

# A Case Study of First-Year Non-English Undergraduate Students' English Learning Anxiety in Bangladesh

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## Abstract:

Anxiety, that is a kind of troubled state of mind, is considered as an important variable in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. It is important to address this anxiety because it represents physically and emotionally uncomfortable experience for many learners in the EFL classroom. So, it has become one of the current challenges in foreign language teaching to provide students with a low-anxiety classroom environment. This study surveyed and analyzed sixty (60) students from International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) in Bangladesh. From a careful examination of the EFL classroom it was found that first-year non-English undergraduate students of IIUC had a moderate level of anxiety that hinders their learning. Moreover, several sources of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) have been discerned and numerous ways for reducing it have been identified. The purpose of this study is to 1) investigate students' anxiety level towards foreign language learning, 2) briefly review the sources of foreign language anxiety, and 3) identify ways to reduce anxiety in the EFL classroom. Different types of instruments had been used for the study among which one was developed from Horwitz (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) where there are 33 items, each one on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The data obtained were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) version 13.0 Windows and descriptive analysis was performed to compute the means and standard deviations for each item and each kind of anxiety.

**Keywords:** English as a foreign language, foreign language anxiety, source, reduce, First-year Non-English undergraduate students.

## 1. Introduction:

Anxiety, one of the most prominent and pervasive emotions, was defined as a feeling of uneasy suspense by Rachman (1998) and has been a focus of research in foreign language learning since early 1970s. Research (Aida, 1994; Bailey, 1983; Crookall and Oxford, 1991; Ely, 1986; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Ganscow & Sparks, 1996; Krashen, 1985b; MacIntyre, 1995; MacIntyre & Gardener, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1994; Muchnick & Wolfe, 1982; Price, 1988, 1991; Schlesinger, 1995; Trylong, 1987; von worde, 1998; Young, 1990, 1991, 1992;) has consistently revealed that anxiety can impede foreign language production and achievement. According to Campbell and Ortiz (1991) half the language students experience a startling level of anxiety. Language anxiety is such a subjective feeling which is experienced by learners of both foreign and second language and poses potential problems "because it can interfere with the acquisition, retention and production of the new language" (MacIntyre & Gardener, 1991, p. 86).

Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986) provided a definition of anxiety especially associated with language learning. They defined foreign language anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviour related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). They identified three related anxieties as components of FLA: communication apprehension (the fear of communicating with other people), test anxiety (fear of exams, quizzes, and other assignments used to evaluate the students' performance), and fear of negative evaluation (the worry about how others view the speaker). In addition, foreign Language anxiety (FLA) is a situation-specific form of anxiety that is related to language learning contest (Horwitz, 2001). Gardener (1985) had also acknowledged that second/foreign language (SL/FL) anxiety was situation-specific. Krashen (1985a, 1985b) maintained that anxiety inhibits in learner's ability to process incoming language and short-circuits the process of acquisition. Foreign language anxiety has been found to have potential negative effects on academic

achievement (e.g., lower course grades) (Horwitz, 1986; Saito & Samimy, 1996; MacIntyre, Noels and Clément, 1997), cognitive processes (e.g., not being able to produce the language) (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994), the social context (e.g., communicating less) (Kleinmann, 1977; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991a, 1991b; MacIntyre and Charos, 1995; Steinberg and Horwitz, 1986; Mejjias, Applbaum, Applbaum and Trotter, 1991), and the reaction for language learner (e.g., traumatic experiences) (MacIntyre, 1999; Cohen and Norst, 1989; Price, 1991; Phillips, 1990). Furthermore, Crookall and Oxford (1991) reported that serious language anxiety may cause other related problems with self-esteem, self-confidence and risk-taking ability, and ultimately hampers proficiency in the foreign language. Thus we find, foreign language anxiety (FLA) is a complex psychological construct, difficult to precisely define, perhaps due to the intricate hierarchy of intervening variables as noted by Trylong (1987).

## **2. Implication for the Study:**

With the trend of globalization English, that is a means of international communication, is often used in Bangladesh. To remain competitive, Bangladeshi students should be well equipped with a solid education foundation wherein the ability to communicate is very important. In Bangladesh, English is extensively used in education system from the primary up to the tertiary level as well as in various professions. So, for academic purpose and later in professional setting, proficiency in English is very necessary for Bangladeshi students. Now a day the employers do not simply look at the candidates' excellent academic results but also their proficiency in the language of English. In brief, English becomes the most important language to the students not only in order to excel in their study but also to prepare them for the competitive job market. Employers choose the best candidates who have good academic qualifications along with proficiency in English to meet the demands of globalization.

In Bangladesh two different mediums, Bangla and English are used in different institutions for instructions. In English medium schools, the medium of instructions is English while in Bangla medium schools, Bangla is the only medium of instructions. In these Bangla medium schools, English is taught as a subject only and the main focus of the students is to pass the exam not to gain proficiency. As a result, in spite of having learned English for twelve years in school level and college level, when the students enroll into university they face difficulties to use English effectively and feel anxiety. International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) is a renowned private university in Bangladesh with seven departments and fifteen thousand students. More than two thousand students and twenty-five teachers are involved with the Department of English Language and Literature (ELL). Students need to use English extensively for the academic purposes. All the subjects other than Shariah are taught in English and books are in English. Moreover, English is used as the medium of instructions in classroom. As a result, the students are required to be proficient in English. Lectures are delivered in English which is a new experience for the students while most of the students come from Bangla medium background.

It has been observed that, first year students feel FLA most. They neither understand the lecture nor the language. So they get frustrated. Most of the teachers remain busy to complete their syllabus ignoring the anxiety felt by the learners. The classes move so quickly that the students cannot understand anything and fail to keep pace with the teachers. The syllabus is also too vast to complete. Moreover, difficult vocabularies, harsh reaction of the teachers, frustration expressed by the teachers when the students fail to fulfill their expectations, personality clash etc. increase FLA. The classes are dominated by the teachers most of the time and the role of the learners is nothing but dumb listeners. When the students participate, the teachers try to correct each and every mistake. All these increase anxiety in the EFL classroom. Therefore this study would try to find out first-year non-English undergraduate students' perspectives towards the feeling of anxiety which they experience in the EFL classroom. In addition, this paper also intends to identify the type of activities that can cause high anxiety level in foreign language learning classroom along with some ways suggested by the students as well as teachers to reduce foreign language anxiety.

## **3. The Goal of the present Study:**

The primary goals of this study are:

- i) to determine students' anxiety level when learning foreign language
- ii) to find out the factors that the students believe can contribute to foreign language anxiety (FLA)
- iii) to suggest some ways to reduce FLA and to increase students' engagement in the EFL classroom

## **4. Research Methodology:**

### **4.1. Research procedure:**

Before the actual data collection period, a prior study was conducted to test validity of the questionnaire as well as to get feedbacks and suggestions from the respondents.

#### **4.1.1. Respondents of this Research:**

The study focuses on first-year non-English undergraduate students of Department of English Language & Literature (ELL), IIUC who are chosen from two different semesters (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>) and the teachers who teach in these two semesters. Questionnaires were distributed randomly to the students and teachers in order to collect data for this research. There were a total of sixty-seven (63) respondents involved in this study. All students were female and most of them were from urban areas and from Bangla medium institutions.

#### 4.1.2. *Research Instrument:*

For the purpose of the study two sets of questionnaire were used as instruments (Appendix A and Appendix B). Appendix A, Part-I was designed to collect personal information of the respondents such as their name, age, gender, department, university, English learning time, their previous and present experience, etc. Appendix A, Part-II was intended to measure students' anxiety level. This questionnaire was adapted from the *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)* developed by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986). The FLCAS is a self-report measure and based on an analysis of potential sources of anxiety. It was posited in order to examine the scope and severity of foreign language anxiety. This FLCAS consists of 33 statements, of which 8 items were for communication anxiety (1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, 32), 9 items for fear of negative evaluation (3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, 33) and 5 items for test anxiety (2, 8, 10, 19, 21). As for the remaining 11 items, they were put in a group which was named anxiety of English classes. The students were asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. According to 5-point scale ranging, Strongly Agree (scale point 5), Agree (scale point 4), Neither Agree or Disagree (scale point 3), Disagree (scale point 2) and lastly Strongly Disagree (scale point 1). In addition to this questionnaire, the students were given another set of questionnaire consisted of ten questions (Appendix B, Part-I). Furthermore, for the teachers a set of questionnaire had been designed where the teachers mentioned the sources of FLA which they observed in the EFL classroom and offered suggestions to reduce FLA in the EFL classroom (Appendix B, Part-II).

#### 4.2 **Data Collection:**

The questionnaire was distributed to sixty (60) first-year non-English undergraduate students. Fifty-nine (59) copies were collected back from the students and fifty-eight (58) replies were found statistically valid. Thirty (30) students supplied their English scores of the final exam. Ten questionnaires were also given to the teachers and only five had been given back.

##### 4.2.1. *Data Analysis:*

To analyze the data of Appendix A, Part-I, SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) 13.0 Windows was employed. Descriptive analysis was performed to compute the means and standard deviations for each item and each kind of anxiety to see the general situation of first-year non-English undergraduate students' anxiety in English learning classrooms.

#### 5. **Findings of Appendixes:**

##### 5.1. *Findings of Appendix A:*

Appendix A, Part-I informed about the students' previous and present experience while Appendix A, Part-II indicates students' foreign language anxiety level. According to the results of the descriptive analyses of Part-II, there were eighteen (18) items whose means were above 3.00 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> one had the highest index of 3.5697 of all the statements. Among the 18 items whose mean values were higher than 3.00, there were nine (9) items concerning it, especially item 9, the mean of which was as high as 3.5697. As Table 1 shows, the first-year non-English undergraduate students indeed had the feeling of anxiety. Moreover, it was also found from the same Table that, students' fear of negative evaluation was especially serious because the means of it reached 3.2137.

##### 5.1.1. *Discussion on Findings of Appendix A:*

According to the results of the study, twenty-nine (50) respondents (86.2%) experienced a moderate level of anxiety, (7) respondents (12.1%) experienced high level of anxiety and (1) respondent (1.72%) experienced no anxiety in the EFL classroom especially when they were asked to speak in front of the class. Thus the students who experienced high anxiety, they may perceive a foreign language learning situation as threatening to them and may showed a poor learning performance. Anxiety can affect learners' learning performance and this view is supported by MacIntyre & Gardener (1989) who found that students with high communicative anxiety tended to have lower scores on oral and written vocabulary tests.

In this study the researcher has identified the students' anxiety level according to the three factors of the foreign language anxiety. They are fear of negative evaluation, communicative comprehension and test anxiety. The study also shows that, many of the students experienced fear of negative evaluation though it was in moderate level when they communicated with other people especially in the EFL classroom. The findings of fear of negative evaluation had been noted in many previous studies, such as, Horwitz (1986), MacIntyre and Gardener (1994), Spielberger

(1972). Fear of negative evaluation can make learners get discouraged, lose faith in their abilities, escape from participating in classroom activities, and even give up the effort to learn a language well. Thus, the learners with high fear of negative evaluation often get low achievement which makes them more anxious about learning.

However, there were number of students also who thought that they felt nervous when they had to speak without preparation and felt very conscious when communicating in English in front of other students. The results of this study seemed to confirm the findings of a study by Casado (2001) who found that many people experience communication apprehension when speaking to a group of people in a formal setting.

Another notable finding of the study is that test anxiety is another variable that creates high anxiety in the EFL classroom. At IIUC, undergraduate students usually spend most of their time on English learning in classrooms. Moreover, compared with schools and college students, they usually sit for more English tests. In each term, students have to sit for two large scale exams – a mid-term exam and a final. In school, students usually take a test every three units and in college, they have to sit for only two large-scale exams within two years of period. Therefore, students with poor English achievement are anxious about or even discouraged by English classes and tests.

#### 5.2. Purpose of Appendix B:

The answers of ten (10) questions of Appendix B, Part-I provided rich details. Among these ten questions, Questions 1 and 2 were designed to know students' feelings about their foreign language classes. Questions 3 and 4 were formulated to elicit information regarding the factors of anxiety in the EFL classroom. Accordingly, Questions 5, 6, 7 and 8 provided with important information regarding students' beliefs concerning ability and contexts. Another question, Question 9 was formulated to know the matter whether they take action to solve a problem or reduce FLA. Question 10 was included in an attempt to understand if the students may have learned more about foreign language anxiety or might have benefited otherwise from their participation in the study. Appendix B, Part-II was designed for the teachers to know from them what factors were responsible to increase anxiety in the EFL classroom. This part also provided some ways to reduce anxiety and thus increase engagement of the students in the EFL classroom.

##### 5.2.1. Findings from Appendix B:

The findings of questions of Part-I and Part-II were analyzed according to basic categories developed from the questions: factors believed to cause FLA and factors believed to reduce FLA. Under these two categories, where appropriate, subcategories were also developed. The findings revealed extremely negative experiences with the EFL class. Some students described their feelings provided examples of how anxiety can lead to frustration and even anger. Several students appeared relieved to learn that they were not alone in their anxieties. Foss and Reitzel (1988) found that anxiety was reduced for many students merely by knowing that they were not alone in their fears or beliefs.

Through these questionnaires the students as well as teachers got an opportunity not only to express their problems and concerns but also to identify the factors of anxiety and solution to reduce FLA. Most of the participants reported positive benefits from their participation in this research.

##### 5.2.2. Discussion on Findings of Appendix B:

The findings of Appendix B have been divided into two sections. First section is the factors of foreign language anxiety and second section is ways to reduce FLA in the EFL classroom. These factors of FLA and ways to reduce FLA were identified by both the students and teachers.

### 6. Factors of Foreign Language Anxiety:

Approximately one-third foreign language learners while learning a foreign language experiences some type of foreign language anxiety (Horwitz, Howtitz and Cope, 1986). Research has shown that, there are a number of factors that can cause anxiety for the language learners. The participants of this study cited various factors for their anxiety and it was found that the sources of anxiety often were intertwined causing difficulty in testing out a discrete factor or source. The causes can be broken down into three main sources:

- i) learner characteristics
- ii) teacher characteristics
- iii) classroom procedures

#### 6.1. Learner Characteristics:

Learner characteristics can cause foreign language anxiety which includes inability to comprehend, self-perceived low level of anxiety, competitiveness, perfectionism, self-awareness, speaking activities, test anxiety, fluent speakers' presence, students' beliefs about language learning, lack of group membership with peers, fear of negative evaluation, negative classroom experiences, etc.

#### 6.1.1. Inability to comprehend:

Inability to comprehend what was being said in the classroom provoked considerable anxiety. Many students complained that when the teacher spoke much too fast, refused to use any Bangla (native language) at all which resulted in an inability to keep up during class, and consequently carried over into homework assignments. Young (1992) also noted that listening might generate anxiety if it were “incomprehensible” (p. 68). The inability to comprehend exercises or the instruction was also cited as anxiety-provoking factor by several students.

#### 6.1.2. Self-perceived low level of ability:

Many participants told that when they think that they cannot do anything and compare themselves to other students, they feel very anxious. An interview conducted by Price (1991) emphasized the importance of low esteem. Many of her subjects compared themselves to other language learners and believed their language skill to be weaker.

#### 6.1.3. Competitiveness:

Competitiveness is another anxiety-provoking factor as reported by the participants. Bailey (1983) attributed the cause of language anxiety to competitiveness on part of the learners. She analyzed the dairies of 11 learners. She found that they tended to become anxious when they compared themselves with other learners in the class and found themselves less proficient. She noted that as the learners perceived themselves becoming more efficient, and therefore better able to compete, their anxiety decreased. According to Price (1991), anxious learners often engage in self-comparison with classmates and peers- and this is the practice which can lead to anxiety.

#### 6.1.4. Perfectionism:

In addition, many participants’ response suggested perfectionism as a factor of FLA. Perfectionism is such a personality trait that can be considered as a factor FLA (Gregerson and Horwitz, 2002). When they looked at the relationship between foreign language anxiety and perfectionism, they found that anxious language learners and perfectionists may have a number of characteristics in common (e.g., higher standards for their English performance, a greater tendency toward procrastination, more worry about the opinions of others, and a higher level of concern over their errors) and that these characteristics have the potential for making language learners unpleasant as well as less successful than other students.

#### 6.1.5. Self-awareness:

Self-awareness is reported as a factor of foreign language anxiety by the participants. Self-aware language learners are confronted with the probability that people will perceive them differently from the way they perceive themselves. Thus, learners can experience anxiety or fear and experience the state of “losing oneself” in the target culture. As Oxford (1992) points out, this is closely related to the idea of “culture shock”. Horwitz, Horwitz and cope (1986) reported that students are very self-aware when they are required to engage in speaking activities that expose their inadequacies, and these feelings often lead to “fear, or even panic”(p. 128).

#### 6.1.6. Speaking Activities:

Many of the anxiety-provoking factors reported by the participants appeared to be generated by various speaking activities which they normally encounter in a language classroom. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) stated that anxious students often cite speaking in the foreign language classroom to be their most anxiety producing experience. This is in part due to the fact that it is hard to be one’s self in the target language (i.e., feelings of uncertainty and threats to the ego due to the unknown element of the target language; Guiora et al., 1972), which can thus trigger anxiety. The foreign language learners are put in the position of communicating something that is meaningful to him/her without having sufficient command of the language to do so.

Thus, the fear of communicating orally or publicly have long been accepted psychologically phenomena. Daly (1991) noted that the fear of delivering a speech in public exceeded even such phobias as fear of snakes, elevators, and heights. Public speaking is considered very difficult as the learners have to not only learn the new language but perform in it as well (Foss and Reitzel, 1988).

#### 6.1.7. Test anxiety:

Test anxiety was mentioned as an important factor of foreign language learning anxiety in the EFL classroom, particularly in connection with oral testing or listening exercises. One student admitted as being near tears during the mid-term exam when she had to give an oral presentation, and was upset, shaking and sweating. Other interviewees stated that she would rather be in prison camp than speak the language of English. In addition, language testing may lead to foreign language anxiety (Young, 1991; Daly, 1991). For example, difficult tests, tests that do not match the teaching in class or unclear or unfamiliar test instructions can also produce foreign language anxiety.

#### 6.1.8. Fluent Speakers’ Presence:

Another anxiety-provoking factor cited by many participants' concerned native speaker's or fluent speaker's presence in the classroom. This appeared to be a problem mainly in the EFL classes, some students believed that the teachers somewhat taught to the higher level, can also cause foreign language anxiety. The students seemed to have a perception of being compared negatively to the fluent speakers.

#### 6.1.9. Students' Beliefs about Language Learning:

Students' beliefs about language learning can also work as a factor of foreign language anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986; Horwitz, 1988, 1989; Price, 1991; Young, 1991). Students can have unrealistic expectations as to how a person should perform in a foreign language classroom. When those expectations are not met it can lead to negative feelings about one's intelligence and abilities. In a study, Horwitz(1988) found that over one-third of the students thought that foreign language can be learned in two years or less of typical university study (i.e., one hour a day). In addition, many students also believed that learning a foreign language primarily involved memorizing vocabulary words and grammatical rules. Such enormous beliefs may lead to disappointment and frustrations on the part of the students. Palacios (1998) found that these students' unreal beliefs are associated with anxiety: the feeling that mastering a language is a overwhelming task; the feeling that one need to go through the translation process in order to communicate in the target language; the difficulty of keeping everything in one's head; and the belief that learning a language is easier at an earlier age. These are all faulty beliefs that may cause the students to have unrealistic expectations about the language learning process, and thus can cause FLA.

#### 6.2. Teacher Characteristics:

The most disturbing aspect of the EFL classroom, according to many students, was directly related to the teachers; that "the teacher was trying to make you feel stupid," and this indicated a lack of respect on the part of the teacher. A judgmental teaching attitude (Samimy, 1994) and a harsh manner of teaching (Aida, 1994) are linked to students' fear in the classroom. Palacios (1998) found the following characteristics of the teacher to be associated with anxiety: absence of teacher support, unsympathetic personalities, lack of time for personal attention, favoritism, a sense that the class does not provide students with the tools necessary to match up with the teacher's expectations and the sense of being judged by the teacher or wanting to impress the teacher. Young (1992) noted that teaching too much grammar as well as speaking activities, put the learner "on the spot" in front of the peers without allowing prior preparation are also sources of anxiety for many students. Ando (1999) found that having a native instructor also can cause anxiety. Young (1994) listed the following role-related beliefs which have been shown to evoke feelings of anxiety: it is necessary for the teacher to be intimidating at times; the instructor is supposed to correct every single mistake made by the students; group or partner work is not appropriate because it can get out of control; the teacher should do most of the talking; and the instructor's role is that of a drill sergeant.

#### 6.3. Classroom Procedure:

Classroom procedure was counted another source of anxiety. Young (1990) compiled list of classroom activities which were perceived by students as producing anxiety:

- 1) spontaneous role-play in the class;
- 2) speaking in front of the class;
- 3) oral presentations or skits in front of the class;
- 4) Presenting an unprepared dialogue in front of the class; and
- 5) Writing on the board.

Palacios (1998) found the following classroom characteristics to be anxiety producing factors; demands of oral production, feeling of being put on the spot, the pace of the class, and the feeling of being evaluated (i.e., fear of negative evaluation). Several students were concerned that the language class moved so quickly that they did not have sufficient time to digest the rules and vocabulary. Again a few commented that the amount of material to be covered in one semester is excessive. Several other students made comments regarding the "speed" of the course. An extremely anxiety-provoking technique is calling on students one after another in seating order in the speaking classes. Another practice that was cited as an anxiety-provoking factor by the participants concerned error correction. Students reported becoming frustrated when the teacher would correct the error before they had time to completely formulate a response. Comments made by several students pertained to teachers interruption to correct speaking errors. These interruptions would frequently cause students to lose their focus. Oxford (1992) emphasized learning and teaching styles as a potential source of language anxiety. If the instructor's teaching style and a student's learning style are not compatible, "style wars" can trigger or heighten anxiety levels.

## **7. Ways that can Reduce Anxiety and Increase Engagement:**

From this study it is clear that foreign language classes generated considerable anxiety. Therefore, it was anticipated that the research should offer some concrete suggestions for alleviating this anxiety where students' participation would be welcome. Students as well as teachers provided some suggestions. The proposals ranged from simple suggestions to complex curriculum.

### *7.1. Suggestions Offered by the Students to Reduce Anxiety in the EFL Classroom:*

- 1) Students should be encouraged to get together outside the classroom and know each other personally. When students feel alone with no friends, they become "more self-conscious." Properly structured group work or collaborative activities appear to reduce anxiety for some students. Group work serves two purposes: a) it allows all the students to get more practice with the language, and b) it takes the burden off the individual student to perform in front of the whole class and allows more student-student interaction.
- 2) The majority of students mentioned that "not being put on the spot" in class would help them to be less anxious.
- 3) Several students pointed out, gentle error correction or modeling the correct response "helps to relieve anxiety."
- 4) Students should sit in a semi-circle or oval arrangement because "in a circle you're kind of like one in a crowd."
- 5) Several students mentioned that having a more "personal relationship" with the teacher is helpful. Teachers should be very friendly, relaxed, and patient in the classroom. They should develop a sense of humour. The teacher's attitude toward the language itself also can play a role in reducing anxiety.
- 6) Teachers should use an encouraging rather than threatening style of questioning, avoid sarcasm and intimidation, and give students more positive feedback (e.g., verbal praise). The students reported that they are less anxious with the teachers who make the class fun or make the class more animated.
- 7) Several students mentioned that they might feel more comfortable if the instructional material were more relevant to their life or goals. Interesting topics for class discussions and exercises can help the students to reduce their anxiety.
- 8) The teachers should speak more slowly or consider using native language to clarify key points.
- 9) The teachers should use native language to clarify instructions for homework assignments.
- 10) The teachers should make sure that everyone understands by a continuous layering and reinforcing of the material to aid acquisition and retention.
- 11) The teachers should consider decreasing the amount of new material to be covered in one semester.
- 12) Students should be heard and appreciated for their valuable insights, ideas, suggestions and learning styles.
- 13) Students should be given written directions for homework assignments.
- 14) The teachers should be sensitive to students' fear and insecurities and help them to confront those fears.
- 15) The teachers should create a low stress, friendly and supportive learning environment.

### *7.2. Suggestions Offered by the Teachers to Reduce Anxiety in the EFL classroom:*

- 1) For the teachers the first step is to be aware of the possibility of language learning anxiety. The teachers should understand that the students who are sitting in the back row and saying nothing may not be bored or disinterested or unmotivated; rather they might just be very anxious.
- 2) The teachers should focus on the students' characteristics that are causing the anxiety, as well as what we, the teachers, do as teachers and what goes on inside the classroom.
- 3) For anxiety stemming from learner characteristics, teachers should recognize the students' irrational beliefs and fears through activities designed for this purpose.
- 4) For removing students' unrealistic beliefs the teachers can discuss with students. Teachers should help students to develop more realistic expectations. For example, students should be informed that after two years (i.e., four semesters) of language learning, they should have basic survival skills in the language. In other words, they will not yet be fluent in the target language. Teachers should emphasize that becoming fluent in a language takes years of continuous language study and practice. It simply is not feasible with just four semesters of language exposure.
- 5) Teachers should recommend that highly anxious students can participate in some form of supplemental instruction, such as getting individual tutoring (from the teacher and/or advanced language students) or joining a language club etc. More exposure to the language outside of the classroom may help anxious

- students to become more comfortable with the language and thus help the students to reduce anxiety in the EFL classroom.
- 6) Teachers should help students by adopting the attitude that mistakes are a part of language learning and are made by everyone. Mistakes are not bad; in fact, they indicate that the students are actually learning-going through the language-learning process.
  - 7) Teachers should emphasize the importance of conveying meaning as well as grammatical accuracy. In other words, getting your point across is just as important (if not more important) as saying it without any errors.
  - 8) For anxiety stemming from teacher characteristics, teachers should avoid over correction, teachers should learn the students' names.
  - 9) In terms of testing, teachers should test fairly what the students know rather than by giving "trick questions."
  - 10) Exams should cover what was taught in the context of how it was taught. For example, if the students were never allowed to actually practice speaking the language in the classroom (preferably in small groups), an oral exam would not be appropriate. In addition, the teacher should provide pre-test practice for the test.
  - 11) The teacher can provide the students with an outline of the exam sections (including the instruction on the test) so that the students will know what to expect and will not be surprised.
  - 12) Teachers should designate points on a test for the conveyance of meaning and not just grammar.
  - 13) For anxiety stemming from the classroom procedures, teachers should try to make the classroom as friendly and relaxed as possible. Teachers should be warm and personable and reward effort, risk taking and successful communication.
  - 14) Teachers should also use a variety of activities in the class, personalize language instruction, and encourage students to have realistic expectations for their language study and be less competitive with each other.
  - 15) Teachers can discuss successful language learning strategies with students and review these throughout the semester.

### 8. Conclusion:

This study has established that moderate level of foreign language anxiety (FLA) existed among the first-year non-English undergraduate students of IIUC which may represent an uncomfortable experience for students if it is not try to be lower. Teachers must pay more attention to it. They should take the effective factors of students into consideration to reduce it as a low anxiety classroom environment can help the students to make their learning process smooth. Thus, foreign language learning will be a more pleasant experience which in turn will increase engagement and make it a more successful endeavor as well. This study has some limitations. As the study was only conducted in one institution, more research is needed to support the findings and to find more about first-year non-English undergraduate students' anxiety in the EFL classrooms.

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**Table 1:** The situation of the first-year non- English undergraduate students' anxiety in the EFL classroom is shown :

	Anxiety Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Fear of Negative Evaluation	3.2137	.83637
2.	Communication Apprehension	3.0386	.66748
3.	English Classroom Anxiety	3.0119	.62022
4.	Test Anxiety	2.9055	.69587
5.	Anxiety of English Classes	2.8838	.65992

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