

Journal of University Studies for inclusive Research (USRIJ) مجلة الدراسات الجامعية للبحوث الشاملة

ISSN: 2707-7675

Journal of University Studies for Inclusive Research

Vol.9, Issue 13 (2023), 9008-9033

USRIJ Pvt. Ltd.,

The Effect of Anxiety on Oral Performance of Saudi Female Students in the Preparatory Year at Albaha University

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Abstract

Oral anxiety plays an instrumental role in the language learning process. The aim of this study is to display the factors that affect students' oral performance. The study sample consisted of 50 female students randomly selected from the Preparatory Year at Albaha University. Participants were asked to complete 15 items from Horwitz's Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale questionnaire. After that, a percentage distribution was used to analyze the data. The results of this study show that language anxiety has a significant effect on students' oral performance. Further, some recommendations and suggestions were provided to assist Saudi students in reducing language anxiety.

Key words: Oral anxiety - Albaha University - Preparatory Year

عوامل القلق في الأداء الشفوي لدى طالبات السنة التحضيرية في جامعة الباحة

إعداد:

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مخلص الدراسة:

القلق في اللغة الإنجليزية يلعب دور مهم في العملية التعليمية للغة. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى عرض العوامل الرئيسية التي تؤثر في الأداء الشفوي للطلاب. عينة هذه الدراسة 50 طالبة تم اختيار هم بطريقة عشوائية من السنة التحضيرية في جامعة الباحة. المشاركات أجابوا على 15 فقرة تم اختيار ها من مقياس القلق في اللغة الأجنبية داخل الفصل، وهو استبانة طوره هوروتز. بعد ذلك توزيع النسبة المئوية لتحليل البيانات، نتيجة البحث غطت العوامل الرئيسية للقلق اللغوي الذوي الذي في الأداء الشفوي الضرائية من السنة التحضيرية في جامعة الباحة. أيضاً قُدمت بعض التوصيات والاقتر احات لتقليص القلق اللغوي بين الطلاب السعوديين.

الكلمات الدالة: القلق اللغوي – جامعة الباحة – السنة التحضيرية

Chapter one

Introduction

1.1 Background

Foreign language anxiety is known as "the feeling of pressure also fears connected with second language skills and communication." MacIntyre & Gardner (1994) argued that Language anxiety has two types. The first one, anxiety as the basic human emotion and that happens in any situation in life such as TV and job Interviews. The second type of anxiety is as Horwitz and Cope (1986) said about it "specific anxiety". In the other word, anxiety connected with difficulties that students face in language learning inside the classroom. It obviously that anxiety of using foreign language inside the classroom is not simply easy. At a university in a preparatory year in oral classes, students feel that is important to produce sentences, participate in class discussions, and fluent. However, students will become very worried because they cannot express themselves and talk in classes. Consequently, speaking courses are most anxiety including than other skills like reading, listening, and writing. Additionally, speaking anxiety can affect the level of achievement in the language learning process in the classroom.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Most of Saudi female students join a college or a university with many English language problems. One of these problems is oral performance anxiety. Oral performance is a significant part in learning the English language. However, a problem like a language anxiety can affect and impact in oral performance proficiency. This problem exists among Saudi students from beginning to advanced levels. Also advanced Saudi female students feel anxious during learning and speaking English language inside the classroom. They wonder and ask why they cannot

speak, participate in the English language well in the classroom. University students are affected by language anxiety, Campbell and Ortiz (1999) point out, because this interferers with their learning process and exhausts them, also they rated that most English language students' experiences' very weak, low, and unstable. So, this research comes to investigate the main factors that make Saudi female students in a preparatory year at Albaha university worried and restless most. It is hoped that this research provides recommendation to help students to dominate language anxiety.

1.3 Aims of the study

As a result of that anxiety having a passive effect on learning a foreign language procedure inside the classroom particularly on the students' acquisition of oral skill, the necessity to examine this case is imperative. In the present study, the following objectives are sought:

1. Determine the factors that contribute Saudi female students in the Preparatory Year at Albaha University to feel anxious about their oral performance.

2. Provide suggestions that help teachers and students to reduce the main factors contributing to oral anxiety.

1.4 Significance of the study

Numerous researchers have been investigating that effect of anxiety on oral performance and the impact of anxiety on the students' achievements in oral proficiency. Thus, this study differs from the previous studies according of several factors. Firstly, a large part of the purpose of this study is to not only investigate the reasons and effects of anxiety on students' oral performance, but also to discuss the effective ways of dealing with this problem. Secondly, in term of population, this study examines 50 female students in preparatory year at Albaha University from different levels (excellent- good – week) students. Moreover, the study contributes to provide teachers the efficiency strategies of teaching speaking skill to the learners and improve the communicative teaching approach in oral performance. Finally, the significant of this study is to concentrate on factors of oral anxiety. Consequently, this study is expected to improve both teachers' and students' awareness of English language anxiety in the classroom as a result of the findings.

1.5 Research questions

What are the main factors that contribute to anxiety on oral performance of Saudi female students who studying English in the Preparatory Year at Albaha University?

1.6 Hypothesis of the study

The oral performance of students in the classroom is not significantly impacted by oral anxiety.

1.7 Limitation of the study

In this study, some limitations were present. In the beginning, there was a limitation that was quite evident, and it related to the fact that the sample size was relatively small in comparison with other studies. A study of 50 Saudi female students was conducted in this study enrolled at Albaha University for preparatory year in academic year 1438\39 AH - 2018. Moreover, this study was conducted with only female participants due to Saudi Arabia's gender-segregated higher education system. Lastly, the finding of this research should not be generalized to all students other than the samples of this study.

1.8 Organization of the study

Five chapters make up this study. The first chapter begins with the research topic, background information about the topic, the intention of the study, the research question and hypothesis. Then, second chapter supplies a literature review about the foreign language anxiety, oral anxiety, the effective factors on oral performance, the previous studies and summary. Methodology is presented in chapter three. Chapter four elaborates data analysis and results. Finally, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further studies are presented in chapter five.

1.9 Definitions of some terms

-Anxiety is feeling and emotion of nervousness, tension and worries about something, and often joined by nervous behavior. In addition, anxiety is expectation of future threat.

- Oral Performance means communication through mouth and expressing ideas or information from one person to another in verbal way.

- Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) happens when students must present tasks and participate in the foreign language in the classroom. Some researchers presented the language anxiety as complex behaviors and component feelings linked to the learning the language process in the classroom.

Chapter two

Review of Literature

A major focus of this chapter will be on the literature review regarding the field of foreign language anxiety, oral anxiety, effective factors on oral performance and the previous studies in oral anxiety. There is a strong connection between anxiety and the learning process of a language and students' oral performance. Thus, this chapter investigates the factors of anxiety on oral performance.

2.1 Foreign Language Anxiety

Study and speak a foreign language are considered as a challenge and need for everyone all over the time. There are many features that effect learning a foreign language such as: cultural background, learning technique, attitude, and motivation. Furthermore, the most significant factors affect the language learning process is language anxiety. The majority of forging language students experience oral anxiety during learning language. Riasati (2011) argued that the number of students who warn about their anxious during learning foreign language is unexpected. For that, in the classroom, an English language teacher should be concerned about language anxiety and devise solutions to simplify language learning. There are three types of language apprehension identified by Horwitz et al (1986): worry about a negative evaluation, anxiety about communication with a teacher or student, and test anxiety. Firstly, fear of negative valuation is known as worry and anxiety about others passive evaluation. (Toth, 2010) describes the first type of anxiety that associated with personal evaluation, in which learners evaluate their oral performance or academic performance. Secondly, communication apprehension occurs when a learner experiences shyness, stress, and discomfort while speaking and participate in English. When students are unable to speak, ask questions, or answer them inside a classroom, this type of anxiety can occur (Marzec-Stawiarska, 2015). Finally, there is a type of anxiety associated with tests. It means fright and worry of failing in test, also a fear of academic evaluation. As Wu (2010) clarifies it refers to assignment, pop quizzes and exams used for evaluating oral performance.

2.2 Oral Anxiety

Recently, researchers are interested in learning a foreign language process and factors affecting learners' oral performance. Yong (1992) noted that oral courses have the most anxiety comparing with other skills. The definition of language anxiety is clarified and shown in different studies. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) define it as "tensions, fears, and worries that occur when an individual is not fully proficient in the language being used.". Anxiety about oral performance is one of the most common problems encountered by English language students. A study by McCrosky (1977) revealed that oral performance anxiety was faced 20% of students in a university. In addition, he investigates that oral performance anxiety was faced 1 out of every 5 which affected negatively in their oral skill and achievement. According to Ewald (2007), most of studies on oral performance anxiety concentrated on beginner students. Additionally, the research by Kitano (2001) and Rzazadeh and Tavakoli (2009)" found out that female students are more concerned about their oral performances than male students".

2.3 Effective factors on oral performance

Yong (1990) represented language anxiety as a complex, difficult and has a several dimension phenomena. Researchers began to study the factors of oral performance anxiety on foreign learners. One of the factors of oral anxiety is the classroom atmosphere. As an illustration, Ozurk & Gurbuz (2014) explored some cases for Turkish students felt worried and tension while speaking in the classroom, they are forgetting some words, and they embarrassed and fear when they are speaking in front of students and the teacher. The second factor of language anxiety is the unsupportive teacher. Shying (1999), pointed out that Chinese students have difficulties for preparing national test because their teachers ignored the communication and oral skills and ignored speaking inside the classroom where students need a real situation to practice the language. Additionally, Yaha (2013) showed that students required proficiency and high level in oral skills and have difficulties in pronunciation because their teacher use traditional methods and old techniques of teaching. The third factor of foreign language anxiety is the test anxiety. Students panic to fail in foreign language class and concerned about negative evaluation from their teacher or other students. Hamouda (2013) pointed out that some Saudi students feel worried and anxious in oral test. To minimize the negative factors of oral anxiety it is important to mark and define the source of anxiety to help teachers to find useful strategies to reduce anxiety in learning language in the classroom. Jen (2003) mentioned five sources of oral anxiety among students: apprehension of negative valuation, personality factors, pressure from parents and teachers, lack of preparation before class and test anxiety. Moreover, Mahmoud Zadeh (2013) noted some resources such as: lack of confidence, anxiety of negative valuation, a teaching technique, proficiency. method and and weakness of English

2.4 The Previous Studies

Few researchers had explored the passive impact of oral anxiety among Saudi students. Students' limited participation in English learning inside the classroom was reflected the important cause of oral anxiety. It is most important to practice their language every day to develop their language proficiency.

It was found by Jamjoom (2009) that the majority of the students responded to questions in the class using only one or two sentences and tend to use short and incomplete sentences while speaking as well.

Furthermore, Alharbi (2015) claimed that most of the students are just listener and receivers of lessons and information. In addition, Alrabai found out that most Saudi college students are not ready to answer the question orally in the classroom. A questionnaire called a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was used to assess participants' oral anxiety and found out that communication is the main cause. Similarly, Hamouda (2012) covered the reasons of Saudi students unfavorable to speak and communicate with teachers in English inside the classroom. He applied his study on 154 students in Al-Qassim University and his finding showed most students were unwilling to speak to the teacher and they are keeping speechless and quiet in the oral English language classroom. Moreover, Asif (2014) investigated the main reasons that cause oral anxiety for Saudi students and the finding of this study showed the most Saudi students fear of making mistakes. They like to keep silent and quiet inside the classroom.

As well, by using FLCAS, Alrabia (2015) investigated the source of oral anxiety among university students and it has been shown that the lack of preparation before English class was the main reason of oral anxiety, and for that students are receivers of knowledge. A questionnaire, an interview, and an observation of the classroom are further examples of the tools used by Al-Saraj (2013) to explore the causes of language anxiety by using ten female students. In light of the responses he received from students, he concluded that the most common causes of low performance were those related to the teaching technique, the interaction between teachers and students, apprehension of negative appraisals, and communication style.

Cohen (1983) indicates other factors such as: shyness of specific students like older students or excellent ones, fear to participate in new or difficult topics. Many researchers investigated the relationship between the achievement in English language class and anxiety, also anxiety and language proficiency. For example, Kamaruddin & Abdullah (2015) focused on the connection between anxiety and English language proficiency and achievement. They found out that the anxiety has a bad impact in learning English language and in English language proficiency.

An additional study conducted by Al-Asmari (2015) at Taif University took place during the preparatory year of the students and examined oral anxiety among these students. The number of students with a low proficiency in English made up 64 of the total participants, while the number of students with a high proficiency in English made up 76 of the total participants. According to the findings of this study, most of the participants generally reported feeling anxious to a medium extent as a result of the study.

In (2015) study by Alsharani and Alandal, 144 female students and 146 male students were studied for their language anxiety standards, and the results demonstrated a high level of anxiety for most students.

Meanwhile, Al-Shalawi (2010) sampled 60 students from a university in order to assess their levels of oral anxiety and the findings indicated that students suffered a high standard of anxiety. In addition, Abu-Ghararah (1999) studied 240 students in a university and secondary school to determine the effects of English language anxiety on academic performance and oral skills by using (FLCAS) and the finding showed that the English language anxiety has a passive impact on students' achievement.

Finally, Alrabai (2014) in his study explored the level of anxiety by using scale (FLCAS) among 1,389 Saudi students in a university , and his results showed a high level of anxiety.

2.5 Summary

Oral anxiety is a complex and different feeling of fear, worry, and nervousness and that has a passive impact on the language learning process. In addition, students who experience language anxiety have a passive effect on their ability to learn and perform in oral communication. Most studies that worked on foreign language anxiety, such as (FLCAS) that introduced by Horwitz, have shown that anxiety has a big function in stopping students to pass and achieve in learning language and communication inside the class of English. Most of research and studies tried to represent reasons of foreign language anxiety such as: teaching technique, worry of negative valuation, test anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of preparation before class, and pressure

from teacher and parents. Therefore, minimizing the negative factors of English language anxiety can help students in oral performance and improve their English language learning. So, the teacher can help students by creating a relaxed classroom, organize a group work to foster a positive relationship between students, and fixing the student-teacher relationship. In addition, students can help themselves by practicing their language preparation before English class and minimizing their fear of evaluation.

Chapter three

Methodology

Introduction:

It is the purpose of this chapter to describe the research methodology used in this study. The first part shows information about the population. The second part explains the tool that used and the procedure of the study and finally data analysis.

3.1 Population of the study

In order to conduct this study, data were collected from a population of Saudi female students learning English in the Preparatory Year, College of Arts and Humanities, female section at Albaha University.

3.1.1 Sample of the study

At Albaha University, 50 female students from the Preparatory Year were randomly selected for this study. Depending on their proficiency in English, these students may display different levels of proficiency.

3.2 Tools of the study

As a means to respond to the research question, the researcher uses "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire" that consists of 33 items developed by Horwitz. This study's questionnaire consists of 15 items selected from the FLCAS questionnaire. Among the decisions items, there are items that range from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire investigates the specific factors of foreign language anxiety, mainly in three types: apprehension of negative valuation, unsupportive teacher, and test anxiety. (Appendix 1).

3.2.1 Validity

The validity of this study tool is confirmed and verified by showing the questionnaire on a group of arbitrators who work at Albaha University. According to their comments, the researcher prepares the final version.

3.2.2 Reliability

The items of this questionnaire are selected from FLCAS questionnaire developed by Horwitz which is already reliable.

3.4 Procedures of the study

As a first step, the researcher informs the students that the purpose of the questionnaire is to assess their anxiety related to their oral performance in English classrooms. Furthermore, she

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informs them that their answers are based on their experiences rather than their grades in the English course. Then, in order to conduct the study, permission was obtained from the head of the English Department, the Faculty of Arts, Alaqeiq, Albaha University.

3.5 Data analysis

Data was collected quantitatively by having 50 female students answer a questionnaire. This questionnaire has 15 items, selected from FLCAS questionnaire developed by Horwitz, an attempt to clarify the most anxious factors. The percentage distribution was used to analyze the data.

Chapter four

Results and Discussion

As a part of this chapter, data analysis is presented, along with figures and tables explaining the results. The content percentage distribution used to analyze the data of questionnaire.

4.1 Data analysis procedure:

Simple random samples of 50 female students were chosen. The participants received a questionnaire that contained 15 statements to respond to. The students responded to the questionnaire in a disciplined manner and a perfect time. (Appendix 1). The statements contained in this questionnaire can be classified and aggregated into three categories: fear of negative valuation, the unsupportive teacher and test anxiety. Each category includes 5 statements ordered according to their numbers in that questionnaire, as follows:

4.1.1 Fear of negative evaluation:

- 1. I never feel confident about myself when I am participating in my English language class.
- 5. It confuses me to give answers in my English language class
- 9. I feel that the other students are better in speaking English language than I do.
- 11. I feel shy when I am speaking in front of the other students.
- 14. I am frightened that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English and make a mistake.

The aggregated data of student responses for those statements are shown in the following table:

(Table 1): Fear of negative evaluation.

All Related Statements to the Category	Number of Student Responses	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	15	6.0
Agree	58	23.2
Not Sure	77	30.8
Disagree	57	22.8
Strongly Disagree	43	17.2
Total	250	100.0

4.1.2 *The second variable: Unsupportive teacher*

6. I feel angry when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.

- 8. I get nervous when my English teacher is ready to correct every wrong word I make.
- 10. I feel anxiety in my English language class than my other classes.
- 12. I get upset when I don't understand every word that the English teacher says.
- 15. I get upset and confuse when the English teacher asks the question which I haven't prepared before.

The following table represents the aggregated data regarding students' responses to those statements:

All Related Statements to the Category	Number of Student Responses	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	31	12.4
Agree	69	27.6
Not Sure	56	22.4
Disagree	61	24.4
Strongly Disagree	33	13.2
Total	250	100.0

(Table 2): Unsupportive teacher.

4.1.3 The third variable: Test anxiety

- 2. I get upset and shudder when I know that I'm going to be called on in the English class.
- 3. I feel scared when I have to participate without preparation in the English language class.
- 4. I am afraid to fail in my English language class.
- 7. Even if I am well prepared for English language class, I get nervous about it.
- 13. I feel confused by the large number of basis and principles I have to learn to speak an English language.

As shown in the following table, the aggregated data of students' responses to those statements is as follows:

(Table 3): Test anxiety:

All Related Statements to the Category	Number of Student Responses	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	24	9.6
Agree	67	26.8
Not Sure	84	33.6
Disagree	42	16.8
Strongly Disagree	33	13.2
Total	250	100.0

4.2 Results and discussion

Based on the findings of this study, three factors have been found to significantly affect oral performance of Saudi students at Albaha University's Preparatory Year.

The questionnaire consists of five items that are related to the first factor apprehension of negative evaluation. This indicates that students aren't sure about themselves, and they are embarrassed while communicating inside the classroom. About 40% of participants disagree with this factor. However, 30,8% of participants are not sure, but 29,2% of participants are agreeing that apprehension of negative evaluation affects their oral performance.

Another five items are included to the questionnaire related to the second factor, the unsupportive teacher. According to these items, students get nervous and feel tension when the English teacher asks them to answer the questions they haven't prepared before. In addition, they become angry when the teacher corrects every word they say. Among participants, 40% agree with this factor. However, 37,6% of participants are disagreeing, and 22,4% of participants are not sure.

The third factor, test anxiety represents five items in the questionnaire. There is an overwhelming sense of confusion among students as a result of the large number of essential English language principles they need to learn to become fluent in the language and are concerned about failing English classes. The number of participants who agree with this factor is 36,4. In contrast, 33,6% of participants are not certain but 30% of participants are disagreeable.

Consequently, this study has concluded that the majority of students were anxious when it came to oral performance during a preparatory year at Albaha University as a result of a lack of support from their teachers, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

Chapter Five

Conclusions, Recommendations, & Suggestions

5.1 Conclusion

Speaking in English language inside the classroom is frightened experience and very hard for students because the feeling of fear and anxiety according to the data collected through the questionnaire. Many researchers show different reasons and factors of English language anxiety such as: afraid of passive evaluation from the teacher or other students, student don't have a lot of vocabulary, feel unconfident and lack of motivation. Therefore, these factors have impact on students' learning and speaking. So, teachers must reduce students' speaking anxiety and help them by creating active classroom and make a good relationship with students to feel comfortable. In addition, learners should help their selves by practice their language, create good relationships between their teacher and other students, and learn new vocabulary.

5.2 Recommendations for students

Considering the findings of the study, it has been recommended that the following guidelines be followed:

1- The students should learn new vocabulary that will be useful in the classroom and outside of the classroom.

2 - The correct pronunciation of a foreign language should be practiced with teachers and with other students in class, as well as by listening to the radio or watching TV.

3- Furthermore, to improve their English language skills, students should engage in conversations outside of the classroom with family and friends and using simple English sentences and idioms.

5.3 Recommendations for teachers

1- Teachers should put together a strong plan to teach students new words with the correct pronunciation as well as to practice these words as much as possible within the classroom.

2- Students must be encouraged and reinforced to feel self-confident, and their efforts and accomplishments should be appreciated.

3- A teacher should encourage and support students to speak confidently and without being intimidated or afraid to make mistakes.

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4-Teachers should help their students establish good relationships with one another. Such good relationships will encourage students to speak inside the classroom without being afraid of negative feedback.

5.4 Suggestions for further studies

Those who are interested in further studies may find my recommendations to be useful. Since I carried out my research only on female students, it could be very beneficial to examine English anxiety for male students, as well. In addition, I use a questionnaire as a tool for this study, In order to determine if the results are different, I recommend that other researchers conduct observation or interviews to verify if their results are different.

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Appendix

Oral Performance Anxiety Questionnaire

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale developed by Horwitz et al and used to measure foreign language classroom anxiety. It is a questionnaire consists of 33 items, but I chose 15 items from this scale and the responses range from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Additionally, it prepared to collect information about your level of English language oral performance anxiety in classroom. Please read each statement and circle the answer according to how you feel in English classroom. There are no wrong or right answer. Finally, thanks for your contribution.

- 1- I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class.
 - 1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.
- 2- I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in the English language class.
 - 1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.
- 3- I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English language class.
 - 1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.
- **4-** I worry about the consequences of failing my English language class.
- 1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.

- 5- It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English language class.
- 1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.

6- I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.

- 1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.
- 7- Even if I am well prepared for English language class, I feel anxious about it.
- 1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.
- 8- I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
 - 1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.
- 9- I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.
- 1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.
- **10-** I feel more tense and nervous in my English language class than my other classes.
 - 1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.
- 11- I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English language class.
- 1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.

12- I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English language teacher says.

1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.

13- I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak an English language.

1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.

14- I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the English language.

1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.

15- I get nervous when the English language teacher asks question which I haven't prepared in advance.

1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree.