Current Developments in Language Anxiety Research

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Abstract

Although the phenomenon of foreign language anxiety has been widely recognized as some kind of mental block against language learning by teachers and researchers as well as learners themselves, it is not until recently that more refined and focused attention has been paid to the conceptual base of the term, "foreign language anxiety" or more simply "language anxiety" (MacIntyre, 1999). This report, thus, provides a review of current developments in the field of language anxiety research, while outlining the theoretical background for conceptualizing anxiety as relevant to second language learning and its contexts. In the sections to follow, a variety of interpretations pertaining to the complex and multidimensional nature of language anxiety will be illustrated and discussed, with particular emphasis on socio-psychological and cross-cultural aspects of the phenomenon. This paper will also address some of the critical issues that surround the current research on language anxiety, especially in the ways that would suggest the necessity of a more holistic approach from a variety of perspectives, so that further understanding of the phenomenon can be attained as a future research prospect.

Introduction

Research into the topic of language anxiety flourished in the 1990s, as the role of emotions in the process of language learning was more clearly recognized, in addition to the traditional accounts of language learning from the point of view of cognition and behavior. As Joseph LeDoux, the author of *The Emotional Brain* (1996) points out, "Minds without emotions are not really minds at all" (p. 18).

Parallel to the study of how our mind works, describing and explaining how we learn a second or foreign language requires us to become more aware of the role of affect or emotions which interact with our body and cognition in a symbiotic manner (Arnold & Brown, 1999). Such awareness can invite more interdisciplinary approaches toward understanding how our mind, body, and emotions contribute to the complex processes of language learning (Young, 1999).

Reflecting such a renewed awareness of the role that "affect" or emotions can play in language learning (Arnold & Brown, 1999), much of the recent research has offered a lot of insight into the nature of language anxiety, along with numerous findings that certainly attest to the complexity and multidimensionality of the phenomenon.

This report, thus, presents an overview of current developments of research in the field of language anxiety, while outlining the theoretical background for conceptualizing anxiety as relevant to second language learning and its contexts. In the sections to follow, this paper would like to discuss and illustrate a variety of interpretations pertaining to the complex and multidimensional nature of the phenomenon, with particular emphasis on the socio-psychological and cross-cultural aspects of language anxiety. In addition, some of the critical issues that surround the current research on language anxiety will also be addressed, in the ways that would suggest the necessity of a more holistic approach from a multitude of different perspectives, so that further understanding of the phenomenon can be attained as a future research prospect.

General Accounts of Anxiety as Relevant to Second Language Learning

According to Spielberger (1972), anxiety in general can be defined as "an unpleasant emotional state or condition which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, and worry" (p. 482), but the entirety or a whole picture of the phenomenon seems quite difficult to describe in a simple and exhaustive manner as it arises from many kinds of sources, often associated with particular contexts or situations that individuals perceive threatening according to their unique

frame of reference (Ehrman, 1996; Levitt, 1980; Schwarzer, 1986; Skehan, 1989). As Pekrun (1992) and Bandura (1991) note, when a certain situation is perceived potentially threatening to the extent that it is far beyond one's ability to deal with that threat positively, anxiety results as a natural consequence. With this regard, the ways in which individuals experience anxiety are largely dependent on their feelings of self-efficacy or whether they can perceive themselves as effective mediators of the particular situations or contexts (Pappamihiel, 2002, p. 329).

Although the question of how such general accounts of anxiety are related to second language learning contexts is still under debate, current investigations of language anxiety have been largely based on the situational interpretations of state anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a). In other words, language anxiety has been viewed as a type of state anxiety specific to the contexts of second language learning, especially in light of its unique nature of experiences involved as distinct from other forms of anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989).

The underlying assumption behind such a view of language anxiety, thus, seems to implicate the following scenario as to the origin of the phenomenon; that is, as a student experiences repeated occurrences of anxiety in response to a particular variety of learning situations, in which he or she is required to perform in the limited capability of second language, the student "comes to associate anxiety arousal with the second language. When this happens, the student *expects* to be anxious in second language contexts; that is the genesis of language anxiety" (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 31).

One of the pieces of evidence that show the distinct nature of language anxiety from other types of anxieties such as math anxiety or test-anxiety is that there can exist some disparity between the learner's "true" self and the more limited self as represented in any phase of language learning and performance (Horwitz et al. 1986, p. 31). Similarly, Cohen and Norst (1989) note:

> There is something fundamentally different about learning a language, compared to learning another skill or gaining other knowledge, namely that language and self are so closely bound, if not identical, that an attack on one is an attack on the other. (p. 61)

With this regard, L2 learners' self-concept and self-expression may be threatened

by their limited command of the target language, to the extent that they feel a loss of their self-esteem along with acute anxious feelings.

What is Language Anxiety?: Its Conceptualization

As Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) note in their seminal article on language anxiety, "research has neither adequately defined foreign language anxiety nor described its specific effects on foreign language learning" (p. 125). Although the phenomenon itself has been widely recognized as some kind of mental block against language learning by language teachers and researchers as well as learners themselves, it is not until quite recently that more refined and focused attention has been paid to the conceptual base of the term, "foreign language anxiety" or more simply "language anxiety" (MacIntyre, 1999).

According to Horwitz and Young (1991, p. 1), there are two general approaches to identifying language anxiety; 1) language anxiety can be viewed as a transfer of other general types of anxiety (e.g., test anxiety or stage fright); 2) language anxiety occurs in response to something unique to language learning experiences. These two approaches represent different perspectives of how language anxiety can be conceptualized, and they are not necessarily taking opposing stances with each other, but the efforts of both sides are considered complementary to the mutual goal of understanding the phenomenon more thoroughly.

The first perspective views language anxiety as a manifestation of other forms of anxiety, such as test anxiety or communication apprehension in the various language learning experiences. This approach has an obvious advantage in its basic assumption that vast knowledge gained from research into other types of anxiety can be applied to explaining language anxiety as well.

Some of the early studies in this approach were mostly correlational in nature, investigating the relationship between some forms of anxiety and language learning and performance. For example, Kleinmann (1977) and Chastain (1975) examined this relationship by focusing on test anxiety and its influence on language learning. Similarly, Daly (1991) and Mejias, Applbaum, Applbaum, and Trotter (1991) studied

the ways in which communication apprehension can operate in a second language context.

Many of the findings from those studies, however, were fairly inconsistent and sometimes quite contradictory in terms of the directions of correlation observed between similar studies. That is, while some of the studies found negative correlations between anxiety and language learning (i.e., the higher the anxiety, the lower the language performance), others indicated no such relationship. One of the illustrative examples that yielded the mixed results within the same study, as summarized by Scovel (1978), was a study by Chastain (1975), in which the directions of the correlations between anxiety (test anxiety) and language learning in three languages (French, German, and Spanish) were not consistent, indicating three levels of correlation: positive, negative, and near zero correlations between anxiety and language performance in those three languages.

Young's (1991) review of sixteen studies that examined the relationship between anxiety and language learning (p. 436-439) also showed similar inconsistent results both within and across studies, and she concluded that "research in the area of anxiety as it relates to second or foreign language learning and performance was scattered and inconclusive" (p. 426).

The second approach to identifying language anxiety views it as a unique type of anxiety or "the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning a second language" (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 27). In the previous studies by MacIntyre and Gardner (1989, 1991b), it was found that performance in the second language was negatively correlated with language anxiety but not with more general forms of anxiety. That is, a total of 23 different anxiety scales were clustered into three categories of anxieties by using a statistical method called factor analysis; 1) the first category or "factor" was found to include most of the anxiety scales (i.e., measures of trait anxiety, communication apprehension, interpersonal anxiety and so on) and was then labeled "General Anxiety" or "Social Evaluation Anxiety"; 2) the second factor was found to be "State Anxiety" (e.g., novelty anxiety, the physical danger scale, etc.) and; 3) the third factor was labeled "Language Anxiety", for it was composed of two measures of French test anxiety, French use anxiety, and

French classroom anxiety. Such results of factor analysis clearly indicated that language anxiety could be separated from other forms of anxiety, as evidenced by the procedure of factor analysis that specified no correlations among the factors.

Components of Foreign Language Anxiety and Relevant Factors

In response to somewhat scattered and often inconclusive nature of early research on language anxiety, Horwitz and others (1986) have proposed a model that bridges or encompasses the two major perspectives illustrated above, so that insights from both sides can be incorporated into their theory of *foreign language classroom anxiety* in a synthetic manner. They argue that language anxiety can be comprised of three performance anxieties: 1) communication apprehension, 2) test anxiety, and 3) fear of negative evaluation. It should be noted, however, that the main contention of Horwitz and others is not advocating the transfer approach but rather arguing for the second perspective that views language anxiety as distinct from other forms of anxiety. In other words, they do not view language anxiety as simply the combination of those three performance anxieties transferred to language learning but rather as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128).

Communication apprehension, which generally refers to a type of anxiety experienced in interpersonal communicative settings (McCroskey, 1987), is obviously quite relevant to second and foreign language learning contexts. Especially in the language classroom where the learners have little control of the communicative situation, and their performance is constantly monitored by both their teacher and peers (Horwitz et al., 1986), communication apprehension seems to be augmented in relation to the learners' negative self-perceptions caused by the inability to understand others and make themselves understood (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989).

Such feelings of apprehension that second and foreign language communicative contexts induce are often accompanied by fear of negative evaluation from others. Watson and Friend (1969) characterize it as "apprehension about others' evaluations,

avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectations that others would evaluate oneself negatively" (p. 448-51). As Gardner and MacIntyre (1993, p. 5) also note, such feelings of apprehension can be characterized by "derogatory self-related cognition..., feelings of apprehension, and physiological responses such as increased heart rate." Even in small group discussions, for instance, some of the learners might feel anxious for fear of negative evaluation from their peers, possibly ending up being quiet and reticent, contrary to their initial intention to participate. Such psychological dilemmas of L2 learners between willingness to speak up in the classroom and fear of losing their self-esteem in front of others, thus, seems to be a quite ubiquitous phenomenon in second and foreign language classroom settings (Bailey, 1983; Cohen & Norst, 1989).

As Brandl (1987) notes, the learners' fear of being negatively evaluated in the classroom can be further intensified when the instructors believe that their primary role is to constantly correct students' errors more like a drill sergeant's than that of a facilitator. Although many learners feel that some error correction is necessary (Horwitz, 1988; Koch & Terrell, 1991), the manner of error correction is often cited as potentially provoking anxiety in students. As Young (1991, p. 429) argues, thus, students are more concerned about how (i.e., when, what, where, or how often) their mistakes are corrected rather than whether error correction should be administered in class. In this sense, instructor beliefs about language teaching can also become a source of language anxiety in L2 learners, because the assumptions of the teachers as to their role in the language classroom may not always correspond to the individually different needs or expectations that the students would hold toward the teachers.

Another self-conflict within L2 learners, which may be attributable to their unrealistic expectations or beliefs on language learning and achievement, can often be instantiated as frustration or anger toward their own poor performance in second language.

According to Young (1991), erroneous learner beliefs about language learning can contribute greatly to creating language anxiety in students. Gynan (1989) reports that some learners believe that pronunciation is the most important aspect of L2

learning, expressing great concern for speaking with an excellent accent over the content of their statements. Similarly, Horwitz (1988) has also suggested that some of the learner beliefs are derived from their unrealistic and sometimes erroneous conceptions about language learning. She found that 1) some learners were concerned about the correctness of their speech in comparison to native-like accent or pronunciation, that 2) some believed that two years of language learning is enough to achieve a native-like fluency, that 3) some expressed that language learning means learning how to translate, and that 4) some others believed that success of L2 learning is limited to a few individuals who are gifted for language learning.

As apparent from these results, it is quite conceivable that unrealistic beliefs held by learners themselves can lead to greater anxiety and frustration, especially when their beliefs and reality clash. For example, if beginning learners believe that pronunciation is the single most important aspect of L2 learning, they will naturally get frustrated to find the reality of their imperfect speech even after quite a lot of practice. In this sense, learner beliefs can play another major role in creating language anxiety in students.

With respect to test anxiety, many learners feel more pressure when asked to perform in a foreign or second language, because they are doubly challenged by the fact that they need to recall and coordinate many grammar points at the same time during the limited test period. As a result, they may put down the wrong answer or simply "freeze up" due to nervousness, even if they know the correct answer (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Price, 1991).

According to Tobias (1986), the arousal of anxiety may work as a mental block to cognitive performance at all of the three cognitive stages: Input, Processing, and Output. In other words, anxiety arousal, which is typically associated with self-deprecating thoughts, fear of failure, or worry over performance procedures, may compete for cognitive resources that normal cognitive processing will demand. Because the capacity for information processing is limited, when combined with anxiety related self-thoughts, the mental processing is naturally overloaded to the extent that language performance is impaired (Eysenck, 1979). As Price (1991) and Schwarzer (1986) point out, even bright students who are excessively concerned

about their performance may become so anxious that they may attempt to compensate by studying even harder (e.g., in the form of "overstudying"), because their compulsive efforts do not lead to their intended performance.

As illustrated so far, current proliferations of language anxiety research are certainly worth noting, as they have provided much valuable insight into the complex nature of language anxiety. However, it still cannot be denied that many of the studies on the phenomenon are based upon the conceptual model of Horwitz et al. (1986) *a priori*, without questioning its pertinence as an operational concept, nor its epistemological soundness. As Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001) argue, "the inconclusiveness of research in this domain suggests that correlational studies alone will not provide a satisfactory answer and that, in fact, the most accepted working hypotheses may need revising" (p. 261). In this regard, any attempt to conceptualize human psychological phenomena such as language anxiety naturally needs to take more into account the qualitative nature of human experiences, especially in terms of its complexity and multidimensionality.

The phenomenon of language anxiety, thus, should be approached from a more holistic perspective that encompasses the multi-faceted nature of its experiences, because each layer of the phenomenon certainly represents the complexity of our human existence.

Potential Sources of Language Anxiety: Socio-psychological and Cross-cultural Aspects

In relation to Horwitz et al.'s (1986) three components of *foreign language classroom anxiety*, several other sources of language anxiety have also been identified, which are closely associated with social and personal aspects of language learning such as the learners' perceptions or beliefs on second language learning and its contexts (Bailey, 1983; Horwitz, 1988; Price, 1991; Young, 1991). Since contexts of second language learning often involve a variety of cross-cultural situations or settings, highly affective processes of acculturation also seems to underlie the learners' experiences of language anxiety.

Social and Personal Dimensions of Language Anxiety

Social and personal aspects of language anxiety, which are probably the most commonly cited or discussed in the anxiety-related literature, have been investigated in conjunction with other social and psychological constructs such as self-esteem, competitiveness, group identity, or social discourse. Bailey (1983) examined the relationship between the learners' competitiveness and self-esteem as a potential source of learner anxiety, claiming that a competitive nature of L2 learning can lead to anxiety when learners compare themselves to others or to idealized self-images. Krashen (1981) also suggests that anxiety can arise according to one's degree of self-esteem. For example, people with low self-esteem may worry about what their peers or friends think, in fear of their negative responses or evaluation. According to Price (1991) and Hembree (1988), learners who perceive their level of proficiency to be lower than that of others in class are more likely to feel language anxiety than those who do not. As clearly revealed in Price's interviews with 17 highly anxious students, some of the major concerns for those students are: fear of being negatively evaluated by others, being laughed at for their foreign accent, or losing their own self-image or self-esteem because of limited language proficiency to express themselves in the L2. One of the memorable accounts of the anxious feelings expressed by the participants is that "It (the language class) was never a learning experience. You either did it right or you didn't" (p. 106). Such complaints by the students seem to be a reflection of the frustrated feelings that they have toward the teacher and classroom environment, accompanied by the fear that their language performance may be judged or negatively evaluated by others. For those students, language classes are no better than "a source of fear, shame, and humiliation" (p.108).

Such fear of social evaluation, thus, might be broadly categorized as "social anxiety" proposed by Leary (1982). Leary defines social anxiety as "a type of anxiety that arises from the prospect or presence of interpersonal evaluation in real or imagined social settings" (p.102). Acknowledging the potential effects of social anxiety on L2 learning, Krashen (1985), with reference to his own "Affective Filter Hypothesis," contends that the affective filter can be lowered when an individual

learner considers himself to be a member of a particular target language group, (e.g., a member of the Spanish, Japanese "club") (as interviewed in Young, 1992, p.167). Similarly, Terrell argues for Krashen's "group membership" theory by drawing on the social aspects of child L1 acquisition; he suggests, "children acquire their first language and a second language in order to identify and be a member of the group that speaks that language" (p. 161). Thus, both Krashen and Terrell seem to hold a similar view of language anxiety, to the effect that language anxiety is closely related to the student's experience of "target language group identification."

Another socio-psychological construct suggested by Rardin in the interview is so-called "existential anxiety" (Young, 1992). According to her definition, existential anxiety refers to a more profound type of anxiety that is inherent to the language learning process, as it "touches the core of one's self-identity, one's self image" (p. 168). In other words, this anxiety can arise from fear that learning another language might lead to the loss of one's identity. In this regard, Cohen and Norst (1989) also point out such a profound nature of language learning, by saying "there is something fundamentally different about learning a language, compared to learning another skill or gaining other knowledge, namely that language and self are so closely bound, if not identical, that an attack on one is an attack on the other" (p. 61).

Other psychological phenomena that can occur in the context of L2 learning include Schumann's concept of "social distance" (1978), Clarke's theory of "clash of consciousness" (1976), and Guiora's "language ego" (1972). Schumann's (1978, 1986) Acculturation Model, for example, clearly suggests that the levels of acculturation, or the extent to which individual learners feel "psychological social distance" to the target language group, can affect the nature of learner language in the interactions that learners engage in as well as the amount of input they are exposed to.

Taking into account the socio-cultural aspects of language learning originally investigated by Gardner, Clement, and associates (Gardner, Smythe, Clement, & Gliksman, 1976; Gardner, Smythe, & Clement, 1979), Clement (1980, 1986) also argues that the levels of language anxiety can be influenced by the frequency and quality of contact with native speakers, and that those language learners who are

learning a new language in a multi-cultural setting are more likely to suffer from an emotional dilemma between "the desire to learn a new language/culture and the opposing fear of losing one's own language and ethnic identity" (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 32) than those who are learning a language in their own cultural settings (e.g., learning English as a foreign language in Japan). Thus, the types of motivation that learners would claim for learning a new language, whether it may be integrative or instrumental, are considered to affect the level of language anxiety, no matter how indirect and subtle such effects may be (Gardner, 1985).

Similarly, other socio-cultural models of L2 acquisition, such as those of Giles and Byrne (1982), Gardner (1985), and Pierce (1995), also suggest that learners' opportunities to use and develop their own L2 knowledge can be affected by a variety of social variables, which include ethnolinguistic identity and vitality, social identity, and attitudes toward the target language and culture respectively (Dickerson, 1975; Tarone, 1983). These psychological phenomena, when accompanied by low self-esteem and competitiveness (Bailey, 1983), can become the seeds for student language anxiety, as often instantiated in the forms of performance anxiety, such as communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, or test anxiety (Horwitz et al. 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991c).

Cross-cultural Perspectives on Language Anxiety

According to Gudykunst and Kim (1997), the process of cultural adaptation or acculturation can be viewed as "a journey of personal change in which strangers who are socialized in one culture cultivate inroads into another culture" (p. 352), but they also note at the same time that the very processes of such change naturally involve tremendous psychological stresses or inner difficulties often known as "culture shock."

According to Brown (1986), who related second language learning to acculturation, the process of second language learning can be characterized by its deeply seated affective nature of experiences encountered as a threat to the learner's social and cultural identity (i.e., which is also an aspect of culture shock experiences). That is, when language is brought into the picture of acculturation, ethnocentric assumptions about L2 culture are combined with the learner's ethnolinguistic identity or "language

ego" (Guiora, 1972; Guiora & Acton, 1979), which results in the feelings of hostility, frustration, or even rage toward L2 culture.

From the perspective of cognitive psychology, Bennett (1998) notes that human defense mechanisms that become operative in reaction to any threat to our identity or existence may be responsible for causing our culture shock experiences. According to Bennett (1998), when our internally consistent beliefs and values are threatened by external change, we activate our defense mechanisms in reaction to such an unstable psychological state, or what he called "cognitive inconsistency" (p. 218). Even if we become aware that our well-established frame of reference is not applicable in different cultures, our defense mechanisms force us to withdraw and drive us further away from reaching for a new frame of reference. Then we find ourselves deep in such vicious cycles of culture shock; "Either they're crazy, or I am!" (p. 218). Bennett illustrates the ambivalent feelings that cognitive inconsistency brings to our psyche as follows:

> At the same time, we value our old belief system as well as adaptation to the new; we seek a way to survive within our former worldview yet recognize the necessity for a new perspective. Often two very contradictory systems vie for equal time. (p. 218)

Our attempts to deal with this psychological dissonance by clinging to our own worldview, however, often exacerbate the conflicts within our mind, because the only defenses available to us are those from our own culture. In other words, even if we are painfully aware of the split between "what is and what should be" (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p.358), we have no other way but to defend ourselves in reference to our own cultural belief systems, which often coincide with what we have come to value as part of ourselves. As Zaharna (1989) points out, thus, our experiences of anxiety in the processes of cultural adaptation naturally take the form of "self-shock," responsible for the occurrence of a existential dilemma within our mind.

Such elements of self-shock also seem to be quite relevant to second language learning experiences, especially for adult L2 learners who have already acquired firm L1 cultural norms or values that resist drastic change or accommodation by themselves. In this sense, the learners' L1 cultural assumptions, acquired through

their early socialization processes, may have a tremendous impact on not only how they approach L2 learning but also how they use their L2 knowledge in various socio-cultural contexts (Hinkel, 1999).

Further ramifications of L2 learners' affective experiences in cross-cultural settings, thus, naturally go beyond mere language learning activities usually given in EFL classrooms (e.g., learning English as a foreign language in Japan), because whatever they say and do in their second language is no longer excused as part of their language practices but rather can be readily communicated to others as a legitimate representation of themselves or who they are, whether they like it or not (Clarke, 1976). In other words, their conscious efforts to learn to use their second language in the ways that would correspond to or closely represent their self-identity are counteracted by the harsh reality to the contrary, in terms of images of themselves that they would like to project to others as social and personal beings.

According to Stengal (1939), adult second language learners often find themselves deep in the emotional disruptions of "language shock" in the face of a different reality that they would encounter in the processes of learning a second language and culture at the same time. He characterized language shock as a kind of fear that adult learners experience when they cannot control their second language in the same way as they do in their native language. As Arnold and Brown (1999) also note, when the learners are deprived of their control of language, they might lose "a source of narcissistic gratification which they might otherwise receive when using their own language" (p. 22). In parallel to the experiences of culture shock, the impact of language shock also seems to be enormous, because it naturally involves a threat to the learners' sense of self-identity.

Such cross-cultural perspectives of second language learning clearly suggest that L2 learners' cultural frame of reference including their own personal beliefs, values, and assumptions, acquired through their early socialization processes, may have a tremendous impact on how they perceive and interpret numerous L2 activities or events that they engage in while learning the L2 culture.

Although the processes of second language/culture learning inevitably require the learners to engage in some sort of change in themselves as to their behavior,

identity, values, or attitudes, it is such processes of self-reconstruction that often entail deep psychological and emotional difficulties, in which the fundamental question of "who am I?" comes into their mind, as their self-worth or self-esteem that derives from being members of particular social/cultural groups is constantly called into question (Ting-Toomey, 2000).

Thus, affective experiences of L2 learners need to be investigated by taking into full account their cultural backgrounds, because the ways in which they experience anxiety are influenced by their cultural perceptions, along with their individual differences in making sense out of the world (Singer, 1998).

Conclusion

Certainly the findings presented above are neither exhaustive nor comprehensive enough to understand the entire picture of language anxiety, but they clearly indicate that the phenomenon of language anxiety cannot be defined in a linear manner, but rather can be better construed as a complex, psychological phenomenon influenced by many different factors. Thus, it seems to be more appropriate to investigate language anxiety from a variety of perspectives or approaches (Young, 1992).

Indeed, the ways in which the complex, multidimensional phenomenon of language anxiety can be investigated should not be limited to either quantitative or qualitative methods, and efforts from both sides should be encouraged for further and better understanding of the phenomenon. It should be noted, however, that hidden aspects of the phenomenon that underlie the actual experiences of language anxiety still need to be further explored from a more holistic approach or perspective, because such aspects cannot be directly accessed or measured with a conventional quantitative approach.

As Gebhard (1990, 1996) clearly points out, human phenomena such as language anxiety, which arise from multiple causes, cannot be adequately captured in numbers, as the ways in which learners experience the phenomenon are also multifaceted in nature, reflecting their individually unique frame of reference. Thus, a more qualitative-oriented approach seems more appropriate as a way of investigating

such a complex nature of language anxiety, especially when the particular emphasis of study is placed on understanding and drawing a holistic picture of the phenomenon rather than measuring the observable effects of its manifestations.

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