

## On the Correlation between Iranian EFL Learners' Shyness Level and their Attitudes toward Language Learning

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### Abstract

The current probe was after pinpointing the would-be correlation between learners' shyness and their language learning attitudes. The participants of the study were a total of 104 male and female institute EFL learners and the means of data collection were two ready-made questionnaires, one for gauging the learners' shyness and the other for tapping data regarding their language learning attitudes. The data thus collected were then analyzed through running Pearson Product Moment Correlation, independent samples t-test, and Eta Test. The results gained pointed toward lack of a significant correlation between the participants' shyness and the subscales of attitudes toward language learning. Moreover, no significant relationship was reported to be at work between gender of participants and their language learning attitudes. Nonetheless, with regard to learners' shyness, gender difference was found to play a part.

**Keywords:** ambiguity tolerance, attitudes toward language learning, ego-permeability, inhibition, Iranian EFL learners, risk-taking, self-image, shyness

### 1. Introduction

To embark on discussing the main argument put forth in the current study, i.e. language learners' shyness, it might prove beneficial to go over Chu's (2008) assertion regarding the experience of foreign language learning which is said to be considered by the learners as not only "cognitively demanding, but also emotion-laden." The formal instructional settings which are fraught with ongoing performance judgments and evaluations on the part of the teacher and peers, give rise to the establishment of "the kind of scenario that can be daunting for most learners, especially those who are shy, due to their fear of negative evaluation and desire for approval from others" (Chu, 2008, p. 1).

As Tanveer (2007, p. 5) nicely points out "learners of English language often express a feeling of stress, nervousness or anxiety while learning to speak English Language and claim to have, a 'mental block' against learning English." This, as the researcher says, is not a grade-level specific issue, and is, indeed, found to be at work at different levels of proficiency "from beginning to more advanced levels. Even highly advanced ESL/EFL learners feel anxious while learning and particularly speaking English in some situations, both within and out of the classroom settings."

Shyness is normally looked upon as a hindering attribute in learners, which acts as a setback standing on the way of their normal educational accomplishment, the reason being that shy individuals are regarded as less adept at expressing themselves during social encounters, and are hence more likely to be left out from the mainstream practice of education due to their inclination for leading a solitary life. One thing that is thought to be affected by shy students' passive approach to language learning is their attitudes toward the general learning process.

Thus, in an attempt to probe the would-be linkages between shyness and learners' attitudes toward language learning, the researchers in the current study strived to delve into this relationship by considering the principal components of language learning attitudes, i.e. *self-image*, *inhibition*, *risk-taking*, *ego-permeability*, and *ambiguity tolerance*. To set out for this quest regarding the possible correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness and their language learning attitudes the following research questions were set forth, in the first place. It's also noteworthy that, for the

sake of clarity, the first research question has been subdivided into more detailed questions to cater for the precision of the gained upshots. Furthermore, as the participants of the study were from both genders, another concern of the researchers was with finding the potential interplay between the learners' gender, on the one hand, and their shyness level and language learning attitudes, on the other.

RQ<sub>1</sub>: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness level and their attitudes toward language learning?

RQ<sub>1a</sub>: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness level and their self-image?

RQ<sub>1b</sub>: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness level and their inhibition?

RQ<sub>1c</sub>: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness level and their risk taking?

RQ<sub>1d</sub>: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness level and their ego permeability?

RQ<sub>1e</sub>: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness level and their ambiguity Tolerance?

RQ<sub>2</sub>: Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' gender and their attitudes toward language learning?

RQ<sub>3</sub>: Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' gender and their shyness?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Shyness

The concept of shyness is described as "an enduring trait characterized by tension, discomfort, and inhibition in the presence of other people" (Wadman, Durkin & Conti-Ramsden, 2008, cited in Tong, Ting & McBride-Chang, 2011, p. 30). Shyness has been studied in relation to so many societal factors such as difficulties in socioemotional adjustment (e.g. Chen & Tse, 2008; Coplan & Armer, 2005), peer interaction (e.g. Xu, Farver, Chang, Zhang, & Yu, 2007), and social acceptance and the development of interpersonal relationships in general (e.g. Jones, Briggs, & Smith, 1986) (cited in Tong, Ting & McBride-Chang, 2011).

In Bešić's (2009) taxonomy of shyness, several subcategories have been put forth which serve the purpose of describing different kinds of shy individuals. The first dichotomy concerns the distinction between *public* and *private* shyness, in which the former has to do with the individual's preoccupation with how others perceive his/her shyness, whereas the latter centers around the feeling of discomfort resulting from shyness which exists within the individual and is not socially-induced. With this view in mind, "shyness can be thought of as having two sets of individual starting points: some shy individuals might be more affected by social fears in public, whereas others might mostly focus on their inner sensations of uneasiness" (Bešić, 2009, p. 23).

Another point on which shy individuals are said to differ is regarding whether their shyness shows up in lower ages or through their later life. Based on this perspective another dichotomous categorization is devised which is known as *early-* vs. *late-developing* shyness. Developing through the early years of childhood, as the name reveals, early-developing shyness is said to be rather fear-based. Later-developing shyness, however, is more of a self-conscious nature and develops through mid-childhood or early adolescence. This category of shyness is believed to reach even heightened levels owing to the physiological changing occurring in adolescents during the puberty age.

The third distinction raised in Bešić's (2009) typology of shyness, is the one made between *withdrawn* and *dependent* shyness. What differentiates between these two groups of shy individuals is the former's inclination toward having more solitude and less social involvement, as opposed to the latter's partial appeal for getting along with their shyness through adopting some strategies aimed at gaining increased levels of socialization. Some even tend to refer to this distinction under the auspices of shy-sociable versus shy-unsociable categorization.

The last shyness dichotomy separates shy people into the so-called *conflicted* and *avoidant* types. While the shy

individuals belonging to the first category are characterized by their tendency for socialization, this potential zeal for gregariousness is suffocated through their overly intense self-conscious behavior. The second group of shy individuals, on the contrary, is recognized by the low inclination toward approaching the social life, as well as the high degree of apprehension and uneasiness.

In their study with 650 adolescent secondary school learners aged between 11 and 18, Lawrence and Bennett (1992) set out for a campaign to pinpoint the would-be relationship between shyness, some relevant personality variables and socioeconomic status. To tap the data regarding the three kinds of shyness (inherent, emotional and situational) concerned in the research, they made use of two self-report questionnaires. Through the study, it was mainly revealed that the learners' shyness (both situational and inherent) highly correlated with their anxiety and neuroticism. Yet, as they found, the two afore-said measures of shyness only moderately correlated with one another. The other significant piece of finding in this scrutiny was the existence of a positive correlation between the learners' shyness and their self-esteem and extraversion; indeed, it was indicated that the lower the level of the learners' shyness, the higher their self-esteem and extraversion. Finally, the obtained results depicted that those adolescents who enjoyed a lower socio-economical status were at a more disadvantageous position compared to their higher-status peers, as the former were said to be more prone to be faced with shyness.

Kerr (2000), on the other hand, grappled with the comparison of early- and later-developing types of shyness and concluded "that shyness that emerges in adolescence was more important for adjustment in adulthood". Early-developing shyness, however, was found to be "less problematic in almost all domains regarding relationships, psychological wellbeing, and occupational and economic circumstances." The findings of the study also urged this researcher to claim that "later-developing shyness was related to more depressed mood, lower self-esteem, poorer attitudes about one's appearance, lower life satisfaction, and less positive affect (cited in Bešić, 2009, pp. 23-24).

Focusing on the interrelationship between adolescent learners' shyness and their social functioning, Bešić (2009) came up with a set of enthralling upshots, ranging from shy youngsters' attempt to "take on off-putting, startling appearances in order to cope with their shyness", to their tendency "to choose others similar to themselves in shyness as friends" (p. 5). However, amid these findings it was also found "that shyness might indeed have some positive implications for adolescent development, as it was found to serve a protective role in the link between advanced maturity and various types of problem behaviors" (Bešić, 2009, p. 5).

Finally, among the recent studies regarding shyness and its ramifications in educational settings, one can refer to the investigation carried out by Tong, Ting and McBride-Chang, (2011), in which the researchers were after revealing the viable relationship between parent-rated shyness and children's vocabulary skills. The participants of this research project were some 54 Hong Kong Chinese kindergarten students. These students were studying English as a foreign language and to measure their vocabulary skills, their knowledge of both receptive and expressive words was gauged in both Chinese and English. Drawing on the final analysis of the gained results, these researchers concluded that shyness is correlated with language learning in both learners' first and second language.

## *2.2 Language Learning Attitudes*

Language attitudes are defined by Richards, Platt and Platt (1992) as "the attitudes which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each other's languages or to their own language." Attitudes held toward a language, as they contend, "may also show what people feel about the speakers of that language" (p. 199). The rest of the discussion in this section deals with the different components of language learning attitudes addressed in the current study, i.e. self-image, inhibition, risk-taking, ego-permeability and ambiguity tolerance.

In delineating the concept of self-image, Mahir (2004, p. 6) holds, "learners with positive self-image are confident, enthusiastic, and have optimistic nature toward learning a language." Talking of self-image, the first pertinent concept that is evoked in the mind is self-esteem. According to Coopersmith (1967) "self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that the individual holds towards himself" (cited in Mahir, 2004, p. 18). "A strong sense of identity and a positive self-image is fundamental to the emotional, physical, as well as language and cognitive development" (Long & Crookes, 1992, cited in Mahir, 2004, p. 19).

Inhibition in learners is mostly attributed to their fear of making mistakes. To adopt Mahir's (2004) words, "inhibition is linked with negative attitudes that prevent learners from learning another language due to the belief that they are incapable of performing well in any language practice" (p. 7). As Mahir (2004, p. 20) claims, "one of the teaching strategies to overcome inhibition would be by focusing on learners' strengths rather than their weaknesses."

Risk-taking can be described in terms of learners' tendency for active class participation as well as their willingness to communicate even in circumstances in which they are uncertain of the verity of their hunches. Risk-takers "do not hesitate taking the risk of providing an answer to the teacher's question or engaging in conversation even if they are not sure about the success of their attempts" (Palvi, 1997; cited in Mahir, 2004, p. 7). Also, as Richards, et al. (1992, p. 317) put it, risk-taking "concerns the degree to which a person is willing to undertake actions that involve a significant degree of risk." This crucial personality factor as they discuss, is "an important characteristic of successful second language learning, since learners have to be willing to try out hunches about the new language and take the risk of being wrong."

Mahir (2004, pp. 21-22) defines ego permeability as "willingness to allow one's perception of the self to extend to being a speaker of the language of a foreign culture." Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (2010, p. 21) delineate the term as "the extent to which the ego can be flexible and adapt." Further, according to Schumann (1975) "*ego permeability* ... and personality factors are at the heart of second-language" (cited in Celce-Murcia, et al., 2010, p. 21).

Finally, according to Mahir (2004, p. 23), Ambiguity tolerance refers to "an acceptance of confusing situations without clear demarcation lines." Tolerance of ambiguity is generally regarded as one of the positive and advantageous personality traits in learners. Without it learners are more prone to lose their motivation and interest in what they are pursuing in their educational career. Now that the five constituents of language learning attitudes have been briefly introduced, it's time to turn to a laconic review of the experimental work done in this domain.

Mahir (2004), for instance, was after identifying the would-be bonds between Malaysian learners' language learning attitudes and their language proficiency. Throughout this survey, the researcher found that learners' attitudes toward language learning had highly influenced their performance on the English language test. The author also explained that since English is the third language acquired by Malaysian learners (the first two being Malay and Arabic), learners' attitudes toward learning English are liable to have been influenced by this non-primacy of English language in the learners' context of learning.

In a scrutiny aimed at finding the possible effect of cultural background on learners' attitudes, motivation and anxiety, Bernaus, Masgoret, Gardner and Reyes (2004) organized a study with 114 immigrant adolescents learning Spanish, English and Catalan in Spain. To tap the data, Gardner's Attitude Motivation Test Battery was utilized. The researchers also drew on the learners' self-ratings concerning their learning achievement. In tandem with the results, very few differences were found regarding the effect of cultural background on the three variables in the study, the most relevant of which being the prevalence of more positive attitudes among Asian learners compared to Spanish students.

In their attempt to find the correlation between learners' attitudes toward language learning and their foreign language achievement, İnal, Evin, & Saracaloğlu, (2005) implemented an investigation with 421 Turkish high school learners. The students involved in their research were passing through their last year of studies at the high school and the data was gathered through a Likert-type scale entitled Language Attitude Scale (LAS) which was developed by Saracaloğlu (1992). In line with the gained upshots, these researchers encountered a significant amount of correlation between the learners' attitudes toward language learning and their degree of achievement. The participants' gender, however, was not found to be of significant role in this regard.

Merisuo-Storm (2007) was interested in pinpointing the potential impact of bilingual instruction on the learners' language learning attitudes and literacy skills. A Total of 335 (190 in the first phase and 145 in the second phase of the study) participated in this project, and based on the findings, it was reported that learners who had been exposed to bilingual teaching process were characterized by holding more positive attitudes toward the experience of foreign language learning.

Sioson (2011), on the other hand, organized a probe into the significance of learners' beliefs regarding language learning process, along with two other factors, i.e. language learning strategies and anxiety, in predicting success in speaking skill. To this aim, 300 college freshmen, aged between 16 and 18, were selected as the participants of the study. As the analysis of data gathered in this study revealed, a significant amount of correlation held between the subscales of the three instruments used. Nonetheless, it was also found that while learners' beliefs negatively correlated with learning strategies, no such significant relationship was reported between beliefs and anxiety. Furthermore, among the subscales of attitude questionnaire in this study, it was motivation that had the greatest predictive power for the learners' speaking competency.

Zainol Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi and Alzwari (2012) strived to explore the learners' Language learning attitudes in the broader spectrum of behavioral, emotional and cognitive perspectives. This study was conducted with 180 Libyan secondary school learners and through questionnaire administration. Probing the role of demographic features such as gender, grade and field of study in shaping the learners' attitudes toward language learning was another major concern of the researchers in this investigation. Altogether, the obtained results were indicative of the participants' negative attitudes toward the experience of language learning in terms of all three factors considered in the study, i.e. emotional, behavioral and cognitive aspects. Furthermore, among the demographic factors, it was gender as well as field of study which brought about significant differences regarding the participants' attitudes.

In another recent learner-attitude-oriented scrutiny, Sarjou, Soltani, Kalbasi and Mahmoudi (2012) delved into middle school students' attitudes toward science and technology, school science and environmental issues. To conduct the research, 250 third-graders were randomly selected by the researchers and given a questionnaire entitled Relevance of Science Education (ROSE). Overall, the findings of this study were indicative of the participants' positive attitudes regarding the textbooks evaluated. The results also pointed to a significant difference among the learners' viewpoints in terms of gender.

Though the two issues attended to in the present study, i.e. shyness and language learning attitudes, have long constituted the focus of manifold research in psycholinguistics and educational psychology, the viable linkages between these two paramount concepts have rarely been touched in the manner approached in the current investigation. Thus, the prime momentum giving rise to the implementation of the study at hand was the witnessed gap in the literature regarding the way these two constructs might correlate with one another. In what follows, the readers are provided with a succinct account of the methodology pursued in the study.

### **3. Method**

#### *3.1 Participants*

A total of 104 institute EFL learners (both male and female) constituted the sample of the current study. The participants were over 18 years of age, and in terms of language proficiency they were either intermediate or advanced language learners. Indeed, a fairly equitable ratio of male and female students took part in the study (45 percent of the participants were male and the remaining 55% were female); yet, as no control was intended to be exercised in terms of proficiency level, the study participants were selected only on the basis of convenience and availability concerns with the learners voluntarily partaking in the survey.

#### *3.2 Instrumentation*

The principal means of data collection in the current study were the two Likert-type scales (shyness & language learning attitudes questionnaires) each with 5 options. Shyness questionnaire comprised 44 items, while language learning attitudes questionnaire contained 27 statements. Regarding shyness questionnaire, it must be noted that its original version contained 52 items, which was later reduced to a 44-item scale through the process of standardization. The Cronbach's alpha found for the latter version of the questionnaire equaled .83. While the questions which raised a positive proposition were scored in the direct order (from zero to four), the ones with a negative content were reversely scored (from four to zero).

The scoring system of attitudes questionnaire was, however, somewhat different as the scores given to each item

ranged from 0 to 8. Though a total of 27 question items existed in the questionnaire, the score on each of its five subscales was calculated through adding the scores of eight relevant items from the questionnaire based on the given guidelines (so some of the questions fell under more than a single category). Furthermore, since each subscale of the questionnaire incorporated 8 questions and the highest possible score for each item was 8, the utmost score which could be gained for each scale was 64.

### *3.3 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure*

The two afore-said study questionnaires (shyness & language learning attitudes scales) were given to the class instructors to be distributed among participants in due time. The instructors were then guided regarding how the questionnaires were to be disseminated and how answering guidelines were to be given. They were also asked to ensure their learners that the questionnaires wouldn't count toward their final class grade and full confidentiality would be observed with respect to the gathered data. The questionnaire administrators were also urged to tell their students to fill in the questionnaire items based on what they really were or thought not what they desired to be.

The learners were further required to provide their answers in terms of how much they agreed or disagreed with the propositions raised to them in each questionnaire on a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The time allocated for completing each questionnaire was roughly 15 minutes. In the case of the former (shyness questionnaire), the answers were to be provided on a separate answer sheet given to the learners, whereas for the latter (language learning attitudes questionnaire), the responses were to appear on the question sheet itself. The scoring procedure was carried out by one of the researchers in the current study, and, in so doing, she made an attempt to stick to the guidelines provided for scoring on the part of questionnaire developers.

Successive to data collection phase, the obtained data were analyzed through utilizing SPSS (version 19), and via running a number of statistical analyses, including Pearson Product Moment Correlation, independent samples t-test, as well as Eta Test. To be more specific, while Pearson correlation analysis was exerted to deal with the first research question and its subdivisions, T-test analysis along with Eta test were run to address the second and third research questions posed in the study regarding the role of gender in learners' language learning attitudes as well as their shyness.

## **4. Results**

### *4.1 Descriptive Statistics*

Table 1 reveals the descriptive statistics gained regarding the learners' scores on the two scales used in the study, as well as their performance on each of the five subscales of attitudes questionnaire. As illustrated in this table, the mean scores gained by the participants on the subscales of self-image, inhibition, risk-taking, ego-permeability and ambiguity tolerance equal 21.01, 22.34, 33.78, 26.64, and 35.13, respectively. Additionally, the mean score gained on the entire scale of attitudes questionnaire is 138.91, whereas the one relevant to shyness questionnaire equals 181.16.

### *4.2 Findings Gained for the First Research Question*

RQ<sub>1</sub>: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness level and their attitudes toward language learning?

To address this research question in a proper manner, the researchers need to first go about the analyses of its five subdivisions. Thus, in what follows an attempt is made to provide a sufficient account of how each of these five questions were dealt with and how their collective result helped come up with a generalized view regarding the first research question.

#### **4.2.1 The Relationship between Shyness and Self-Image**

RQ<sub>1a</sub>: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness level and their self-image?

As Table 2 reveals, no significant correlation exists between the participants' degree of shyness and their self-image



( $r = .799 > .05$ ), which runs contrary to commonsensical views regarding the potential linkages between these two relevant constructs. Under normal circumstances, it is expected that higher levels of shyness should correlate with a less positive self-image in learners. The observed mismatch between what would seem more expectable in natural settings and what has been found here is liable to be attributed to the notoriety of self-report measures as partially inaccurate measures of respondents' status quo.

#### 4.2.2 The Relationship between Shyness and Inhibition

RQ<sub>1b</sub>: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness level and their inhibition?

Drawing on the data illustrated in Table 3, one could infer that the learners' shyness does not significantly correlate with their level of inhibition ( $r = .132 > .05$ ). This piece of finding is again in sheer contrast to what might hold true in reality as shy learners are more likely to be characterized as inclined toward possessing higher levels of inhibition.

#### 4.2.3 The Relationship between Shyness and Risk-Taking

RQ<sub>1c</sub>: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness level and their risk taking?

While the research postulation was that high degrees of shyness in learners may lead to their tendency to take less risk, the findings (briefed in Table 4) revealed no significant correlation between these two personality features, i.e. shyness and risk-taking ( $r = .610 > .05$ ).

#### 4.2.4 The Relationship between Shyness and Ego-Permeability

RQ<sub>1d</sub>: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness level and their ego permeability?

Shy learners are thought to possess a less permeable ego. However, lending this postulation to further scrutiny through Pearson correlation analysis provided the researchers with another piece of unfavorable finding (Table 5), implying that learners' shyness does not significantly correlate with their ego-permeability ( $r = .947 > .05$ ).

#### 4.2.5 The Relationship between Shyness and Ambiguity Tolerance

RQ<sub>1e</sub>: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness level and their ambiguity Tolerance?

The participants' tolerance of ambiguity was the last factor on the attitudes questionnaire which was gauged in relation to their shyness. In keeping with the gained upshots (summarized in Table 6), the researchers are drawn to claim that learners' shyness does not significantly correlate with their ambiguity tolerance ( $r = .980 > .05$ ), which, indeed, runs against the researchers' primary speculation.

### 4.3 Findings Gained for the Second Research Question

RQ<sub>2</sub>: Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' gender and their attitudes toward language learning?

Running independent samples t-test analysis (Table 7) revealed no significant differences among the learners' attitudes in terms of gender ( $t = .23$ ;  $df = 97$ ;  $p = .83 > .05$ ).

### 4.4 Findings Gained for the Third Research Question

RQ<sub>3</sub>: Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' gender and their shyness?

Finally, to find the possible relationship between the learners' gender and their shyness, another independent samples t-test was run (Table 8), which pointed toward significant gender-induced differences regarding learners' shyness ( $t = 2.09$ ;  $df = 97$ ;  $p = 0.03 < .05$ ). Further analysis through Eta test reveals a 63-percent effect exerted from gender on learners' shyness. Figure 1 helps provide a more vivid illustration of how this gender-induced difference prevailed with regard to the participants' shyness.

## 5. Discussion

Throughout the current study, it was found that learners' language learning attitudes and their subscales didn't significantly correlate with the participants' degree of shyness. This unexpected finding can be attributed to the afore-said problem with the self-report measures, which are likely to reveal what learners tend to be rather than what they really are. Moreover, browsing the literature on the issue provided the researchers with no similar study striving to find the correlation between shyness and attitudes. The only reportable studies in this regard might be Sioson's (2011), in which learners' beliefs regarding language learning process were said to negatively correlate with their learning strategies, and Mahir's (2004) investigation, in which a significant correlation was encountered between Malaysian learners' language learning attitudes and their language proficiency.

Furthermore, the analysis of data for the second research question revealed no significant relationship between the participants' gender and their attitudes toward language learning. The results of the current study, in this respect, might be said to be in partial going with the findings of İnal, Evin, & Saracaloğlu, (2005) who pointed toward the non-significant role of gender vis-à-vis the correlation between the learners' attitudes toward language learning and their degree of achievement. Nevertheless, this piece of finding is in sharp contrast to what was reported by Zainol Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi and Alzwari (2012) who found that learners' gender as well as their field of study brought about significant differences concerning the participants' attitudes. Likewise, Sarjou, Soltani, Kalbasi and Mahmoudi (2012) concluded their attitude-oriented study by underscoring the significant role of gender in determining the direction of learners' attitudes.

Finally, regarding the third research question the current study came up with a significant difference among the learners' shyness in terms of gender. The findings of the study, in this regard, are found to be in contrast to those obtained by Vahedi (2011) where the researcher came up with no significant gender-induced differences regarding the learners' shyness.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

One of the main axioms underlying the current scrutiny was the researchers' fervent endeavor in catering for the concerns of a fairly neglected group of individuals in classroom settings, i.e. shy learners. Shy individuals, due to their partial ineptness and reluctance in communicating with other peers and the teacher, are thought to be more readily ignored in language classes. Though finding strategies to bring about learners' increased involvement with the classroom processes has long been among the major preoccupations of educational researchers and practitioners, the investigation of EFL learners' shyness in relation to their language learning attitudes was found to be among the untouched research areas and hence dire need was felt on the part of the researchers in the present study to address this less-attended issue.

The researchers' quest for the possible correlation between EFL learners' shyness and their language learning attitudes ended up with no such significant correlation between the components of attitudes questionnaire and shyness. The unaccountability of the gained upshot for the first research question in terms of what is expected in real-life conditions was ascribed to the ineptitude of self-report measures in depicting the veritable status quo of the respondents. Furthermore, concerning the second research question, no significant relationship was reported between the gender of learners and their language learning attitudes, a piece of finding which seems to run contrary to commonsensical views and expectations. Indeed, it was simply in terms of the relationship between gender and shyness that the researchers came up with a significant result. After all, it ought to be asserted that since the current scrutiny was done with a fairly low number of learners, the results gained can't be utterly generalizable to other contexts, and hence many similar studies are called for to investigate different other noteworthy aspects of the issue at hand.

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**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics for the Learners' Performance on the (Sub-)Scales of Attitudes and Shyness Questionnaires

Statistics		Self-Image	Inhibition	Risk-taking	Ego-Permeability	Ambiguity Tolerance	shyness	Learning Attitudes Questionnaire
N	Valid	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		21.01	22.34	33.78	26.64	35.13	181.16	138.91
Median		21.01	22.00	34.00	26.64	35.14	181.17	136.00
Std. Deviation		4.54	7.06	6.25	5.55	6.30	35.65	22.21
Minimum		12.00	8.00	16.00	10.00	16.00	57.00	86.00
Maximum		30.00	38.00	48.00	40.00	48.00	262.00	184.00

**Table 2** Correlation between Learners' Shyness and their Self-Image

Correlations		Shyness	Self-Image
Shyness	Pearson Correlation	1	.026
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.799
	N	99	99

**Table 3** Correlation between Learners' Shyness and their Inhibition

Correlations		Shyness	Inhibition
Shyness	Pearson Correlation	1	-.152
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.132
	N	99	99

**Table 4** Correlation between Learners' Shyness and their Risk-Taking

Correlations		Shyness	Risk-Taking
Shyness	Pearson Correlation	1	-.052
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.610
	N	99	99

**Table 5** Correlation between Learners' Shyness and their Ego-Permeability

Correlations			
		Shyness	Ego-Permeability
Shyness	Pearson Correlation	1	.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.947
	N	99	99

**Table 6** Correlation between Learners' Shyness and their Ambiguity Tolerance

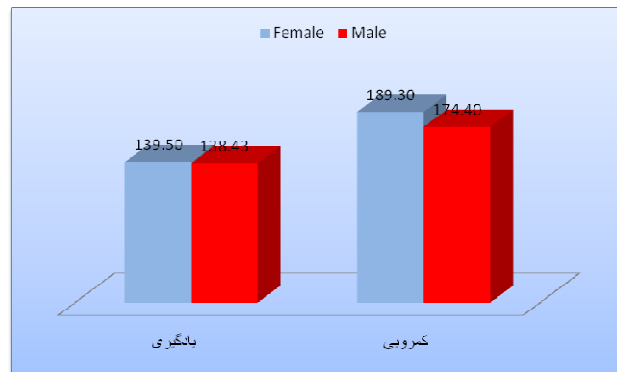
Correlations			
		Shyness	Ambiguity Tolerance
Shyness	Pearson Correlation	1	.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.980
	N	99	99

**Table 7** Independent Samples T-test Run for the Relationship between Learners' Gender and their Language Learning Attitudes

Attitudes toward L. L.	variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
					F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.
	female	45	139.50	23.64	.14	.70	.23	97	.83
male	54	138.43	21.16						

**Table 8** Independent Samples T-test Run for the Relationship between Learners' Gender and their Shyness

shyness	variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			Eta
					F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	
	female	45	189.3	28.83	1.15	.28	2.09	97	.03	.63
male	54	174.4	39.48							



**Figure 1** The Relationship between Learners' gender and their Attitudes and Shyness

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