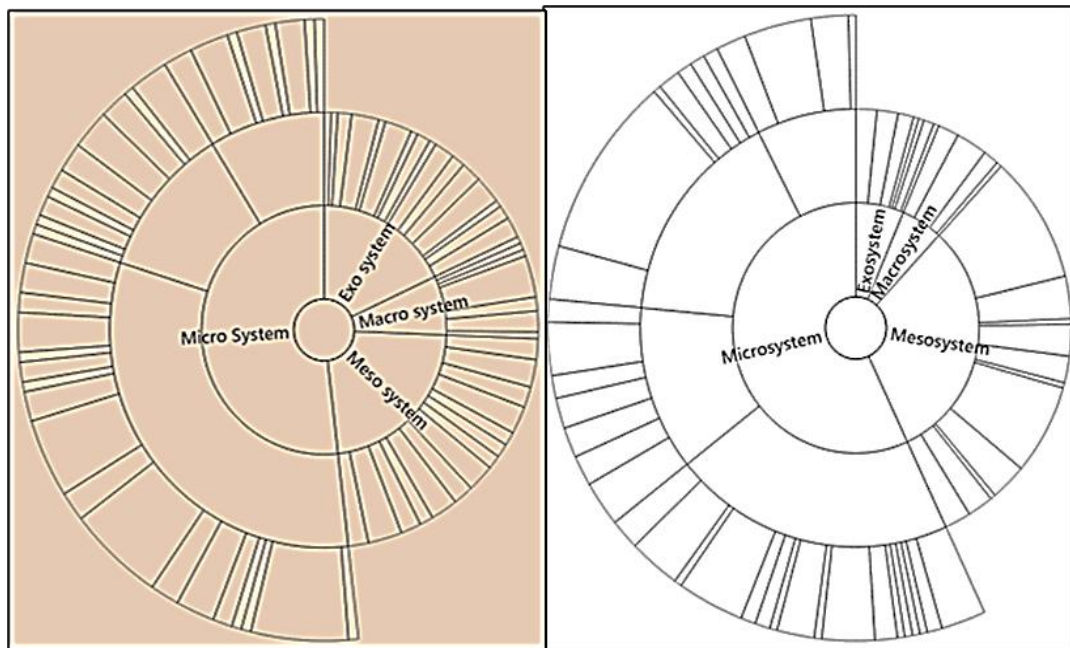


Figure 63: Public Sector Universities Reported More Issues at Micro Level

When the universities of Faisalabad and Islamabad were compared, no significant difference was found. All four levels were reported by the anxious students of these universities. One thing that can be noticed from the hierarchy chart above is the ratio of the factors reported. At the micro level, the research participants from Faisalabad have reported almost affective factors. The comparison between the two is presented below to confirm the findings.



*Figure 64: Comparison of Universities of Islamabad and Faisalabad*

The participants from Faisalabad, however, reported more factors at the meso level. The exo system again received more factors from the students of the universities in Faisalabad. Issues reported by the anxious students are no doubt more however in every category, the anxious students have reported more issues comparatively.

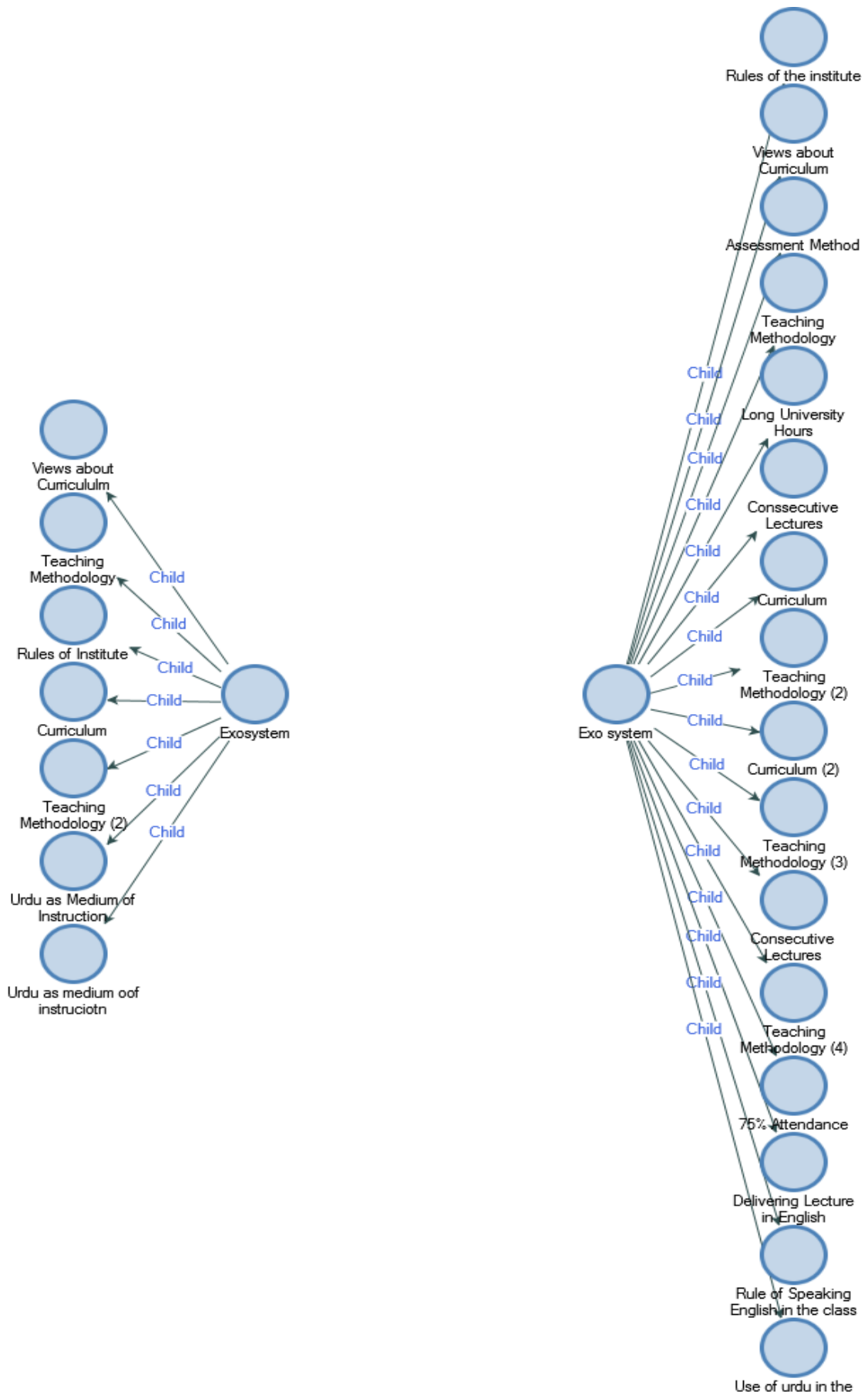


Figure 65: Exo System Received More Factors from The Students

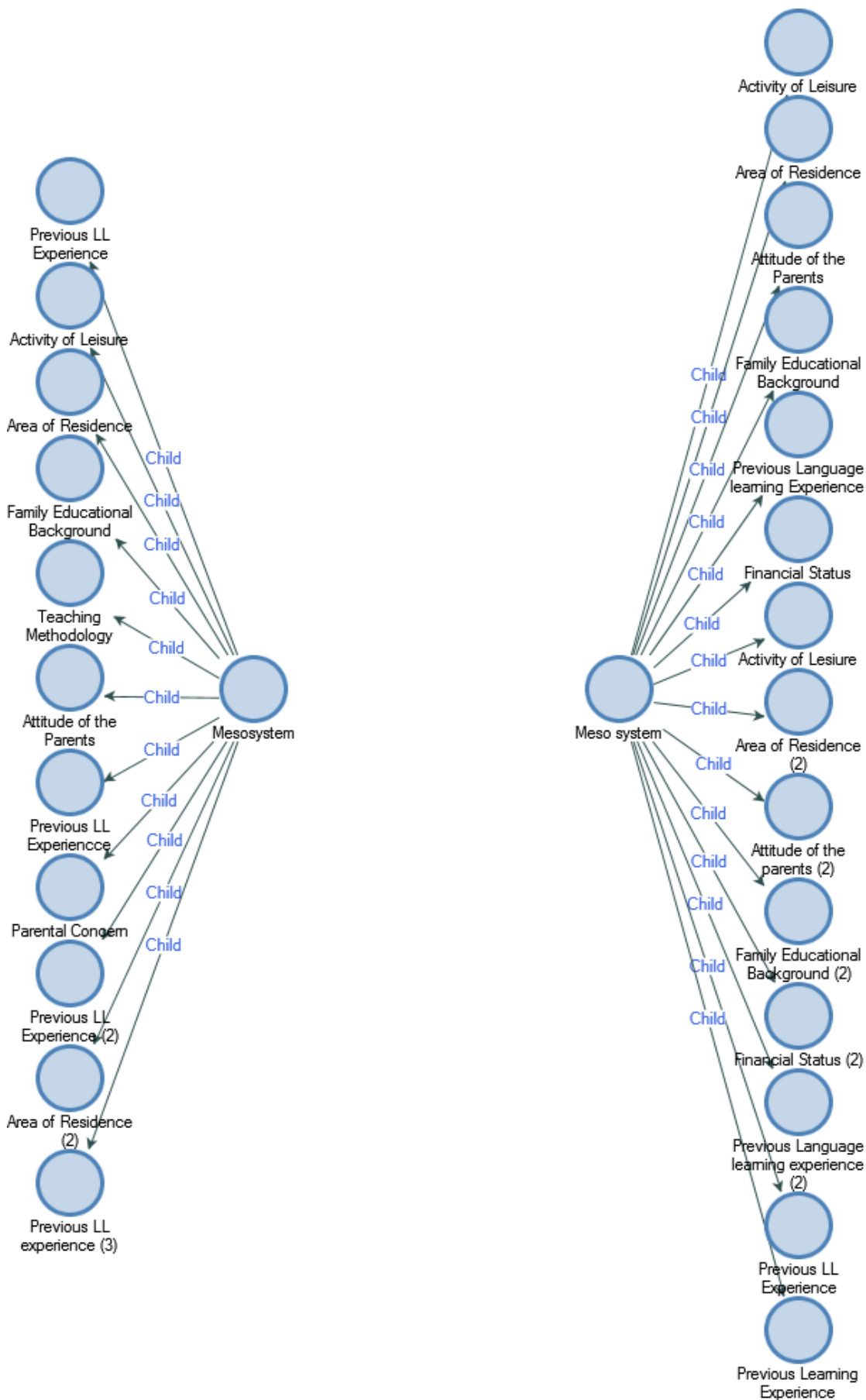
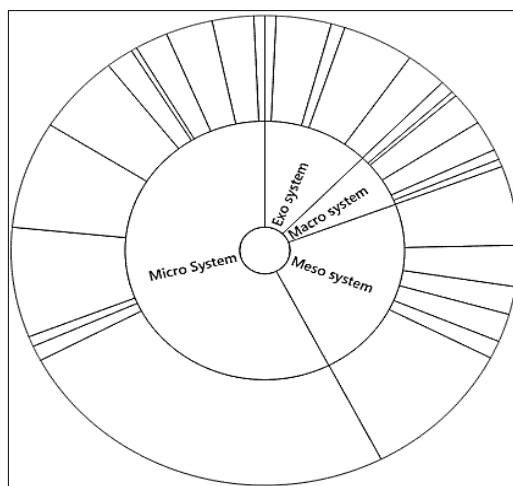


Figure 66: Participants from Faisalabad However Reported More Factors at Meso Level

If the results of the study are calculated cumulatively (as the purpose of the study is not to compare the public and private sector universities but to get an overall picture of anxiety-causing factors), it comes to the surface that in all the universities, the students reported micro level factors to be responsible largely for the anxiety of the students i.e., affective, cognitive and linguistic and classroom environment. A cumulative diagram below clearly shows that in all these universities, micro-level factors abound.



*Figure 67: Cumulative diagram of anxiety causing factors at all the universities*

The most frequently reported issue as evident in the hierarchy chart is microsystem. The students in all these universities get anxious because of the affective, cognitive, and linguistic factors. The classroom environment also contributes to the anxiety of the students at some places. The second prominent system that exerts an influence on students' English language learning is the mesosystem. At this level, the most prominent factor is the previous language learning experience whereas the second important factor is the activity of leisure. 72% of the participants reported 56 times that they were not taught English in the right way either at school or college level. As far as the activity of leisure is concerned, the majority of the participants of the research were involved in such activities that had nothing to do with language learning. The rules of the institute and the teaching methodology created problems for the students at the exo level. The rule that caused problems for the students was that of the consecutive lectures in English and they did not have any practice in listening to English for such long hours. On the other hand, the teaching methodology was also inconsiderate according to these students as the teacher used to speak English all the time in the class. Lastly, at the macro level, the lack of a speaking environment, Urdu as the national language, a

Different provincial education system, and online classes because of the pandemic caused anxiety among the students of these universities.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter performs three different functions: first, it presents the findings of the study; second, it discusses the results obtained from the findings; and lastly, it presents the implications of the study.

#### 5.1. Findings of the Study

The analysis of the data has revealed that language learning is a complex phenomenon influenced by various factors at multiple levels, contributing to anxiety among students at Pakistani universities. These factors are evident across all four layers of Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystem model.

##### 5.1.1. Micro Level

At the micro level, certain anxiety-causing factors were reported by the students to be the reason for their anxiety in English language classrooms. These factors can be categorized into cognitive, affective, linguistic, and classroom environment. Significant challenges were posed by cognitive factors such as pronunciation, grammar rules, and lack of vocabulary for English language learners. The complexity of grammatical rules caused problems for students as they struggled to internalize and apply them correctly which led to anxiety in English language classrooms. Students also felt uncomfortable because of limited vocabulary which prohibited them from being engaged in classroom discussions or asking questions from teachers for clarification.

Affective factors which were frequently reported by the research participants also played a crucial role in English language learning anxiety. Students reported various factors that posed problems for them such as speaking anxiety, lack of confidence, fear of public speaking, lack of motivation, and test anxiety. These emotional or psychological barriers are deeply interwoven with students' self-perception and well-being as a lack of confidence results from repeated failure and negative feedback by the teachers, thus creating a cycle where students are reluctant to participate. Fear of speaking in front of people or the fear of participating in class prevents students from improving their language skills. Lack of motivation is often



caused by uninspiring teaching methods. Test anxiety adds another layer of stress as students worry about their performance and fear judgment.

The prominent factors related to the linguistic domain are the pronunciation and grammar rules. The difference in the phonetic system of the native speakers' language and that of the English language creates hurdles in making correct sounds. Rules of grammar which vary across languages also threw significant challenges for the students. The difficulty in internalizing and applying these rules contributes to a sense of anxiety.

Students' anxiety was also triggered by the lack of productive relationships between the teachers and the students. A supportive classroom environment is essential for fostering language learning as it creates opportunities for students to interact and give feedback. However, the highly anxious students of the study reported a lack of motivation to participate because they did not have a healthy relationship with the teacher. Moreover, being the students of the first semester they couldn't develop friendly relationships with their peers which resulted in contributing to their anxiety. They feared that their peers would laugh at them in case if they committed any mistake.

### **5.1.2. Meso Level**

At the meso level, the study found six variables to be responsible for the anxiety of the students in English language classrooms. Out of these six factors, four were highly reported and consequently responsible for the anxiety of the students. These factors include previous language learning experiences, extramural activities students were engaged in, the educational background of the family, and the social class of the research participants. Positive experiences foster language learning whereas negative experiences hinder that by causing anxiety. The anxious students reported anxiety at the university level because they had bad experiences of language learning either at the school or college level which means they had brought language learning anxiety with them in the class.

Unproductive extramural activities also contributed to their anxiety as these activities took a lot of their time and did not contribute to their language learning. Playing online games and using WhatsApp or social media were their chief leisure time activities which are ranked low in terms of language learning. The last two factors, i.e. educational background of the family and their social class are interlinked. Financial

status and educational background play critical roles, with students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and lower educational levels experiencing higher levels of anxiety. These students often lack access to quality resources and opportunities, further exacerbating their challenges. All these four factors are held responsible for the anxiety of students at the meso level.

### **5.1.3. Exo Level**

At the Exo level, three factors are held responsible for the anxiety of the students in the language classroom. The curriculum suggested by HEC and the teaching methods to teach that curriculum caused anxiety for students in language classrooms. A rigid and traditional curriculum focused on rote learning and memorization often fails to engage students and address their individual needs. Innovative and activity-based teaching methods enhance engagement and reduce anxiety by providing interactive and meaningful learning experiences. Institutional rules and regulations, such as 75% compulsory attendance policies and assessment methods, also impact students' anxiety levels. Strict and inflexible policies create additional pressure and stress, while supportive and flexible policies mitigate anxiety and foster a positive learning environment. Although such things may have a similar effect on other subjects as well however it becomes crucial when it comes to a high cognitive activity like second language learning.

### **5.1.4. Macro Level**

Factors revealed at the macro level about the societal and cultural factors that affect language learning anxiety. The fact that English is considered a language of the superior society and the pressures that come with having to learn a language has greatly caused language learning anxiety. Sadly, students are often made fun of and laughed at because of the way they speak, thus contributing to the atmosphere of bullying. The formality of the examination-driven learning approaches and the primary weighting towards writing skills does not teach speaking skills hence the boost in pressure in the language class. As a result, one can conclude that the various and extended societal and even cultural factors are significant determinants of the students' approaches to language learning, as well as their level of anxiety.

Moreover, it was also identified that there were regional differences that contributed to the respondents' language learning anxiety levels. Research participants

from Islamabad had low anxiety which pointed towards the effect of regional educational systems and resources. The diversity in provincial education systems as well as the generally high standard of the educational facilities influences learners' results when learning languages. Overall, students learning in areas that have comparatively low standards of teaching and assessment like Sindh were more anxious.

In addition, the study also found COVID-19 to be responsible for the anxiety of the students in the language class. The shift of classes to online media disrupted the regular learning environment of language where the students get the opportunity to interact face-to-face. Slow internet connections and limited access to internet sources increased the level of anxiety, especially for learners from low economic backgrounds. The transition to online learning also unveiled inequality in the distribution of devices and learning materials, which increased anxiety among the learners.

The findings of this study highlight the need for a multi-level approach to address language learning anxiety in Pakistani universities. A comprehensive understanding of the cognitive, affective, linguistic, and environmental factors contributing to anxiety is essential for developing effective interventions. Addressing emotional and psychological barriers, fostering a supportive classroom environment, and providing access to quality resources and opportunities are critical steps in mitigating anxiety. The study underscores the importance of a holistic approach, considering the various ecological levels and the interconnectedness of factors influencing anxiety.

## **5.2. Discussion**

The findings of the study highlight the complex nature of English language learning anxiety among university students in Pakistan. By using Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystem model, the study identifies multiple factors across different layers of an ecosystem. The supporting Engestrom's (1999) Activity theory Model also went well with the study. Several triangles such as subject, object, and mediating artifacts and then the triangle of subject, object, and community; and then rules, and division of labor helped in dealing with every aspect of this activity of language learning. This analysis of all these aspects with the help of the Eight-Step Mwanza Model (2002) revealed the intrinsic issue that would have remained obscure in the absence of this model. Since

this was used as a supporting theory, an in-depth analysis was not made based on it otherwise this theory has the potential to deal with any complex issue.

The findings of the study corroborate the existing research and provide new insights into specific challenges faced by students at the university level in terms of English language learning. Using these models to find out the reasons for anxiety among Pakistani university students, is itself a deviation from the standard, set for the study of language learning anxiety in Pakistan. All the researchers conducted in Pakistan such as Shams, 2008; Adeel, Khattak et.al., 2011; Bhatti, Buriro, 2016; Nazari, Nazeer Ahmed, 2017; Illahi Bux, 2019, 2020 & Ali et al, 2021 have explored language learning anxiety descriptively with the cause-effect approach. The use of a nested ecosystem model will redefine language learning anxiety research.

The current study is different from the other research in Pakistan in its treatment of the issue of language learning anxiety from an ecological perspective. The research on English language learning anxiety can be classified into two main categories: first, research that deals with anxiety in the overall language learning process; second, research that deals with the anxiety of one out of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reading and listening, being passive is less anxiety arousing as compared to speaking and writing, therefore, speaking and writing received more attention from the researchers. In the Pakistani context, the researchers have worked to find out the reasons for anxiety either in the overall language-learning process or in speaking skills. Most of these research works have used correlation methods; either quantitative or qualitative. These works are limited in scope because of focus only on micro-systems i.e., the variables related to the classroom. Although the current research is in line with the previous research in its adoption of the overall language learning process, however, to find out the reasons for anxiety among university students in Pakistan, it has adopted an emerging way out i.e., the ecological model. All these recent works of Bhatti, 2016; Buriro, 2016; and Illahi Bux, 2019, 2020 have used a descriptive approach in an attempt to find universals. This research is quite in contrast to the previous studies as it is based on the complexity of the system which denies cause and effect ways. The reason for the selection of a holistic approach was to study the issue in-depth and to introduce a new way of dealing with language learning anxiety in Pakistan. Therefore, the research opens a new way out for LLA.

### 5.2.1. Micro Level

Micro-systematic factors were extensively researched by previous researchers in Pakistan such as Shams (2008), Adeel (2011), Awan (2011), and Buriro (2016). The recent publication of Ali et al. (2021) found psychological issues as well as cognitive issues of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation to be responsible for anxiety. The factors, that this work has brought to the surface related to microsystems, are the same as those explored by the above-mentioned researchers. However, the categorization of these factors into microsystems allows a deeper understanding of the issue and that is something new in the Pakistani context. The categorization of anxiety-causing factors is borrowed from the works of scholars such as Gkonou (2016), Kasabi (2017), Shirvan (2017), and Saghafi (2017). Shirvan (2017) has divided the microsystem into internal and external factors whereas Saghafi (2017) believed that cognitive, linguistic, and affective factors can explain a learner's writing anxiety more reliably (P.12). He has divided the microsystem into three: First, beliefs and motivation; second, cognitive, linguistic, and affective factors; and third classroom environment. The current research adopts Saghafi's categorization which is more comprehensive and provides an opportunity to delve deep into the issue of anxiety. Although the study has adopted a pattern set by Saghafi (2017), it has categorized micro-systems into cognitive factors, affective factors, and classroom environment. Beliefs and motivation are categorized under the heading of affective. Such a classification of microsystem is absent from the studies available in the Pakistani context. The classification of anxiety-causing variables into such systems gives the sense that the issue is composite and chaotic and needs serious consideration.

### 5.2.2. Meso Level

Four factors were reported by the anxious students to be the reason for their anxiety in English language classrooms i.e. previous language learning experiences, activities of leisure, and social and educational background of the family.

The experiences that we face today are largely shaped by our past. Past experiences become crucial when it comes to a gradual process like language learning. The most prominent factor of the mesosystem that exerts an influence and causes anxiety in the current classroom is the 'previous language learning experiences' i.e., at school and college level. The participants have alleged their language-learning

experiences at school and college level for their poor performance in the current class. Almost all the participants have reported that they were taught with the grammar-translation method at school and the focus of concern at college was “how to get good marks” with the medium of instruction “Urdu”. The experience of learning English at the university level was altogether different from activity-based teaching and the use of English as a medium of instruction. The discrepancy between the previous teaching methodology and the current one leads to anxiety. These anxious students had different educational backgrounds; some had attended government schools and colleges, and some had attended institutes of the private sector. However, this categorization is not that neat, many participants had switched from government and private sector or vice versa after matriculation. 72% of the participants reported previous LL as the reason for their being worried in the current classes which means the public and private sector is not a determinant force here. It was noted however that all the private schools that were reported by the participants were of average level. Not even a single anxious student has mentioned his reference to key private institutes. On this basis, it can be concluded that it's not sufficient to get admission to a private-sector institute, the quality of the institute matters. Moreover, at the college level, the focus was on getting good marks instead of learning skills therefore it is safe to say that colleges contribute less to language development. Many researchers have reported the impact of the previous learning experience as a reason for anxiety in the current class. The findings are in line with the findings of Shirvan (2017) However, the study brought some different results from the results of Gkonou (2016) who have found the previous experience of “failing in the subject” and “strict attitude of the teacher” as anxiety-provoking. The participants of the research did not mention failing the subject as a reason however the lack of interaction can be attributed to the strict attitude of the teacher. In the Pakistani context, Khattak et.al. (2011) found that poor educational background (schooling) causes them to suffer from language anxiety. This research however has found that educational background at the college level is also responsible for anxiety by changing the focus from learning to getting good grades. The majority of anxious students reported that no attention is paid to language learning at the college level as future admission depends on your grades and not on your proficiency in the language. Therefore, the concern of both the teacher and the students at the college level was to get good grades. The results of the study imply that the causes of language learning

anxiety are deeply rooted and to uproot it instead of focusing on the university level, there is a need to consider schools.

Modern learning theories believe in experiential learning where most learning takes place outside the classroom. In experiential language learning, extracurricular activities become crucial. In the Pakistani context, the role of extracurricular activities in terms of language learning is explored least which implies that language learning is taken as a classroom phenomenon therefore the role of external factors was not considered in LLA research. Previous research works outside Pakistan have traced a link between language proficiency and how you spend your leisure. According to Sundqvist (2009), students learn most of their English outside the classroom. According to Sundqvist (2009), extramural activities of reading books and newspapers, listening to music, and watching TV are ranked as high language facilitators in the Rank of the importance of extramural English activities (Attached as Appendix 8). The current research found that all the participants have taken up such activities that do not contribute to language learning. Not even a single student mentioned book reading or newspaper reading as a spare time activity. They are neither interested in listening to English songs nor in watching English television. The research participants spend their leisure using social media applications and playing online games like Pub-G, which were ranked 6 by Sundqvist (2009) in terms of language learning. The researchers gathered from the Pakistani context for the current study have not considered it as a variable in their works. Shutting eyes from this factor confirms the claim made earlier in this research that LLA research in Pakistan is still at a preliminary stage as learning outside the class is out of the question.

The social, and educational levels of the parents and the area of residence are interlinked. Social class is determined by one's financial condition, which to a considerable extent depends on the educational level, especially for the middle class. The area of residence again depends on financial stability. Research findings prove the role of social status in language class anxiety. Social class is a group of people who possess the same socioeconomic status (Britannica, 2019). The financial status of a person determines his surroundings such as residential location and friendship circle. It also determines the circle of one's activities. English is considered the language of the elite therefore people from the lower strata of the society do not get the opportunity to learn it as English medium schools are beyond their reach and resultantly, they do not

get white-collar jobs. Therefore, the chances for their improvement in terms of the English language diminish.

Previous research works have confirmed that social class has a strong relationship with language proficiency and anxiety. Hashemi (2011) believed that the sense of inferiority complex because of being a participant of the lower middle class leads to anxiety in language class. Rezaabadi (2017) found a significant correlation between language learning anxiety and social class. The researchers in Pakistan have also considered it as an anxiety-causing variable. Khattak et.al. (2011) concluded his work on language learning anxiety in these words, "*Poor socio-economic background makes them feel as if the English language is the language of the elite and they can hardly feel at home about learning it*". Current research has found a strong relationship between language learning anxiety and social class. All the anxious students came from humble backgrounds and some of them complained about their poor economic condition. The participants of the research believed that those who get the opportunity to get an education from Beaconhouse or city school automatically develop better language skills. The sense of deprivation may have grieved the situation therefore the government should provide a uniform syllabus to reduce this sense of deprivation. The present research is unique, as it has considered a modified Kuppuswamy scale (2020) to determine the class of the participant. This scale provides an exact picture of the social status but in Pakistan, the Research works have relied heavily on interview questions to establish the class of the participants. Either they ask about the income of the head of the family, or they take the participants' self-perceptions about their class. For example, Khattak et.al. (2011) relied on semi-structured interviews to determine the social class of the participants. The Kuppuswamy scale is a more reliable resource for determining social class.

The study also revealed that the parents of the anxious students were not highly educated so they were not concerned. Parents who are educated know the value and importance of the subject. Therefore, they take pains to develop English language skills in their children. The concern of uneducated parents or parents with very basic education is no more than a worry. It was also noticed that some of the parents were graduates or undergraduates, but they were so much absorbed in their job-related activities that they were not concerned about the studies of their children as an anxious student reported that his father was working in Karachi, and he was living in the Inner



Sindh with his mother and siblings. The identification of this variable is strengthened by the finding of Ahmad (2019) who found parental education to be of utmost importance in the language proficiency of the students. He named parents with no education as “advice parents” and such parents contribute to the anxiety of the students (Ahmad, 2019). However, the present finding is a bit different from that of Ahmad’s as it addresses both the education and concern of the parents. No education with concern and no concern with education both are futile to language learning.

The data revealed that the majority of the anxious students were living in backward areas or in areas that had contributed nothing to their English language. The majority of general folk living in the areas of research participants from Faisalabad were uneducated therefore it had a strong impact on their language. When anxious students listen to the classroom conversation, they find their expressions odd and atypical. Some of the research participants blamed their rural background for their poor performance in class. People living in villages cannot even speak Urdu well; therefore, it is futile to expect proficiency in the English language from students with rural backgrounds. On the other hand, some students from the universities of Islamabad had come from other cities and some belonged to the adjacent areas that weren’t developed like Islamabad. They reported having no share of their area in their language development rather some of the students believed that it had contributed negatively to their language. The students who were the natives however did not report its negative impact on their language. This result of the research is in line with the finding of Awan (2010) who found the achievement of students from lowly developed areas to be low (p.39). The finding implies that schools in backward areas should adopt different strategies for language teaching from regular urban schools as the lot that they receive faces a gap between the ideal and the reality.

### **5.2.3. Exo Level**

At the exo level, three factors i.e., curriculum, teaching methodology, and rules of the institution emerged as anxiety among all the university students. The role of curriculum and teaching methodology was reported by Nazir (2014) and Ali et al (2021), whereas the rules and regulations of the institute are something new. No doubt, rules have an indirect impact on all the subjects taught and on the overall development of a learner but some of the rules have devastating effects on language learning. Psychology believes that optimal span time varies from person to person and 45 minutes

is the maximum concentration span. Even some of the researchers recommend that after every 18-20 minutes, there should be an interval. No matter how interesting the subject is or how compelling is the teacher, there would be a lapse after 20 minutes (Khan, 2012). This concentration span decreases when performing activities of high cognitive load such as language learning. Listening to a lecture for 2 consecutive hours with concentration is beyond human capacity therefore students lose their focus after some time. The students at NUML however reported to have three consecutive classes. The same issue was reported by the students of private-sector universities.

As far as the discrepancy between the methodology used at the university and college level, the study revealed that at the intermediate level in Pakistan, the grammar-translation method prevails whereas, in the university, the direct method is employed. This discrepancy reduces concentration span as they had not developed their listening skills in English. This factor was mentioned by Bhatti (2016) as well and the work confirms that of Bhatti and suggests removing this discrepancy.

#### **5.2.4. Macro Level**

At the macro level, the research has found cultural and ethnic hazards responsible for anxiety. English is taken up in Pakistan as a language of the privileged or colonial hangover. Whenever someone tries to speak English in public, people mock him with phrases like “The English left but they left you behind.” Such a discouraging statement prohibits them from using the English language in public and ultimately the language vanishes from private life as well. The teachers should try to create a friendly environment for the English language in the class as well and students should be encouraged to use English whenever and wherever possible.

The indigenous culture of learning also contributes to the anxiety of language learners. The education system in general, not just second language learning, revolves around the formal examination. Students are taught everything from the perspective of exams and their results are the sole criterion to determine the eligibility of a candidate. Since the students depend on the results of their written examination for their future careers, they work hard with their writing skills. Speaking is the most negligent of the skills, as the Pakistani examination system does not support oral tests. Therefore, the study confirms Gkonou’s (2017) finding that the local culture of learning is responsible for anxiety in language classes who reported similar findings in Spanish institutes of

language learning. It establishes the need to consider changing the exam-oriented approach to language teaching.

The research found that different provincial education systems exert different influences on language learning. Students from Punjab, Sindh, and KPK have different systems of education in terms of curriculum and assessment. The students from Sindh were more anxious comparatively (150 score on FLCAS) because of the weak system of teaching and assessment. All the research participants from Sindh reported that they did not attend college either because the teachers were not available; where they were available, they did not bother to teach. The question arises if the students from other provinces are more anxious then why do most of the sample belong to Punjab? The answer is simple, since the university is in Punjab and far away from other major cities of other provinces, people know less about it. Moreover, the university was established in 1958 for the study of textiles therefore the textile department receives a considerable number of students from other provinces. Departments of Computer science and business school were established when the university gained the status of a general university. At the same time, many established institutes offer business and computer studies in every province.

All the above-mentioned factors contributed to the anxiety of the students, but the most potent variable was the pandemic. Covid-19 paralyzed the world altogether and people suffered around the globe. Where educational institutes suffered from irretrievable loss, language learning was not an exception rather it can be stated that language learning suffered the most. Social distancing and distance learning both badly affected the language-learning process as language is promoted by face-to-face interaction. Interaction through pair work and group work in the class maximizes the opportunities to practice the learned rules. Online classes do not allow free interaction with the teacher as well as with classmates. Moreover, group activities are utterly impossible in online classes. Most of the participants reported poor internet connection to be a cause of being worried in the class. The quality of a medium used for communication determines the effectiveness of the process. Medium gets primary importance when it comes to second language learning as the quality of the medium will determine what the receiver will get.

On the other hand, one of the participants mentioned that he could not improve his language because he could not interact with the teacher. The mentioning of lack of

interaction is in sharp contrast with the fear of facing the public, a variable reported by most of the anxious students. This discrepancy can be attributed to the confused personality i.e., they dream a thing but are not confident enough to pursue it. This clash of expectations and reality leads to anxiety in the language classroom.

Secondly, students mentioned that they do not feel comfortable when they are asked to present but they are equally uncomfortable in online classes. The reason for being uncomfortable may be attributed to their fear of speaking language instead of the fear of presentation. Being a teacher, it was observed that confident students do not fear presentations even when they are unable to use the English language effectively. Therefore, it is suggested to develop the overall confidence of the students to make them feel comfortable in language class.

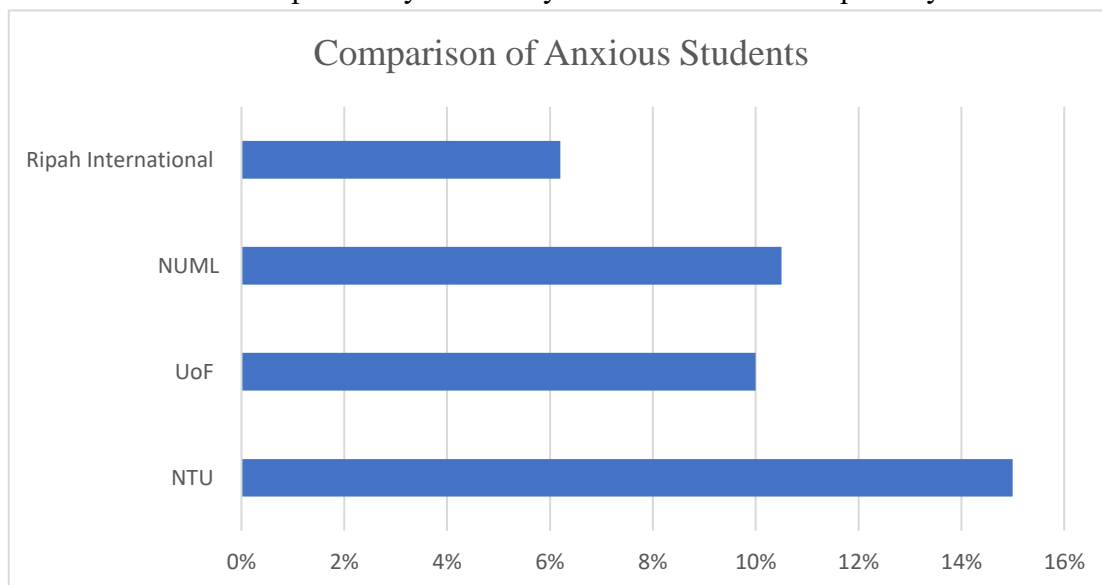
Since this is a recent phenomenon, therefore, no research in the Pakistani context is available regarding language learning anxiety during Covid-19. However, recently published research in China by Liu & Yuan (2021) confirmed the findings of the current research. Li & Yuan (2021) found the students of online classes to be more anxious as compared to the language students of physical classes. They believed physical classes to be more facilitating to the language learning process as compared to online ones. In his words, “the students have more access to and practice of target language, they become more familiar with their peers, the course instructor, the classroom and school learning environment which makes them more confident and less anxious” (Liu & Yuan, 2021).

The students in the current studies however did not confirm Liu and Yuan’s findings, they blamed the quality of the internet for their being worried in the class. Students living in backward areas of lower Punjab and Sindh and remote areas of KPK complained about the non-availability of the internet. Those who were living in advanced cities found fault with the speed and reported frequent disconnection. The quality of internet connection gets more important when it comes to language classrooms as students need to concentrate more as not only ideas but also language needs grave attention. This physical barrier leads to multiple issues related to listening, speaking, and comprehension. Students did not feel comfortable in online classes because of poor connectivity, but they were bound to join the classes for the sake of attendance just and consequently, could not improve from their previous level of language.

### 5.2.5. Comparative Analysis of the Universities

The data analysis revealed that the number of students varied in public and private sector universities: the private sector received a lesser number of students comparatively. This may be attributed to the high fee structure at private-sector universities. As a result, the students get more attention in their classes which helps them boost their confidence. This confidence goes a long way in developing English language skills. This may be why there are fewer anxious students in private-sector universities. Moreover, those who can pay high fees can afford coaching too which ultimately helps them in their weak areas of study. The graph below shows that the students in both private sector universities i.e., TUF and Riphah International University were less anxious as compared to the students of public sector universities.

The graph below shows that from public sector universities, NTU has higher anxious students comparatively. This may be attributed to the quota system of NTU



*Figure 68: Comparison of Anxious Students in different Universities*

where the merit becomes secondary. Even if a student doesn't meet the merit, but the seat for a specific quota is vacant, he will be adjusted. On the other hand, the students at NUML are less anxious as compared to that of Faisalabad. The ratio of anxious students in public sector universities was largely because of NTU.

Another important factor that emerged from the analysis of the data was the lesser number of anxious students in the universities of Islamabad as compared to the students in the universities of Faisalabad. 9 percent of students were anxious in the universities of Islamabad whereas 12 percent of total students in Faisalabad were

anxious. The reason behind this may be the previous institutes that they have visited and the policies of the Federal board. The major difference between the students of Faisalabad and those in Islamabad was that the students of Faisalabad passed their matriculation and intermediate from the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Faisalabad whereas the students of Islamabad passed it through the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education. The same factor was reported by the students of NTU from Sindh that their system was responsible for the anxiety in the recent classes. The curriculum and assessment suggested by a board may be the reason for lesser anxiety. Another factor that may have contributed to the lesser anxiety was that the majority of the participants had attended private schools, and such schools are preferred by the parents for the focus on English language skills. The students at NUML and Riphah also showed a deviation from the data gathered from Faisalabad. The data gathered from these universities revealed that there are very relaxed students as well which again proves the presence of lesser anxious students in the universities of Islamabad.

If we compare the public and private sector universities, private sector universities received less anxious students comparatively. This may be attributed to the fact that the students in private sector universities have better social backgrounds which proves a helping hand in the language learning environment. When the results of private universities were compared, the students of Riphah International emerged as far better than the students of TUF which proves that the region exerts more influence on language learning as compared to the institute. Since the purpose of the study was to find the ecological factors that contribute to the anxiety of students therefore the comparison wasn't sought further between the students based on anxiety.

Analysis of the data revealed that students at all public and private sector universities of Faisalabad and Islamabad have reported more or less similar factors to be responsible for their anxiety in class. However, their number varied: at the meso and exo levels, the ratio differed. The students at public sector universities reported more issues.

When the universities of Islamabad and Faisalabad were compared, it emerged that the students from Islamabad have reported fewer issues comparatively especially at affective factors of micro level. This justifies the implication that they have fewer issues related to their behavior, perception, and confidence. The factor "overestimation

bias” refers to the same, a factor that was not reported by the students of Faisalabad. It means the students at NUML and Riphah International were overconfident and they took the English language for granted. This may be the reason for their anxiety in the class as they hadn’t considered it a problem contrary to reality. The details of the factors that were reported rigorously by the research participants are given below as the potential reasons for anxiety in English language classrooms.

### **5.3. Implications of the Study**

In the light of the findings and discussion, the following implications have been drawn:

1. The study found that a considerable number of students get anxious in LL classes in Pakistan. According to the findings of the present research, 40 percent of students suffer from anxiety which exerts a negative effect on language learners. By ignoring the problems of such a huge number, the situation cannot be improved.
2. The reasons for anxiety in English language learning go beyond the classroom boundaries therefore there is a need to focus on meso, exo, and macro levels as well.
3. Third, students at public and private sector universities did not exhibit any considerable difference in terms of LL anxiety. However, the difference was observed in terms of area; the students residing in Islamabad were less anxious comparatively. Regional variation should be given due consideration.
4. Finally, Utilizing Bronfenbrenner’s nested ecosystem model (1993), the current study provides a comprehensive and contextualized understanding of the issue of English LLA in the context of Pakistan.

In the light of the findings of the study, a model of anxiety-inducing factors has been formulated for Pakistani students. The diagram below shows all the possible reasons for anxiety in language learning classrooms in Pakistan.

### 5.3.1. Model of Anxiety-Inducing Factors for English LL in Pakistan

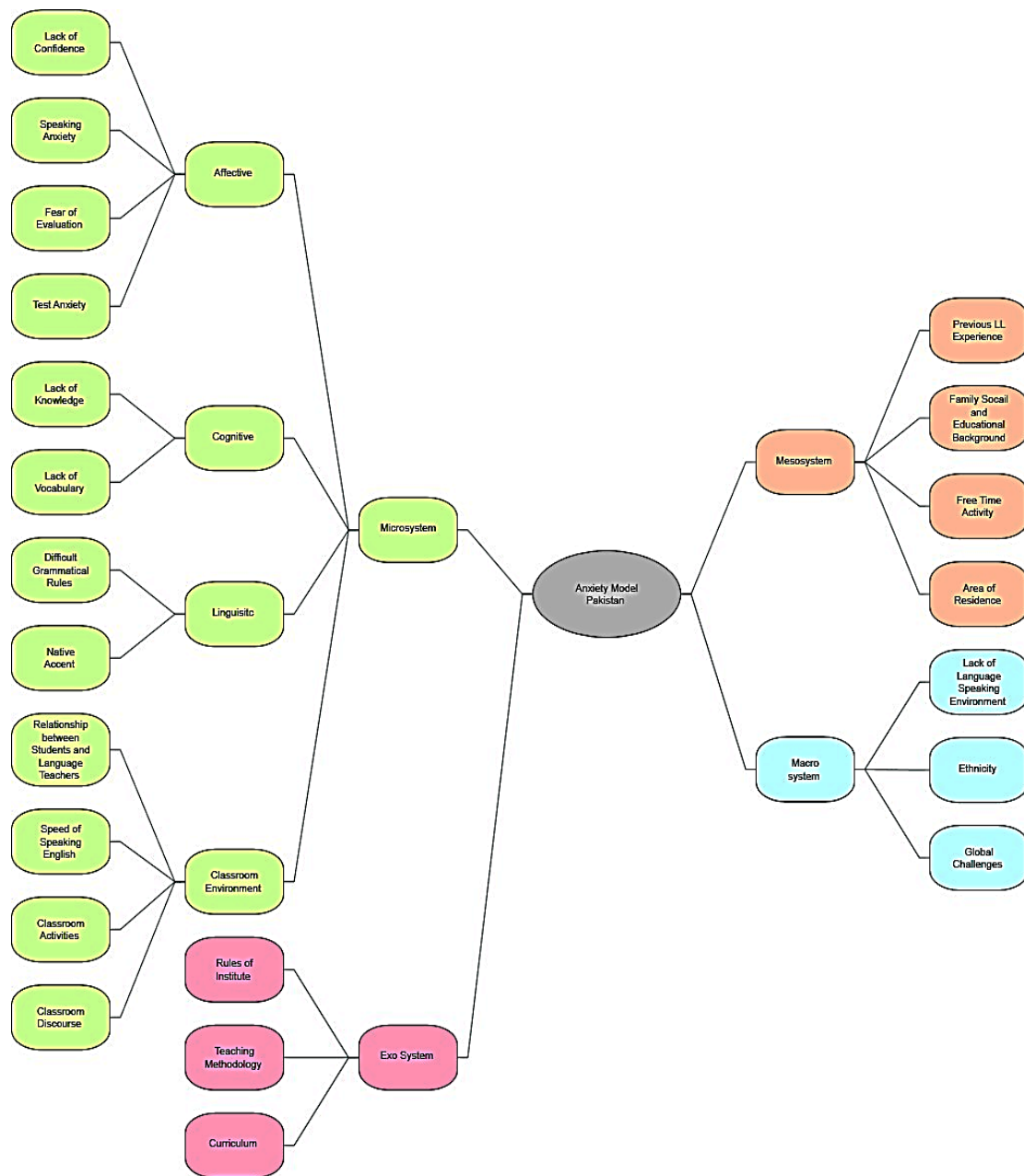


Figure 69: Potential Anxiety Model for Pakistani English Language Learners

The diagram above illustrates a potential anxiety model of English language learning anxiety factors for Pakistani students. By employing Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the study has brought all possible factors of language learning anxiety under one umbrella. At the micro level, cognitive, affective, and linguistic factors contribute to the anxiety of English language learners. Classroom environment in terms of student-teacher relationships, peer relationships, and classroom activities also plays its role. At the meso level, previous language learning experiences, family educational and social background, and extramural activities cause



anxiety. At the exo level, institutional policies, teaching methodology, and the curriculum cause anxiety for students whereas at the macro level, societal influences, lack of speaking environment, and global challenges such as COVID-19 contribute to anxiety. This comprehensive model captures the multifaceted nature of language learning anxiety in Pakistan, emphasizing the importance of addressing these factors holistically.

#### **5.4. Chapter Summary**

In this section of the thesis, the results drawn from Chapter 4 are discussed concerning the research at the national and international levels. All the important anxiety-causing factors are discussed with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested ecosystem model. At the micro level, four major factors (Affective, Cognitive, Linguistic, and Classroom Environment) caused anxiety among the research participants. At the affective level, lack of confidence, fear of evaluation, speaking, and test anxiety posed problems for the students. At the cognitive level, the lack of knowledge and lack of vocabulary whereas at linguistics the rules of language and native accent in the activities caused problems for the students. Different factors of the classroom environment were also problematic. At the meso level, the previous LL experience, financial status, educational background, and free time activity were reported. The rules of the university, curriculum, and teaching methodology at the exo level whereas ethnicity at the macro was the real issue. The chapter has also discussed the similarities and differences between the public and private sector universities and the universities of Islamabad and Faisalabad. The chapter ends with the implications of the study and presents a potential model for anxiety-inducing factors for anxiety in Pakistani university students.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The present study has explored the ecosystem of English language learning to find out the reasons for anxiety among university students in Pakistan. Being an English language teacher, it was observed that the students become anxious in their language classes. They were eager to learn the language, but the anxiety prevented them from attaining the desired goal. Therefore, the researcher decided to help the students by exploring the reasons so that they could find out the root cause of the problem and the teacher could also look deep into the issue to resolve it. It is important because the globalized world requires individuals who are communicatively competent. The government is striving to equip the masses with this skill by declaring English as a co-official language and a compulsory subject till graduation in the curricula. The research was conducted to dig out the reasons to remove all the barriers that may hinder the smooth learning of the language. The review of the literature also provided a rationale for the study as no research in Pakistan was available based on the ecological model and a comprehensive and in-depth study was required.

The ecological approach that was used to conduct this study believes in ‘holism’ i.e., the totality of the environment. According to Kramsch (2008, p.18), language is not a self-contained system rather it is surrounded by multiple factors, such as personal factors, societal, situational, and cultural factors. All these factors work in collaboration to shape language learning. Therefore, all these factors should be taken into consideration while studying any language-related issue. With all these thoughts in mind, the current research aimed at exploring the answers to three questions by using ethnography according to Lier (2004), it goes well with an ecological study:

1. What is the level of language learning anxiety among university students in Pakistan?
2. What are the factors in the ecosystem of English language learning that contribute to anxiety among university students in Pakistan?

3. How can an ecological approach to English language learning contribute to understanding and thereby resolving English language learning anxiety?

### **6.1. Conclusions Drawn from the Findings of the Study**

Responding to the first question regarding the level of LLA among the university students in Pakistan, the study has spotted very anxious, anxious, mildly anxious, and relaxed students in all the universities under investigation whereas very relaxed students were available only in the universities of Islamabad. On the basis of this finding where on the one place we can say that the students of all the anxiety levels can be easily found in Pakistani universities, we will have to accept that region has a strong impact on the language learning process. These levels of anxiety have a different impact on language learners. Whereas high anxiety mitigates LL, mild anxiety facilitates it. A high level of anxiety, which is detrimental to learning, affected thirty-nine percent population of the current study. Therefore, it can be said that there is a considerable number of anxious students in Pakistani universities. The presence of a considerable number of anxious students is in line with the findings of other research works on the subject in Pakistan (Shams, 2008; Adeel, Khattak et.al., 2011; Bhatti, 2016; Buriro, 2016; Nazeer Ahmed, 2017; Gopang, 2019, 2020 & Ali et al, 2021).

The second research question concerned the ecological reasons for anxiety among the students at the graduate level. The findings have confirmed that Pakistani university students get anxious because of multiple factors found across all four layers of the ecosystem. The Microsystem level is the most extensively explored in language anxiety research. The study has traced a strong relationship between anxiety and micro systematic factors such as Affective factors, Cognitive factors, and linguistic factors play an important role in ELL anxiety. The environment of the class also plays an important role in this regard where the teacher-student relationship, peer relationship, and the types of activities going on in the class exert influence on the language learning process. A healthy classroom environment i.e., one based on empathy helps in reducing anxiety. Individual activities and presentations raise more anxiety comparatively. The mesosystemic level also exerts an influence on the LL process. The social, educational, and economic background of the parents, previous LL background, activities of leisure, and area of residence also contribute to the anxiety of the students. Pakistani learners are also affected by the activities of the exo-level. At the exo level the curriculum, teaching methodology, and the rules of the institute matter. The discrepancy in teaching

methodology and course content at the college and university level leads to anxiety. At the macro level the cultural and social norms, the ethnic background of the learners, the provincial education system, and global calamities such as COVID-19 can affect the LL of the students.

The presence of factors from all the levels of the ecosystem concludes that learning a language, especially a second language is a complex process as it involves not only the learning of grammar and vocabulary but also the awareness of the target culture. Complex systems such as LL comprise many components or agents. Such systems are called complex, as the components cannot determine the behavior of the product, i.e., the whole is different from the composition of the parts (Larsen-Freeman, 1997). Such a complex system needs a model or a theory that may deal with its complexity. The nested ecosystem model (1979) and activity theory provided an opportunity to delve deep into the issues related to LLA. The majority of the research works on language-learning anxiety have not considered the complex nature of the language-learning process; therefore, these research works are simple and unsystematic. These early research projects have explored the correlation between randomly selected variables and language-learning anxiety. However, the present study, following the recent trends in language-learning anxiety research, is systematic, as it has considered different levels of anxiety and came up with the conclusion that LL is complex and multi-faceted. The study validates the point put forth by the researchers of the complexity and chaos movement such as Shirvan, (2016, 2017), Kasbi, Nazari, and Saghafi (2017).

The concern of the third research question was to find out how an ecological approach to English LL contributes to understanding and thereby resolving English LLA. The application of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested ecosystem model to study English LLA at the university level in Pakistan yielded a comprehensively contextualized understanding of the issue. The study has envisaged the factors inside and outside the classroom that exert an effect and mitigate LL. These factors were glossed over by the previous researchers only because of the unavailability of a comprehensive framework. The study has proved that the issue of LLA is complex and multifaceted. Such a complex system can be explored only by taking into consideration the multiple layers. Exploring only a superficial level is cutting the weeds that can sprout at any time to harm the main crop. The collaboration of individual and contextual

factors in creating anxiety is also supported by Peng (2012) and more recently by Gkonou (2017) and MacIntyre (2017). Kasbi (2017); Nazari (2017); Saghafi (2017) and Shirvan, (2017) provided a practical implementation of the concept. Based on the findings of this research, the insightful vision of Peng, Gkonou, and MacIntyre, and a review of the research projects, this research believes that the development of a heuristic framework based on Bronfenbrenner's ecosystem model (1979) can determine the causes of English LLA more comprehensively. The research concludes this part with Gkonou's (2017) words, "ecological approach is indispensable if we are to explain adequately how the people learn."

## **6.2. Suggestions for the Improvement of Language Learning Anxiety Situation**

1. All the levels of the ecosystem should be considered in a language class. If any student exhibits anxiety, the teacher should not blame him as the problem may exist somewhere beyond the class.
2. At the micro-level, there is a need to focus on the affective, cognitive, and classroom environment too. Currently, the whole focus is only on the linguistic factors to teach the English language.
3. The uncontrollable factors such as the education of the parents, ethnic, social, and economic background, etc. should also be considered in LL and separate sections should be formed based on such background information.
4. The discrepancy between college and university levels in terms of curriculum, teaching methodology, and assessment of ESL should be reduced. There should be a gradual progression in the curriculum instead of being altogether different. Collaborative training should be arranged for the teachers at colleges and universities so that the transition from one level to the next i.e., from college to university goes smoothly.

## **6.3. Contribution of the Study**

This study brings a new perspective to deal with LLA in Pakistan by introducing the ecological approach. No doubt, several studies have already dealt with the issue of anxiety concerning language learning, but the majority of those studies were

correlational and do not follow any systematic framework. Moreover, in Pakistan, researchers from disciplines (other than English) have conducted comprehensive studies on LLA. Since language learning was not their primary concern, language-related factors remained in oblivion.

The recent interest of post-structuralism, in the holistic-interactionist approach, requires the study of the person in context. The contextual study of a person can be conducted in LLA research with the application of ecological theory. Dealing with the issue of LLA using the ecological model adds to the existent store of research based on this new trend at the international level; however, in the Pakistani context, the application of Bronfenbrenner's model (1979) to get an ecological understanding of the issue is equivalent to a reconceptualization of the issue.

The most important contribution of the study is to bring all the factors under one umbrella. The study has contributed by introducing new factors at the meso, exo, and macro levels of English language learning anxiety. The study found that at the micro level, affective, cognitive, and linguistic factors contribute to language learning anxiety among students at the university level in Pakistan. The classification of anxiety-causing factors into cognitive, affective, and linguistic, was missing in the previous works. The study also proved that the affective factor is largely responsible for English language learning anxiety among the students. The study has used a socio-economic scale for the very first time in language anxiety research in the Pakistani context. It has brought forward that too much focus on grades at the college level and the discrepancy between teaching methodology and curriculum at the college and university levels leads to anxiety. The important role played by macro-level factors is also highlighted by the study.

The study has also provided empirical evidence from the Pakistani context to support the existing theory, i.e., ecological systems theory. In short, the study has demonstrated that language-learning anxiety is a complex phenomenon that requires exploration at varied levels. Language-learning anxiety research is still at a preliminary stage in Pakistan where a simple cause-and-effect method has been in practice. An exploration into the multifaceted nature of language-learning anxiety among students in Pakistan can bring about constructive changes practically in foreign language education. The study concludes that an ecological stance on LLA brings a new

dimension to anxiety research in Pakistan that is more comprehensive and all-encompassing.

#### **6.4. Recommendations for Future Research**

In the light of the findings of the study, it is recommended that future research on the below-mentioned topics will further enhance the understanding of the issue:

1. The study has used mixed-method research, an ethnographic/longitudinal study of LL anxiety is strongly recommended for future research. Such in-depth research can spot increasing and decreasing levels of anxiety which can help in understanding the real role of institutes in LL anxiety.
2. The study has also highlighted that different provincial education systems are responsible for LL anxiety. This cross-provincial perspective can help identify commonalities and differences in anxiety triggers and coping mechanisms.
3. It would be interesting to examine language policies in Pakistani educational institutions (especially in terms of language proficiency requirements, assessment methods, and curriculum design) and their impact on students' language learning anxiety.
4. Teachers' perspectives on the anxiety of the learners have been sought in many studies including the current one. However, the transfer of anxiety from the teacher to the students has not been explored yet. Exploring the anxiety among the teachers can help in determining the share of teachers in students' anxiety.
5. The current study has focused on LLA in general. A study with a focus on individual skills such as speaking or writing etc. can bring more factors to the fore. The focus on every skill separately will help the students in assimilating their problems with the findings.

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## Appendix 1

### Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale by Horwitz et.al (1986)

Tick the most relevant option.

	Name:	Program:	Reg. no.	Date:			
No			Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.						
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.						
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.						
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.						
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.						
6	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.						
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.						
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.						
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.						
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.						
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.						

12	In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.					
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.					
14	I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.					
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.					
16	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.					
17	I often feel like not going to my language class.					
18	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.					
19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.					
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.					
21	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.					
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.					
23	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.					
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.					
25	Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.					
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.					
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.					
28	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.					

29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.					
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.					
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.					
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.					
33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.					

**Appendix 2**  
**Oetting's Scores (1983) to Determine Anxiety**

<b>Sr. No</b>	<b>Score Range</b>	<b>Level</b>
1	33-65	Very Relaxed
2	66-86	Relaxed
3	87-107	Mild Anxious
4	108-123	Anxious
5	124-165	Very Anxious

## **Appendix 3**

### **Prompts for Diary Writing**

1. At what point in class you were most comfortable.
2. What was the most anxiety provoking moment in the class.
3. Any other comments you want to make about the class.



## Appendix 4

### Interview Guide

<b>Questions to ask based on Activity Theory based on Mwanza Model (2002)</b>		
Objective and outcome	<p>1. Do you understand the purpose behind learning English? How does this understanding influence your feelings about the course?</p>	Macro Level
	<p>2. How do you perceive your English language classroom environment? Is it engaging, satisfactory, or do you find it dull? How does this perception affect your language learning experience?</p>	Micro Level
Subjects	<p>1. Can you share some insights about your background, including your family, siblings, parents' education, and occupations? How has your experience with language learning in school and college influenced your current approach to learning English?</p>	Meso Level
	<p>2. How do you typically spend your spare time, and does this leisure activity impact your English language learning journey?</p>	Meso Level
Tools	<p>1. How does your teacher utilize different teaching methods or audio-visual aids in the English language classroom? Do you find these tools helpful, or do they contribute to any</p>	Exo Level

	feelings of anxiety during learning?	
	2. Are there any specific rules or regulations set by your teacher or university regarding language learning that you find challenging to adhere to?	Exo Level
Rules and regulations	1. What are your thoughts on the marking criteria used by your English teacher for assignments, presentations, or exams? Do these criteria add to any stress or anxiety during assessments?	Exo Level
Division of Labor	1. How does your English teacher engage you in the classroom? Do they primarily deliver lectures or involve you in interactive activities? How does this teaching approach impact your language learning experience?	Micro Level
	2. What role do you perceive your teacher playing in your language learning journey, and what role do you assign to yourself? Do you prefer collaborative group activities or individual tasks?	Micro Level
Community	1. Are you familiar with all your classmates in the English language class? How does the level of familiarity with peers affect your comfort level in class?	Micro Level
	2. How many friends do you have within the language learning context, and how do these friendships influence	Micro Level

	<p>your language learning experience?</p>	
	<p>3. How comfortable do you feel sharing your academic concerns with your language teachers? What type of support do you receive from them?</p>	<p>Micro Level</p>
	<p>4. What is your parents' attitude towards your English language studies? How does their level of concern impact your own feelings about language learning and academic performance?</p>	<p>Meso Level</p>



## Appendix 6

### Social Class Scale

#### (a) Occupation of the Head of the Family: -

Sr. No.	Occupation of the Head	Score
1	Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers	10
2	Professionals	9
3	Technicians and Associate Professionals	8
4	Clerks	7
5	Skilled Workers and Shop & Market Sales Workers	6
6	Skilled Agricultural & Fishery Workers	5
7	Craft & Related Trade Workers	4
8	Plant & Machine Operators and Assemblers	3
9	Elementary Occupation	2
10	Unemployed	1

#### (b) Education of the Head of the Family: -

Sr. No.	Education of the Head	Score
1	Profession or Honours	7
2	Graduate	6
3	Intermediate or diploma	5
4	High school certificate	4
5	Middle school certificate	3
6	Primary school certificate	2
7	Illiterate	1

#### (c) Total Monthly Income of the Family: -

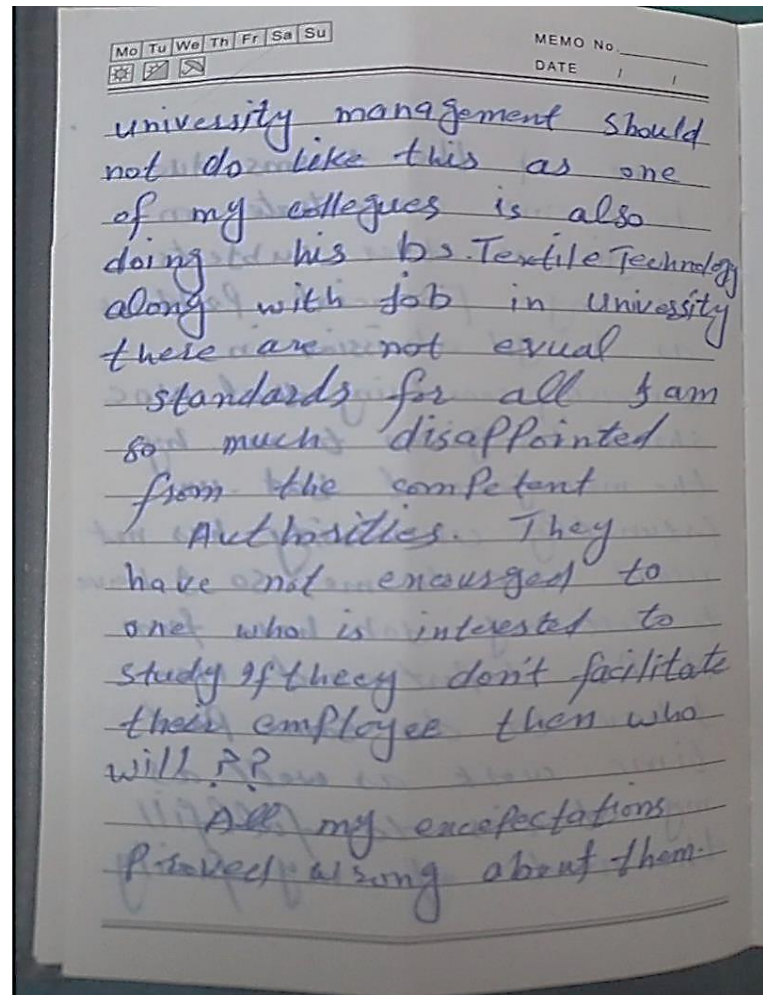
Sr. No.	Updated Monthly Family Income in Rs. (2012)	Updated Monthly Family Income in Rs. (2016)	Updated Monthly Family Income in Rs. (2018)	Score
1	>30375	≥ 40,430	>126,360	12
2	15188-30374	20,210-40,429	63,182-126,356	10
3	11362-15187	15,160-20,209	47,266-63178	6
4	7594-11361	10,110-15,159	31,591-47262	4
5	4556-7593	6060-10,109	18,953-31589	3
6	1521-4555	2021-6059	6327-18949	2
7	≤1520	≤ 2020	≤6323	1

#### (d) Kuppuswamy's Socio-Economic Status Scale 2018: -

Sr. No.	Score	Socioeconomic Class
1	26-29	Upper (I)
2	16-25	Upper Middle (II)
3	11-15	Lower Middle (III)
4	5-10	Upper Lower (IV)
5	< 5	Lower (V)

## Appendix 7

### Sample from Student's Diaries

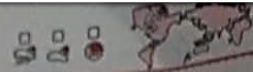


Date: 16-11-20 No.

I felt uncomfortable because teacher was taking the surprise quiz. whole of class was worried. Teacher did not compromise and took quiz.

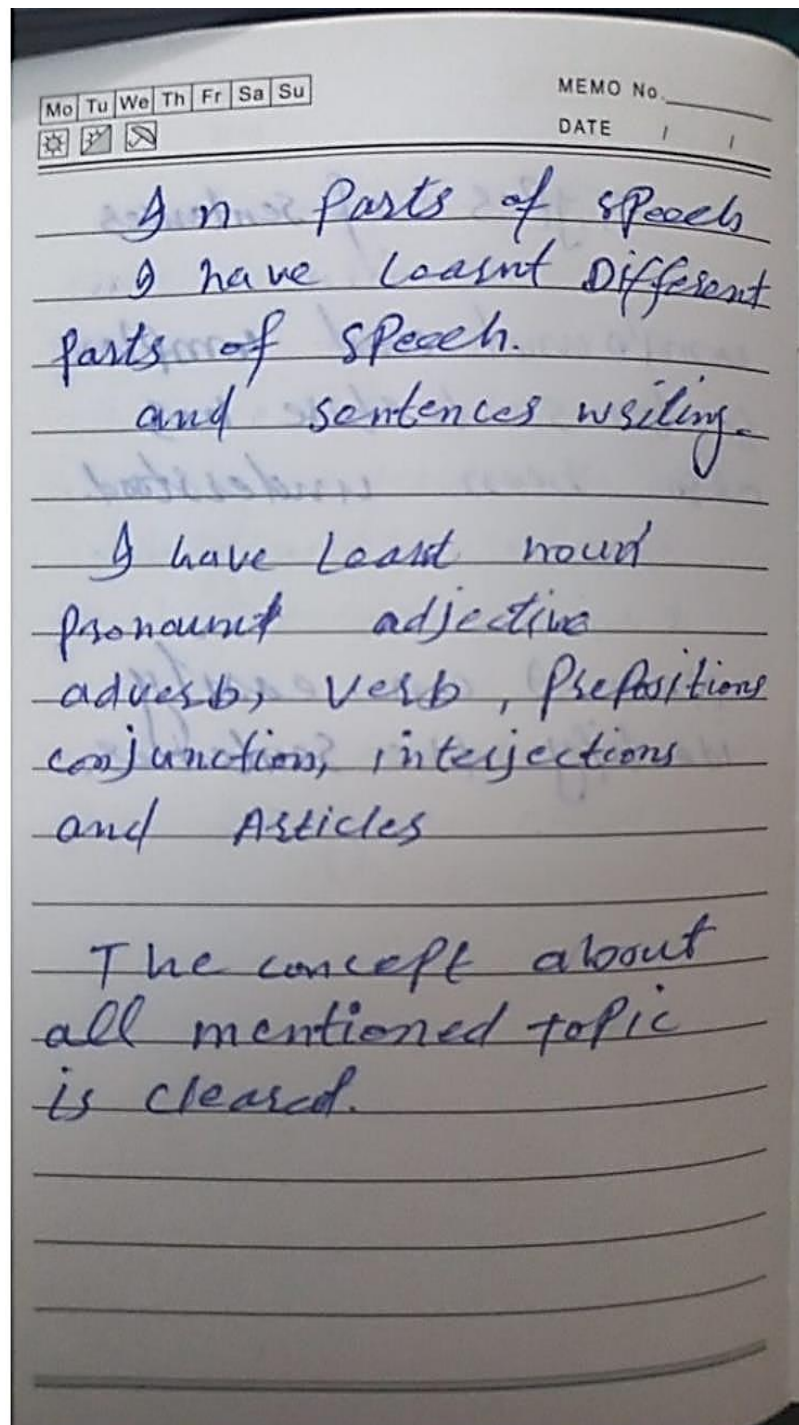
After quiz, teacher asked to the class about reading, writing and speaking.

Date. 30-11-2016.



This lecture was the first lecture which we were taking online. I felt uncomfortable when I did not know the the how to run the app M.S team. I felt comfortable at the end of lecture, when my attendance marked.





**Appendix 8**  
**Activity Rank Scale**

Rank	EE activity
1	Reading newspapers/magazines
2	Reading books
3	Listening to music
4	Watching TV
5	Surfing the Internet
6	Playing video games
7	Watching films

## Appendix 9 (a)

### Request for approval Data Collection

The HOD (Computer Sciences),  
The University of Faisalabad,  
Faisalabad.

**SUBJECT:                    REQUEST FOR PERMISSION OF DATA  
COLLECTION FOR PHD RESEARCH  
WORK**

Respected Sir/Madam,

It is stated with due reverence that I am serving as Lecture (English) in National Textile University Faisalabad. I am enrolled in PhD (English Linguistics), NUML, Islamabad and have completed my course work. I am going to start my research work on “**An Ecological Study of English Language Learning Anxiety Among University Students**”. I have to collect data from the students of BBA and BSCS of all the Universities of Faisalabad. For this reason, I have selected your prestigious institution for data collection.

It is requested to you to kindly allow me to attend the classes of English in the department of Management and Computer Sciences (BBA and BSCS) and to have interviews with the students and discussions with the teachers of English. It is requested to you kindly consider my request and oblige. I will be highly grateful to you.

Yours Truly,

Rabia Rani  
Lecturer English  
Department of Humanities  
National Textile University Faisalabad

## Appendix 9 (b)

### Consent Form

#### Consent Form

**An Ecological Study of English Language Learning Anxiety Among the University Students in Pakistan**

I, M. Saad..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I know that I have the right to withdraw from this process whenever I want to.

I allow you to record my interview and use for research purposes.

I will be available whenever the researcher calls me to obtain any information.

Signature of research participant Saad

Signature of researcher [Signature]

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**An Ecological Study of English Language Learning Anxiety Among the University Students in Pakistan**

I, Shehryar..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I know that I have the right to withdraw from this process whenever I want to.

I allow you to record my interview and use for research purposes.

I will be available whenever the researcher calls me to obtain any information.

Signature of research participant [Signature]

Signature of researcher [Signature]

Date \_\_\_\_\_