

Investigating English Language Anxiety Among Female Undergraduates Studying in Universities of Balochistan by Applying FLCAS

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Abstract

This study investigates the English Language Anxiety among female undergraduates studying in Universities of Balochistan to prove the validity of FLCAS. Therefore, the responses of 300 participants were obtained on a 5-point Likert scale to get factor components (EFA). The component analysis reduced 33-questionnaire items into four factors (Fear, Panic, Confusion and Hesitation) by finding intercorrelation between them. Then CFA was conducted on obtained factor components to understand covariance between observed and latent variables. The findings showed acceptable model fit indices, but some values (TLI=.87 and NFI=.82) were slightly lower than 0.9 that have pointed out a little discrimination in validity. But other values of CFA i.e. (RMSEA=0.04, GFI=0.84, CFI=0.88, AGFI=0.7) were a good fit that confirmed the validity of FLCAS in the setting of Balochistan. The results obtained after CFA have proved 'Fear' as the strongest factor due to its greater covariance as compared to the other three factors, which came out to be the reason of Foreign language anxiety and discouragement among undergraduates.

Keywords: English Language Anxiety, FLCAS, Component Analysis, EFA, CFA

Introduction

Anxiety has been the main issue for many educationalists and foreign language students as they struggled with it for several years. When teenagers are underdeveloped in terms of self-awareness and potential, they may be disappointed due to pessimism and failures. This condition may cause them to

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lose confidence by increasing their anxiety (Tuncel et al., 2020). Alpert and Haber (1960) introduced two sorts of language anxiety: debilitating anxiety, which is as termed destructive and facilitating anxiety, also named as beneficial anxiety. Among these two types, debilitating anxiety is more focused on by researchers as it hurts students and has a severe influence on their performance. It can directly affect the activities of students by lowering their class participation or can create indirect stress and frustration in them. On the contrary, facilitating anxiety assists language students to perform effectively in their language classes. Facilitating anxiety is a trait established by a few researchers to help students overcome their fears (Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019). Anxiety has been identified as a concerning factor that hinders the learning of a foreign language. Furthermore, one of the most common reasons for obstruction in language learning is associated with anxiety (Young, 1990). Pakistan is a country owning ethnic and cultural diversity with more than 70 languages spoken by its inhabitants. Despite its multilingualism, the vast majority of Pakistanis speak only two languages: Urdu, the national language, and English, the country's international language (Akhunzada). Waheed, Wahab, and Bahadur (2020) stated English to be a status symbol for the elite class that can never be replaced with other indigenous languages because of the privilege it owns. Therefore, students are taught English throughout their education but still, they face difficulties in speaking it because of cultural differences (Ahmed, Pathan, & Khan, 2017). Abbas and Hussain (2021) analyzed the literacy rate of education in Pakistan, which is highest in Punjab (59%) and lowest in Balochistan (46%). The reason for the lowest literacy rate in Balochistan is directly linked to a variety of ethnic groups and multilingualism in the province (Jahani, 2005). These groups include Balochi, Pashtuns, Hazara people, Sindhi, Brahui etc. and each group speaks its mother tongue. Whereas, the medium of instruction for students at each level in English or Urdu has marginalized other indigenous languages (Rana, Bashir, & Abbas, 2020). Due to this marginalization, the students have to focus on these two languages to complete their education and to get employment. Despite focusing on English, students face difficulty in speaking due to multilingualism as it is directly linked to foreign language anxiety (Thompson & Khawaja, 2016). According to Göncz (2020), English language anxiety is not only connected to multilingualism but also ethnicity and cultural diversity. Therefore, the focus of this research is to dig out the

perspective of female undergraduates on their English language anxiety with the help of FLCAS (Foreign language classroom anxiety scale) proposed by Hortwiz (1986), who described three types of performance anxieties. He pointed out 'Fear' to be the main reason for the shyness of communicating the second language among students. He also found difficulty in listening and speaking among students having a high level of communication apprehension that ultimately lead them to linguistic deficiency.

Objective of the Study

This study aimed to explore English language anxiety among students that are studying in the universities of Balochistan and facing FLA (Foreign Language Anxiety). For this purpose, the researcher validated the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) of Hortwiz(1986), with the help of confirmatory factor analysis. The purpose of CFA was to adapt FLCAS and to confirm its model in the setting of Balochistan.

Research Questions

This study has been followed by two research questions:

1. What are the major factors of FLA among female EFL learners studying in universities of Balochistan?
2. How does FLCAS validate the FLA of female undergraduates studying in the universities of Balochistan?

Literature Review

FLA is thought to have been a difficult experience for some language learners. Language anxiety was previously thought to be caused by various anxiety disorders such as it may be related to test, trait or oral communication(Scovel, 1978). The investigators in past conducted various studies to explore reasons behind English speaking anxiety in students. The English language is an official language that is used at a vast level in institutions of Pakistan. Anxiety has been extensively studied worldwide since it slows down the learning process, yet it appears to be understudied in Pakistan. Therefore, Ahmed et al. (2017) tried to find out why Pakistani postgraduate students at the University of Balochistan are afraid of speaking English. Researchers aimed to investigate the statistical difference between genders. The researchers derived an eighteen-item questionnaire from FLCAS by using a quantitative research design(Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). SPSS(version, 21) was used to perform both descriptive and inferential statistics. The data suggested that a variety of elements in the EFL classroom

were causing anxiety among UOB students. The t-test indicated no statistically significant differences between genders. Hence, this work has consequences for both teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language in the Pakistani context.

Similarly, another investigation was conducted on the students of Balochistan to find out the anxiety they feel while speaking English. The study's specific goals were to assess students' anxiety levels when conversing in English and identify the types of talking exercises that are responsible for making students anxious. The data was collected with 18 questions on a 5-point Likert scale and analyzed with (SPSS, version 20). The findings revealed a moderate level of anxiousness among students (Saeed & Pathan). The reasons for foreign language anxiety were explored in another investigation among students of Lasbela University, Balochistan by utilizing FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986). There were ($N = 240$) responders, including 26 females and 214 males. To give descriptive statistics of the respondents, the data were analyzed through SPSS. Furthermore, the ANOVA test demonstrated that the anxiety levels of non-majoring and majoring students were not significantly different (Gopang, Bughio, & Pathan, 2018).

Malik, Qin, and Ahmed (2020) investigated foreign language learning anxiety faced by postgraduates of Pakistan and China. For this purpose, they took the population from Chinese and Pakistani government universities consisting of 206 participants. They used Horwitz's (FLCAS) and analyzed their data through (SPSS, version 21). The findings found that Chinese postgraduates have higher levels of anxiety than Pakistani postgraduates, with substantial disparities between the two groups due to foreign language anxiety. The findings suggested that collaborating with mentors and students can help university postgraduates manage anxiety. Quintos (2021) analyzed foreign language anxiety among Filipino students by using FLCAS (1986). The findings demonstrated a link between anxiety and motivation when learning a foreign language.

The highly motivated English language learners were less anxious as compared to demotivated students. It's also a good idea to create or adapt a more context-specific questionnaire that delves deeper into students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, as well as the anxiety that comes with them. Kalsoom, Soomro, and Pathan (2020) highlighted the effects of FLA on the English communication of learners. They conducted descriptive and

inferential statistics on responses taken from a sample of 200 participants enrolled in HEIs of Balochistan. These findings suggest that L2 learners can benefit from social support and anxiety-reduction techniques to improve their second language communication. In another study, the researcher used the English Language Anxiety Scale consisting of 30-questionnaires to explore the reasons for anxiety in Philippine students. The findings revealed that speaking, fear of making mistakes communicating in English with native speakers cause significant anxiety among students. Whereas, deprived self-perception while writing and non-comprehension cause moderate anxiety. However, after using multiple regression analysis to examine the various sources of anxiety and speaking activities, only one significant predictor of English proficiency was found that was linked to anxiety (Jugo, 2020).

Rationale of Study

The researchers in past studies investigated various perspectives of foreign language anxiety by using surveys and questionnaires. They conducted descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, correlation, ANOVA test, t-test and standard deviation by using ELAS and FLCAS. But none of them conducted EFA (exploratory factor analysis) and CFA (confirmatory factor analysis) to validate FLCAS in higher education institutions of Balochistan, which is the main purpose of this research study.

Research Methodology

The researcher used 33 questionnaires adapted from the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) to collect data for this study (1986). The population was taken from Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University which is located in Quetta, Balochistan and the sample of the study was 300 undergraduates enrolled in four years BS program in the English department. The students of the third, fourth and fifth semesters were invited to participate in this study due to their better English proficiency as compared to newly enrolled undergraduates. The responses of participants were taken on 5 points Likert scale and the data was investigated with the help of SPSS software (version 21). The primary purpose of the study was to validate FLCAS by conducting CFA in the setting of Balochistan. Firstly, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to analyze the reliability of questionnaires and then factor components were obtained by using varimax rotation with Exploratory Factor Analysis. EFA reduces a large number of questionnaires into a smaller group or factors by analyzing inter-correlation between them. The reduced factors

contain associated variables conveying similar meanings(Hooper, 2012). Finally, CFA was carried out on factor components obtained after EFA by using IBM AMOS software to confirm the application of FLCAS in the setting of Balochistan.

Data Analysis

The analysis began with five questions about the demographic background of students to analyze their age, qualification, ethnic groups, regional languages and medium of instruction. The results highlighted a greater percentage of Baloch(36%) and Pashtun(25%) undergraduates followed by Brahui (22%) and Hazara people (17%) in the institute. As far as languages are concerned, the Balochi language(31%) was a widely spoken language followed by Pashtu (25%), English (17%), Urdu (16%), Brahui (6%), and Hazargi (5%). The gender of participants was clear as the sample was taken from a women university. Out of 300participants, 38%of students were from the third semester, 33% were from the second semester and 29%of students were from the fifth semester of BS. English Department. After demographic background, the reliability of adapted questionnaires from (FLCAS) was checked with help of Cronbach's alpha coefficient that was consistently low with 33-items but improved after removal of 13-items with 0.729 value.Before EFA, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was used to ensure the data adequacy The sample's KMO is .741 which is higher than the 'Mediocre' value of 0.5(Kaiser, 1974). In addition, the researcher ran a Bartlett sphericity test, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), showing that the data was valid.

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test

<i>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.</i>		.741
<i>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</i>	<i>Approx. Chi-Square</i>	2231.902
	<i>Df</i>	528
	<i>Sig.</i>	.000

Exploratory Factory Analysis

After the reliability test, EFA was carried out by using varimax rotation to find out factor components. The questionnaires that were creating problems or below 0.5 were not included in the components. Therefore, out of 33-items, 18 items were removed with 15 items in 4 factors. The Keiser rule suggested

four factors with Eigenvalues (8.179, 4.004, 3.054, 7.91). These factors were named Fear, Panic, Confusion and Hesitation. Factor one showed the variance % of 24.784 that highlighted the fear of self-consciousness among undergraduates due to which they feel the anxiety of speaking English in front of their class. Factor two pointed out towards exhausted environment of English language class, which is the reason for panic and low self-confidence in students with variance % of 12.133. As the students expressed that they feel panic when they are called in language class even when they are asked something that they could not prepare, they get nervous and lose their self-confidence. The third factor ‘Confusion’ revealed the stress of losing their self-esteem in their class with a variance % of 9.256. As they worry about speaking wrong sentences or they panic about the correction in their language. Whereas, the fourth and last factor revealed the hesitation of undergraduates due to which they get reluctant to speak a second language. As they don’t feel comfortable and panic while making mistakes with a variance % of 8.54.

Table 2. 4-Factor Components After EFA

<i>Questionnaire Items</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>	<i>Factor 4</i>
<i>(1) I feel ambiguous while speaking in my language class.</i>	0.863			
<i>(2) I feel that other students will mock me if I talk in a foreign language.</i>	0.846			
<i>(3) I consider myself inferior to other students in terms of language learning.</i>	.827			
<i>(4) I feel embarrassed if I have to speak in my class.</i>	0.799			
<i>(5) I get nervous when I have to speak in English in front of so many students.</i>		0.796		
<i>(6) I feel the burden of leaving many valuable suggestions behind because my class goes quickly.</i>		0.787		
<i>(7) I get nervous when I have to speak in English in front of so many students.</i>		.782		
<i>(8) My confusion arises more and</i>		0.724		

<i>more during my class.</i>				
<i>(9) Sometimes I don't like to attend my language class.</i>				0.738
<i>(10) My heart pounds when I am called in my language class.</i>				0.686
<i>(11) I feel comfortable during test sessions of my language class.</i>				0.648
<i>(12) I think my other class fellows speak better English than me.</i>				0.513
<i>(13) I feel troubled when my language teacher highlights each mistake.</i>				0.743
<i>(14) I feel anxiety in my language class despite so much preparation.</i>				0.728
<i>(15) I am boosted up with confidence when I am going to attend my language class.</i>				0.698
<i>Eigen values</i>	<i>8.179</i>	<i>4.004</i>	<i>3.054</i>	<i>7.91</i>
<i>Variance %</i>	<i>24.784</i>	<i>12.133</i>	<i>9.256</i>	<i>4.85</i>
<i>Cumulative %</i>	<i>24.784</i>	<i>36.19</i>	<i>46.17</i>	<i>50.80</i>

Hence, it can be inferred that EFA summarized the foreign language anxiety of students from 33-questionnaires into 4-Factor components. The obtained four-factor components in Table 2. have shown factors with their Eigenvalues, cumulative and variance percentages. After analyzing the EFA and getting factors CFA can be conducted to get a clear picture of anxiety among EFL learners in Balochistan. Therefore, the four-factor components were loaded in AMOS software to draw a CFA cloud.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

CFA assists in the assumption of a strong model and investigates previously proven hypotheses by applying new data. According to Orçan (2018), after obtaining a structure from EFA, CFA must be employed to validate it, especially in scale development studies. Brown and Moore (2012) suggested CFA be a sort of structural equation modelling that specifically focuses on the measurement of models. It is a relationship between observed and latent variables. The purpose of factor analysis (also known as a model to measure latent variables) is to determine the number of factors and to find out covariation and variation among variables. Brown (2015) defined a factor as a variable that is unobserved and influences multiple observed variables and

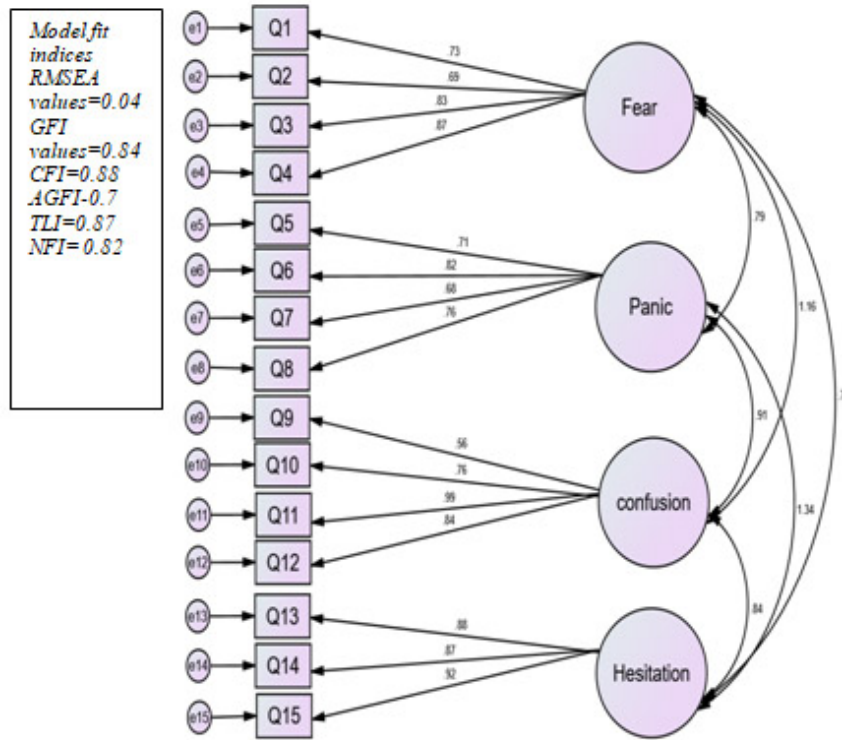
accounts for the correlation between them. Therefore, observed variables are interrelated as they are influenced by the same underlying framework and have the same root cause. Whereas, in the case of latent variables, there is no or zero interrelation among observed variables. Hence in CFA, there are lesser number of factors as compared to measured variables that provide a clear covariance among them. After extraction of four-factor components from EFA, CFA was carried out that is shown in Figure 1. The figure has also shown factor loadings and covariance along with standardized estimates. To validate FLCAS in the setting of Balochistan, CFA was conducted to discuss model fits based on model fit indices criteria. According to Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, and Strahan (1999), RMSEA values equal to or less than 0.05 are good, the values from 0.05 to 0.08 are acceptable, values from 0.08 to 0.1 come in the marginal category and 0.1 to 0.9 come in the poor category. Therefore, 0.04 RMSEA value indicated a good fit model. Even though the GFI value of 0.84 is below 0.9 but it is acceptable as AGFI and GFI depend upon the size of the sample (Mulaik et al., 1989). The CFI value being close to 0.9 is a good fit. In the case of NFI and TLI, the values must be greater than 0.9 for a good fit (1990), even though both values are less than 0.9 but this four-factor model is acceptable because the four other indices are fulfilling the model fit criteria. Hence, the validity of the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) has been proved according to responses of female undergraduates studying in the universities of Balochistan.

The four-factor components of 'Fear, Panic, Confusion and Hesitation' came out to be the major themes as well as latent variables of foreign language anxiety among students. Basically, 'Fear' proved to be the major reason behind English speaking anxiety among graduates due to high variance in the level of fear experienced among students. As they get afraid when they enter

Figure 1. CFA of Four-Factor Components (covariance among observed and latent variables)

language class, they don't feel confident when their teacher questions them about something for which they are not mentally prepared and they feel hesitant when they say a wrong sentence. The descriptive statistics has shown the level of Fear to be 3.91 along with other three factors (*Panic*= 3.71), (*Confusion*=3.65) and (*Hesitation*= 3.24) which are more than moderate level. Therefore, the findings of this research highlighted the anxiety of students that is associated with the fear of attending language class to creating

hesitation, confusion and panic of speaking it. As they tremble on being called for a language class and get fearful of losing their self-esteem.



Conclusion

The investigation of FLA and validation of FLCAS has proved this research a fit model in the setting of Balochistan. The findings were attained by digging out factor components with the help of factor analysis by carrying out EFA and then conducting CFA on the obtained factors. The four-factor components of 'Fear, Panic, Confusion and Hesitation' proved to be the main reason for discouragement among female undergraduates due to which they feel FLA in their language class. This study illuminates the importance of understanding the problematic factors that are the reasons for FLA among female undergraduates of Balochistan. As after getting awareness, learners can utilize their insight to identify ways for overcoming their anxiety problems. It is also suggested that while choosing anxiety coping strategies, students consider and use those techniques that will not prevent them from participating in-class activities. Moreover, it is also the foremost

responsibility of language teachers to bring new ideas in their classrooms that may increase the involvement and class participation of students. In addition, this research study was limited to participants taken from a single university. Therefore, the upcoming researchers can further find out the validity of FLCAS on a sample taken from multiple universities of Balochistan.

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Appendix

Demographic Background

1. Age of students
 - (a) 18-21
 - (b) 22-25
2. Ethnic groups
 - (a) Pashtuns (1)
 - (b) Baloch (2)
 - (c) Brahui (3)
 - (d) Hazara people (4)
3. Spoken languages
 - (a) Pashtu (1)
 - (b) Brahui (2)
 - (c) Balochi (3)
 - (d) Hazargi (4)
 - (e) Urdu (5)
 - (f) English (6)

4. Qualification of respondents

(a) Students of English department: BS (4 Years Program), 3rd Semester

(b) Students of English department: BS (4 Years Program), 4th Semester

5. Medium of Instruction

(a) English

(b) Urdu

Questionnaire response scale: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), strongly agree (5).

No	Questionnaire	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	I feel ambiguous while speaking in my language class.						
2	I never get distressed due to mistakes that I make in my language class.						
3	I get nervous when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.						
4	I get afraid when I don't get the lecture from my foreign language teacher.						
5	I would prefer to attend more foreign language classes for improvement.						
6	I think about unusual and out of course things during my language class.						
7	I consider myself inferior to other students in terms of language learning.						
8	I feel comfortable during test sessions of my language class.						
9	I become nervous when I have to talk in English without preparation.						
10	I am concerned if I get fail in my language class.						
11	I don't get the fear of students while attending their language classes.						
12	I get nervous when I forget something in my language class.						
13	During questioning and answering sessions in my language class, it disturbs me to volunteer.						
14	It would not bother me to talk with native speakers in a foreign language.						
15	I get sad when the teacher points out my mistakes.						
16	I feel anxiety in my language class despite so much preparation.						
17	Sometimes I don't like to attend my language class.						
18	I have the confidence of speaking a foreign language in my language class.						
19	I feel troubled when my language teacher highlights each mistake.						
20	My heart pounds when I am called in my language class.						
21	My confusion arises more and more during my class.						
22	I am not concerned if I am not well prepared for my language						

	class.							
23	I think my other class fellows speak better English than me.							
24	I get nervous when I have to speak in English in front of so many students.							
25	I feel the burden of leaving many valuable suggestions behind because my class goes quickly.							
26	I am more distressed in my language class as compared to my other classes.							
27	I feel embarrassed if I have to speak in my class.							
28	I am boosted up with confidence when I am going to attend my language class.							
29	I get sad if I have ambiguity in my teacher's lecture.							
30	I learn the rules of the foreign language with so much excitement.							
31	I feel that other students will mock me if I talk in a foreign language.							
32	I am at ease with native speakers of foreign languages.							
33	I get fearful when I have to answer a question for which I am not ready.							