

Factors causing language anxiety among Arab PHD holders and candidates: A cultural dimension?

ABSTRACT

Much research has investigated foreign/second language (FL/SL) anxiety among learners belonging to various demographic backgrounds. However, very limited studies have explored this phenomenon among FL/SL users, more specifically from females' perspectives. Additionally, the vast majority of this research has adopted quantitative techniques to identify the factors causing language anxiety. Therefore, this paper attempts to reduce this gap perceived in the literature by exploring the factors causing language anxiety among ESL users (English as a second language). A qualitative approach was adopted to collect data by conducting a focus group interview with four females, two PhD holders and PhD candidates. Remarkably, new findings were obtained by this research, where the cultural perception about women within the participants' society was found out to be one of the reasons provoking language anxiety. Furthermore, a common belief about PhD candidates/holders to be highly proficient speakers of English and also the level of English proficiency of the listeners/interlocutors were two other interesting findings reported by the participants to increase their language anxiety. The research results are discussed and recommendations for further research are suggested