

Language  
learning  
anxiety in  
a group of  
psychology  
students at  
Universidad  
del Norte

Heydi Robles

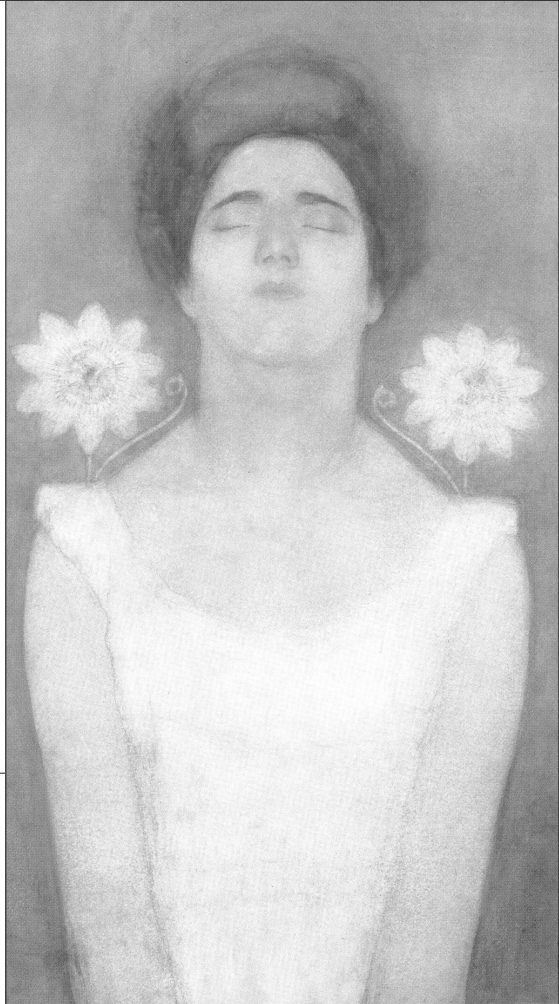
"Minds without  
emotions are not  
really minds at all".  
Le Doux (1996:25)

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Revista del Instituto  
de Estudios Superiores  
en Educación  
Universidad del Norte

nº 6, diciembre, 2005  
ISSN 1657-2416

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próxima



Mondrian, P. *Pasionaria*, 1901

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This article shows the results of a research on anxiety caused by language learning. It focuses on language learning anxiety related to speaking skill. This study intended to find out the external factors that produce anxiety in the development of the oral competence in a group of psychology students. In order to attain the objectives of this study, the instruments used were diaries, questionnaires, recordings (personal opinions, short oral presentations) and interviews. With regard to external factors that produce anxiety in relation to activities, results show that all kind of oral activities produce a high degree of anxiety in students, especially non prepared oral tasks.

RESUMEN

They also show a lack of participation in class with a strong rejection to oral learning tasks. Among the possible causes of this reticence, it is the fact that they do not want to be mocked in class. Also, Speaking skill was not encouraged in the first levels in the prior approach. It is vital to mention that students are aware of their lack of some aspects of the language, such as, vocabulary, grammar and fluency.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Anxiety, language competence, oral skill and fluency.

ABSTRACT

Este artículo muestra los resultados de una investigación sobre la ansiedad causada por el aprendizaje de idiomas. Está centrado en la ansiedad relacionada con la habilidad de producción oral. El objetivo del estudio era identificar los factores externos que producen ansiedad en el desarrollo de la competencia oral en un grupo de estudiantes de Psicología. Para lograr su objetivo, la investigación utilizó diarios, cuestionarios, grabaciones (opiniones personales, presentaciones orales breves) y entrevistas. Con respecto de los factores externos que producen ansiedad en relación con las actividades, los resultados muestran que todas las actividades orales producen un alto grado de ansiedades en los estudiantes, especialmente las actividades no programadas. También muestran una falta de participación en clase con un fuerte rechazo a las actividades orales. Entre las posibles causas de reticencia puede estar el hecho de que los estudiantes no quieren ser objeto de burla. Además, la habilidad de producción oral no fue estimulada en los niveles anteriores del programa de inglés. Es vital mencionar que los alumnos son conscientes de sus carencias en algunos aspectos del idioma como vocabulario, gramática y fluidez.

KEY WORDS: Ansiedad, competencia comunicativa, destreza oral.

## 1 Introduction

The education process has experienced positive changes, especially the English learning process. A few years ago, the teaching-learning view was based on a teacher-centered approach. The teacher was the most important person in the curriculum. Fortunately, this perspective has been changing and learners have become the subject part of the teaching-learning process. Nowadays students' wants, lacks, desires and feelings are taken into consideration in an affective teaching process.

Language teachers are concerned about their students' performance in their courses. While some students do better in learning a foreign language, many students do not gain their desired level of proficiency, due to internal as well as external variables from the learning environment, for instance, personality, language aptitude, interest, study habits, learning styles, age, and previous experiences in learning a foreign language. Some authors such as Nunan (1999) define those external variables as social affective factors .

Currently most research studies are coping with the cognitive area and the affective one is disregarded. Chastain (1976) states that since affective factors and social interaction have not received the amount of attention devoted to the cognitive aspects,

research in this area is not so extensive.

The concern about affective state was not a relevant area to study. The assumption was that students would automatically develop emotionally and socially as they developed intellectually, (Chastain, 1976). Perhaps, an evident relationship among the three areas before mentioned was not perceived but as isolated areas which developed independently. Because of that, most research studies addressed the cognitive zone.

Among the social affective factors that influence the teaching learning process, language anxiety represents a primary predictor of second language acquisition. Gardner and McIntyre, cited by Bailey and Daley (2000), found that language anxiety is the best single correlate of achievement.

This research focuses on language learning anxiety related to speaking skill. In this study I intend to find out the external factors that produce anxiety in the development of the oral competence in a group of psychology students.

## 2 Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Language Learning Anxiety

Almost all language students have experienced anxiety at some time or in some specific situations in classrooms.

Researchers have advocated that anxiety is one of the most frequent factors that impedes language learning.

Anxiety is the response to a particular situation. Horwitz & Cope (1986) cited by Arnold (1995) share similar points of views with respect to anxiety. They define it as a feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry, indirectly associated with the object; in other words, the word object refers to the acquisition of the second language.

Gardner and Macintyre are the main representatives in the study of anxiety. They, cited by Arnold (1995), define language anxiety as fear or apprehension occurring when a learner is expected to perform in the second or foreign language.

## 2.2 Types of Language Anxiety

Elaborating on the concepts, (Arnold, 1995) explains the different faces of language anxiety; in other words, anxiety could be a short-term state or a lasting trait. Some authors refer to the same concept using different names, for instance, Trait anxiety and State anxiety (Macintyre, 1995). There are other kinds of anxiety: a harmful language anxiety and a helpful one .

- Harmful Anxiety

This negative kind of anxiety is called "debilitating anxiety" because it harms

Students' performance in many ways, reducing participation in the

classroom, producing avoidance of the language use, worry, self doubt, plummeting motivation, negative attitudes and beliefs towards the language learning and language performance difficulties.

- Helpful Anxiety

This anxiety is so called because it keeps students alert (Scovel ,1978, quoted by Brown 1995).

Horwitz & Schalllet (1999) stated that anxiety is only helpful for simple learning tasks, not for difficult ones.

Rardin, cited by Young (1992), pointed out that the positive aspect of anxiety operates all the time, but teachers only notice when a negative imbalance occurs. Terrell, cited by Arnold (1995), refused the term anxiety and he called it "Attention" because this attention might be useful for language learning.

Oxford, cited by Nunan (1999), in his article about Anxiety and the language learner defines the State anxiety as a "passing state" because it is transitory only for short periods in a situation. In other words, the state of nervousness only occurs during specific moments in class.

On the other hand, when anxiety occurs in repeated situations it then becomes a "Trait" (Macintyre, 1995). It is seen as a characteristic of learners' personality.

Anxiety is not only studied as Trait or State view. Allwright & Bailey (1991), in their work about

competitiveness in classroom language learning, describe two different perspectives: Debilitating and Facilitating Anxiety.

Debilitating view is defined as a negative factor, something to be avoided at all costs (Scovel, 1978, cited by Brown 1995). The Facilitating anxiety motivates students to conquer the new learning task, making them unconsciously move towards the target.

Students who show a debilitating anxiety, have an unsuccessful self-image (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). A negative concept about themselves concerning to English learning

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Context

This study took place at Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla. The subjects of this study were a group of ninth semester psychology students. These learners were taking level seven at Language Institute. English is a required subject for all the university students.

- The English program at Universidad del Norte consists of eight levels or courses, which are focused on the development of oral competence.

The study was carried out during an intensive vacation course, (4 hours daily) focused on oral performance development. A vacation course is an

inter-semester course, which is offered by The Language Institute to those students who want to advance in the English program or need to be in a specific level as an institutional requirement.

In 1995 the prior approach to learning English in this institute was academic. Oral skills were not emphasized in the first levels, only the receptive skills, since the idea was to provide vocabulary and grammatical tools to foster reading of academic texts in English related to their specific careers. Therefore, speaking was simply not encouraged in the first levels.

This particular group of psychology students had started studying English at the institution during the years when the approach was academic English for Science and Technology. As the interest in an oral approach emerged, the students were forced to continue studying English in a different approach. It is important to mention that most of these students have repeated previous levels in both approaches. Therefore, many ups and downs, successes and failures have characterized their past history as English students.

#### 3.2 Instruments for Data Collection

In order to attain the objectives of this study, the instruments used in this research are diaries, questionnaires, recordings (personal opinions, short

oral presentations) and interviews. Diaries are very useful in this type of research because it is way to know students' insights and feelings, without asking questions to elicit information about what they feel in class.

Questionnaires were used due to the size of the group (small group). These kinds of instruments are practical to get specific information. Besides, responses to closed questions are easier to collect and analyze, researchers often obtain more useful information from open questions. (Nunan: 1999)

Also, recordings are essential elements to analyze students' interaction and their performance. Van Lier (1988) recommends their use because they are useful diagnostic

aids for focusing on specific problems and they are also means to monitor students' performance and progress.

## 4 Results

This chapter focuses on the results generated by the instruments applied in the research. The results will be shown by each instrument; tabulated diaries , questionnaires in graphics (A and B ) , and finally tabulated interviews and recordings too.

### 4.1 Diaries Result

This table summarises the results obtained from the analysis of the diaries by using selected categories. These are the titles in the boxes.

D means diary

Social Pressure	(Gram/Voc)weakness recognised	Negative Feelings
<p>D1/jun8/L.8 "...mucha presión por parte de mis padres."</p> <p>D3/jun8/L.7-8 "...la verdad no me gusta la presión..."</p> <p>D3/jun18/L.2-4"... me sentía con mucha presión...me tendré que cambiar de universidad."</p> <p>D3/7jun19/L.11-13 "...como voy a llegar a donde mi mamá...no quiero ni pensar en todo lo que diría."</p>	<p>D1/jun7/L.7 "...me falta un poco mas de soltura."</p> <p>D1/jun11/L.3 "...teníamos que participar en un tema libre...se me olvidaban muchas palabras.."</p> <p>D3/Int/L.7-8 "...me cuesta trabajo enlazar una palabra con la otra." D3/jun18/L.6..." no sé armar la oración."</p> <p>D3/jun23/L.5 "...no sabía como unirlos..."</p> <p>D4/jun8/L.2"... mi voc. Es muy pobre."</p> <p>D4/jun22/L.3-4 "...entendía la pregunta pero no sabía como expresar."</p> <p>D4/jun27/L.3-4 "...me falta mejorar mi vocabulario."</p> <p>D4/jun29/L.3-4"...se que tengo que mejorar mi pronunciación."</p> <p>D2/jun11/L.1-2 "...no sabía como expresar mis ideas... me falta manejo de vocabulario."</p> <p>D2/jun13/L.1-2 "...no se como expresar mis ideas peor pienso que voy a lograr superar ese obstáculo."</p>	<p>Flee feeling D1/jun19/L.5 "... ganas de irme..."</p> <p>D1/jun22/l.18 "...ganas de irme..."</p> <p>D1/jun19/l.10 "...no tenía ánimo de seguir en la clase.."</p> <p>D3/jun13/L.6-7"...quiero cerrar los ojos y cuando despierte..."</p> <p>D3/jun19/L.14 "... a veces quisiera dejar todo..."</p> <p>D3/jun 24/L.5 "...la verdad no se que voy a hacer...quisiera salir corriendo."</p> <p>D4/jun26/L.1 "hoy quiero que se acabe el vacacional. Fear of making mistakes D1/jun7/L.8-9 "...miedo a equivocarme...no participo. D1/jun20/L.12 "...miedo a equivocarme.."</p> <p>D3/jun7/L.5 "... me siento metiendo las patas..."</p> <p>D4/jun14/L.1-2 "...no tengo miedo a equivocarme..."(no fear).</p> <p>Anxiety-anger</p> <p>D1/jun8/L.10-11 "...mucha rabia y me desespero..."</p> <p>D1/jun19/L.8 "... me dio rabia.."</p> <p>D3/jun13/L.6 "...tengo rabia.."</p> <p>"Being little" feeling</p> <p>D1/jun22/L.13 "... era una estúpida.."</p> <p>D3/Jun23/L.9 "...me sentí tan mal que tengo la moral por debajo.."</p> <p>D3/jun24/L.3 "...hoy me siento la mujer mas bruta del mundo.."</p> <p>D2/jun11/L.4 "...me sentí impotente."</p> <p>D2/jun13/L.4 "...y llego a creer que no se nada.."</p>



Relationship with –Classmates	Relationship-Teacher	Perception towards Oral Act/Tests.
<p>D2/jun25/L.4-5 "... al ver que algunos estudiantes podían captar con mayor facilidad..."</p> <p>D2/jun27/L.1-2 "...cuando Bety habla me siento mal.. no le entiendo".</p> <p>D4/jun7/L.2-3 "...la mayoría de mis compañeros estaban en igual condición que yo."</p> <p>D1/jun7/L.8</p> <p>D2/jun11/L.7 "...nunca he sentido que los demás se burlean de la forma en que me expreso"</p> <p>D4/jun15/L.1-2 "...alguien que no me agrada."</p> <p>D4/jun21/L.1 "...me tocó hacer grupo ,alguien que no me agrada, otra vez"</p> <p>D3/Int/L.10"...creo que gracias al apoyo de ellas.."</p> <p>D3/jun12/L.5-6 "...tengo muy buenas amigas". D3/jun20/L5-7.."Indira y Laura...y eso me da ánimo.."</p> <p>D1/jun7/L.10 "hay muchos compañeros qu ese burlean cuando uno participa y se equivoca y eso no debe ser así"</p> <p>D1/jun8/L.5-6 Los compañeros que tenia alrededor hablaban mucho y me distraían.."</p> <p>D1/jun11/L.3-4 ..."me daba miedo hacer el ridiculo frente a mis compañeros.."</p> <p>D1/jun11/L.10 "...mi amiga Bety me ayudó mucho fui entendiendo un poco".</p>	<p>D4/jun29/L.6-7 "...tener a la profesora adecuada ya que nos enseñó mucho." D3/Int/L.11-15"...cuando me gradúe...gracias por tenerme paciencia"</p> <p>D3/jun7/L.2 "...ya tengo confianza con ella." D3/jun 23/L.10 "...gracias a Heidy me sentí un poco mejor después".</p> <p>D1/jun7/L.11-12 "...las dinámicas de la profesora nos ayudan mucho a nosotros ya que nos permite soltar mas la lengua".</p> <p>D1/jun8/L.3 "no entendia,..la profesora hablaba muy rápido".</p> <p>D1/jun 20/L.15 "...miedo a equivocarme..pero con la ayuda y confianza de la profesora Heidy creo que ya lo estoy logrando".</p>	<p>D2/jun25/L.2-4 "...en el listening tuve dificultad.. sonidos muy confusos"</p> <p>D2/jun25/L.5-6 "...el ejercicio del teléfono me costó dificultad entender la frase.."</p> <p>D2/jun28/L.1 "...Al realizar el role -play me sentí nerviosa y me incomodó conmigo misma.." D4/jun8/L.1-2 "...las conversaciones eran muy rápidas.."</p> <p>D4/jun19/L:1-2 "...me pareció chevere trabajar en grupo.."</p> <p>D4/jun27/L.1 "...muy ansiosa por el examen oral."</p> <p>D4/jun27/L.2-3"... en este día nos trajeron una canadiense...hice un mejor esfuerzo.</p> <p>D3/Int/L.4"...me siento mejor realizando exposiciones con previa preparación.." D3/jun 11/L.1.."hoy en la exposición me sentí muy bien.." D3/jun20/L.4.."las actividades fueron buenas y me sentí cómodas." D3/jun 24/L.7-8"...en los ejercicios de la mesa redonda..." D3/jun25/L.2-3"...aunque en los ejercicios que hicimos en el laboratorio...tengo que estudiar mas eso".</p> <p>D1/jun7/L.5- "...ejercicios orales ..causan susto.." D1/jun7/L.8-9"...por miedo...no participo.." D1/jun7/L.11-13 "...ese día fue chevere..."</p> <p>D1/jun11/L.1 "la clase estuvo agradable.."</p> <p>D1/jun11/L.9.."empezamos a ver una película..me sentía azul.."</p> <p>D1/jun11/L.12.."la clase estuvo muy interesante.."</p> <p>D1/jun21/L.1-2.."ese día fue un poco chevere..."</p> <p>D1/jun 21/L.6-7 Esa clase de didáctica nos ayudan mucho</p> <p>D1/jun22/L.3-4 "Estaba muy nerviosa, a mi en la parte oral no me va muy bien, me enredo, me bloqueo antes de que me pregunten."</p>



<p>D2/jun25/L.4-5 "... al ver que algunos estudiantes podían captar con mayor facilidad..."</p> <p>D2/jun27/L.1-2 "...cuando Bety habla me siento mal.. no le entiendo".</p> <p>D4/jun7/L.2-3 "...la mayoría de mis compañeros estaban en igual condición que yo."</p> <p>D1/jun7/L.8</p> <p>D2/jun11/L.7 "...nunca he sentido que los demás se burlen de la forma en que me expreso"</p> <p>D4/jun15/L.1-2 "...alguien que no me agrada."</p> <p>D4/jun21/L.1 "...me tocó hacer grupo ,alguien que no me agrada, otra vez."</p> <p>D3/Int/L.10"...creo que gracias al apoyo de ellas..."</p> <p>D3/jun12/L.5-6 "...tengo muy buenas amigas". D3/jun20/L5-7.."Indira y Laura...y eso me da ánimo."</p> <p>D1/jun7/L.10 " hay muchos compañeros qu ese burlan cuando uno participa y se equivoca y eso no debe ser asi"</p> <p>D1/jun8/L.5-6 Los compañeros que tenia alrededor hablaban mucho y me distraían."</p> <p>D1/jun11/L.3-4 ..."me daba miedo hacer el ridiculo frente a mis compañeros."</p> <p>D1/jun11/L.10 "...mi amiga Bety me ayudó mucho fui entendiendo un poco".</p>	<p>D4/jun29/L.6-7 "...tener a la profesora adecuada ya que nos enseñó mucho." D3/Int/L.11-15"...cuando me gradúe...gracias por tenerme paciencia." D3/jun7/L.2 "...ya tengo confianza con ella." D3/jun 23/L.10 "...gracias a Heydi me sentí un poco mejor después".</p> <p>D1/jun7/L.11-12 "...las dinámicas de la profesora nos ayudan mucho a nosotros ya que nos permite soltar mas la lengua".</p> <p>D1/jun8/L.3 "no entendia,..la profesora hablaba muy rápido".</p> <p>D1/jun 20/L.15 "...miedo a equivocarme..pero con la ayuda y confianza de la profesora Heydi creo que ya lo estoy logrando".</p>	<p>D2/jun25/L.2-4 "...en el listening tuve dificultad.. sonidos muy confusos"</p> <p>D2/jun25/L.5-6 "...el ejercicio del teléfono me costó dificultad entender la frase.."</p> <p>D2/jun28/L.1 "...Al realizar el role -play me sentí nerviosa y me incomodó conmigo misma." D4/jun8/L.1-2 "...las conversaciones eran muy rápidas.."</p> <p>D4/jun19/L:1-2 "...me pareció chevere trabajar en grupo."</p> <p>D4/jun27/L.1"...muy ansiosa por el examen oral."</p> <p>D4/jun27/L.2-3"... en este día nos trajeron una canadiense...hice un mejor esfuerzo.</p> <p>D3/Int/L.4"...me siento mejor realizando exposiciones con previa preparación." D3/jun 11/L.1.."hoy en la exposición me sentí muy bien." D3/jun20/L.4.."las actividades fueron buenas y me sentí cómodas" D3/jun 24/L.7-8"...en los ejercicios de la mesa redonda..." D3/jun25/L.2-3"...aunque en los ejercicios que hicimos en el laboratorio...tengo que estudiar mas eso".</p> <p>D1/jun7/L.5-7"...ejercicios orales ..causan susto." D1/jun7/L.8-9"...por miedo...no participo." D1/jun7/L.11-13 "...ese día fue chevere..."</p> <p>D1/jun11/L.1 "la clase estuvo agradable.."</p> <p>D1/jun11/L.9.."empezamos a ver una película..me sentía azul."</p> <p>D1/jun11/L.12.."la clase estuvo muy interesante..."</p> <p>D1/jun21/L.1-2.."ese día fue un poco chevere..."</p> <p>D1/jun 21/L.6-7 Esa clase de didáctica nos ayudan mucho</p> <p>D1/jun22/L.3-4 "Estaba muy nerviosa, a mi en la parte oral no me va muy bien, me enredo, me bloqueo antes de que me pregunten."</p>
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## 4.2 Questionnaires Results

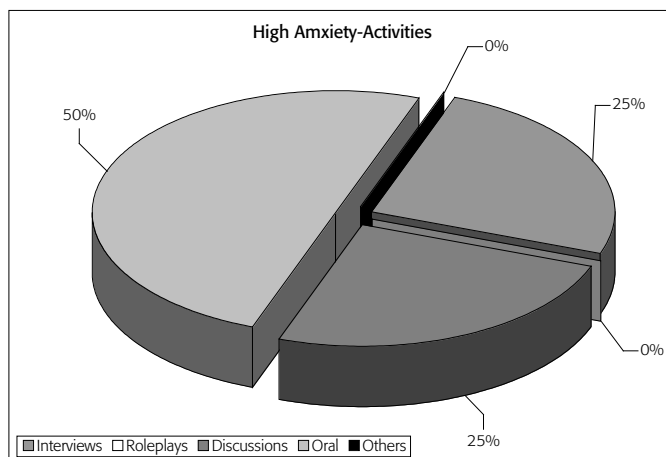
### 4.2.1 Questionnaire A

4.2.1.1. A range of responses refers to the way students recognize anxiety in English class:

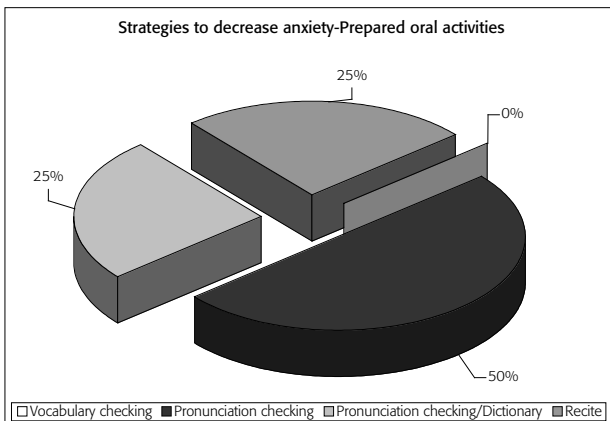
- Cuando tengo que hablar frente al profesor y a mis compañeros de clase. En los exámenes orales y las exposiciones.
- Cuando estoy insegura en las discusiones de la clase con respecto a lo que voy a decir.
- Cuando me desespero, quiero realizar todo de primera.
- Las uñas no me crecen, me las como, pendiente del reloj, no veo la hora en que se acabe la clase.
- Cuando veo que los otros están hablando bastante fluido y la fluidez mía no es la mía. Se me olvidan las palabras.

- Me da hambre, me entra caminadera en los pasillos cuando son evaluaciones orales.
- Cuando la clase es de hablar, se que me va a tocar hablar y tengo ganas de salir corriendo.
- Cuando no he preparado nada . pero cuando estoy con mis compañeros no me da pena.
- Me siento incómoda al momento de responder, tengo miedo a pronunciar mal, a equivocarme.
- Me da palpitaciones, sudo mucho y movimiento incontrolables en las piernas.
- Incomodidad, cuando había gente que sabía le preguntaba al de al lado y me confirmaba cuando terminaba la clase.

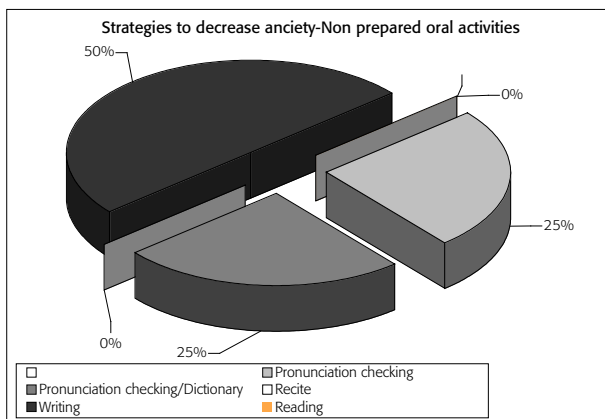
### 4.2.1.2. Oral activities where students show high levels of anxiety.



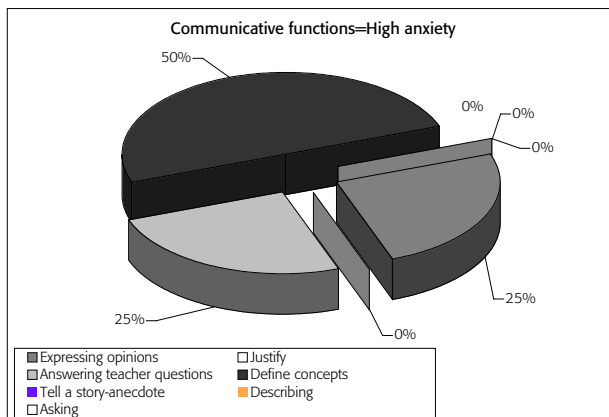
### 4.2.1.3. Strategies to decrease anxiety in prepared oral activities



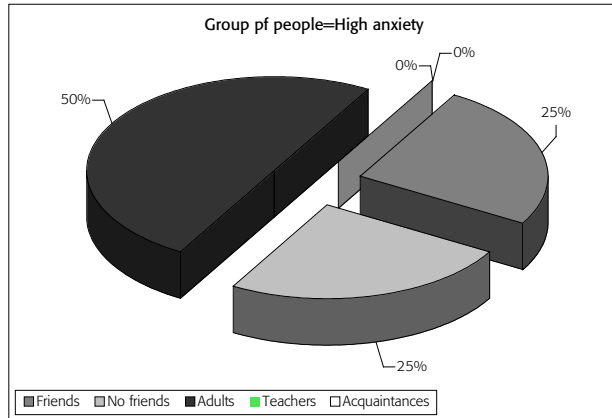
### 4.2.1.4. Strategies to decrease anxiety in non-prepared oral activities



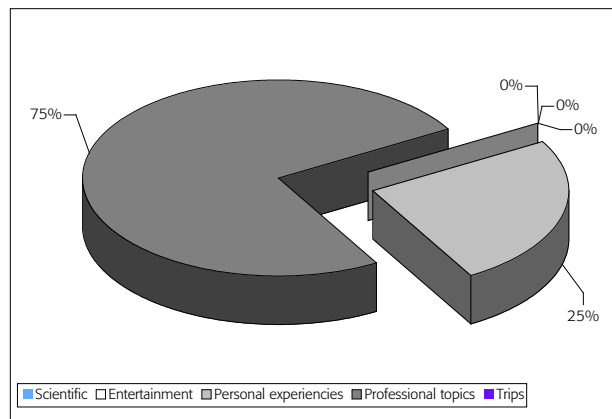
### 4.2.1.5. Communicative functions which produce high anxiety



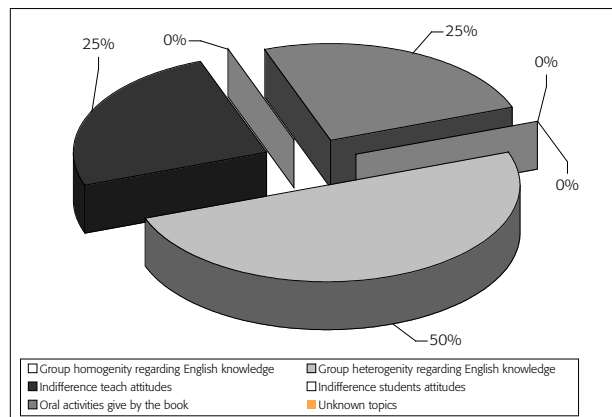
#### 4.2.1.6. High anxiety among a group of people



#### 4.2.1.7. Topics preferred by students



#### 4.2.1.8. Factors which produce anxiety



## 4.2.2 Questionnaire B

### 4.2.2.1 Students Confidence

towards the use of English in Class.  
Related Questions 1, 2.

- In question 1 "Me siento poco seguro de mi cuando hablo en inglés en clase", 66.7% of the students chose sometimes, and the 33.3%, always.
- In question 2 "Me siento seguro cuando hablo en inglés en clase", 80% expressed never, and the 20% , sometimes.

4.2.2.2 Feeling of Nervousness during Students Oral Performance.  
Related Questions 3, 7.

- In question 3 "Me siento nervioso y confundido cuando estoy hablando en inglés en clase", 67% picked always and 33% sometimes.
- In question 7 "No me sentiría nervioso hablando inglés con hablantes nativos", a 33.3% expressed always, 33.3% sometimes and the 33.3% left none of them.

4.2.2.3. Feeling of Embarrassment and Fear towards Speaking skill. Related questions 4,5 and 6.

- In question 4 "Siento temor cuando tengo que hablar en inglés sin preparación en clase de inglés", 100%of the

population responded always.

- In question 5 "Siento pena la responder de forma voluntaria en clase", 87% responded always, while 13% chose sometimes.
- In question 6 "Tengo miedo que mis compañeros se rían de mi cuando hablo en Inglés", 60% of the students answered always, a 27% chose sometimes and 13% never.

4.2.2.4. Feeling of worry, depression and fear related to make mistakes. Related Questions 8,13 and 14

- In question 8 "No me preocupa cometer errores en clase ", the whole group responded sometimes.
- In question 13 "Me deprimo cuando no entiendo lo que el profesor me está corrigiendo en inglés", 60% responded always and 40% left sometimes.
- In question 14 "Tengo miedo que mi profesor me corrija cada error que cometo", 53.3% of the students expressed always, a 26.6% picked sometimes as an answer and 20 % remaining chose none of them.

4.2.2.5. Feeling of Fear and Nervousness when the teacher speaks.  
Related Questions 11, 12.

- In question 11 "Experimento

miedo cuando no entiendo lo que el profesor está hablando”, the whole group responded always.

- In question 12 “Me pongo nervioso cuando no entiendo ninguna palabra expresada por el profesor”, 66.7% responded always and 33.3% responded sometimes.

4.2.2.6. General English Classroom Performance Anxiety. Related Questions 9 and 10.

- In question 9 “El ritmo de las clases de inglés es rápido y me preocupa quedarme atrás”, 73% responded always and 27% left sometimes.
- In question 10 “Me siento

abrumado por la cantidad de reglas que debo aprender”, 60% responded always and the 40% left sometimes.

4.3 Interviews Results

Four interviews were done: one addressed the director of the psychology program, the second to three students from the group about feelings during prepared and non-prepared oral activities. Number three to an English teacher who knows learning difficulties of the group, and finally 6 students about their English previous background.

4.3.1. Result of the interview with three students about “Feelings towards prepared and non-prepared oral activities”.

Non -Prepared oral Activity: Como se sintieron en la discusión sobre el incidente de Soledad ¿		
Erika Herrera	Liliana de la Hoz	Fabianis Oñate
Fue muy angustiante, . Me costó mucho trabajo, por eso no hablé nada son dos o tres cositas que dije. Sentía miedo de hablar,pero yo sabía como tenía que decirlo porque yo tengo la mala costumbre de preguntarle al de al lado si esta bien o si esta mal para decirlo.	Estaba full asustaba, porque me tocaba improvisar, me dio mucho miedo.	Tenia un poco de miedo quería decir frases que no sabía como pronunciarlas, porque la pronunciación sigue siendo muy pobre, se que esa es mi debilidad. Después cuando terminé me sentí un poco relajada.
Prepared oral Activity: Students prepared a free topic to talk about it.		
Erika Herrera	Liliana de la Hoz	Fabianis Oñate
Me sentí super bien , me la había estudiado con mi novio y además me gusta salir siempre de primera para salir de eso antes que se me olvide.	Con menos miedo porque me la había estudiado, pero en el momento de hablar se me olvidó todo,  se que tengo que ponerme las pilas.	Me sentí mas segura, porque me la había estudiado con anterioridad con Konrad y fue sobre un tema de actualidad, la violencia.

#### 4.3.2. Result of the Interview with Director of the Psychology Program.

The Director of the psychology program expressed that students do not use English oral competence but reading strategies instead, because the information related to psychology is in English.

However, students from eight semester experience oral English through a subject named "Psychology and Culture". This subject is taught in English.

She also stated that, currently teachers from the psychology program are given English training courses.

As refers to English levels related to psychology semesters, She explains that students must be in the same English level they are in their career. Besides, she shows satisfaction with the Language Institute with the work done with the psychology students so far.

Finally, she remarks that students perceive English subject as an institutional obligatory requirement instead of recognizing it as an essential tool for their professional successful.

#### 4.3.3. Result of the interview with an English teacher

An English teacher of the Language Institute, who has been working there for several years teaching English three and four to the group describes the psychology group as homogenous

in terms of difficulties towards English learning, a group support each other. A group who had decided to continue English studies together and they did not accept students from different careers.

She expressed that most of students had repeated previous levels many times and they felt ignored by teachers and classmates. Also, they showed with a defensive attitude towards the class, especially when she spoke in English. They saw themselves as individuals unable to learn English language.

Besides, she said that at the beginning of the course (level 4) they did not want to participate in any oral task, they had linguistic weaknesses from previous levels. For that reason, she tried to fill the gap they have, and the end of the course they showed remarkable progress.

#### 4.3.4. Results of the interviews with seven students about their English Background and negative feelings towards English language.

- Liliana de la Hoz

Liliana's background with respect to English levels repetition is the following:



English Levels	Former Approach	New Approach	# Repetition
1	x		2
2	x		2
3		x	2
4		x	0
5		x	2
6		x	2
7		x	0
8		x	0

- Erika Herrera

English Levels	Former Approach	New Approach	# Repetition
1	x		3
2	x		2
3	x	x	2
4		x	0
5		x	0
6		x	0
7		x	0
8		x	0

- Fadia Cure

English Levels	Former Approach	New Approach	# Repetition
1	x		2
2	x		0
3	x	x	2
4		x	2
5		x	2
6		x	0
7		x	0
8		x	0

- Luz Lindey Moreno

English Levels	Former Approach	New Approach	# Repetition
1	x		2
2	x		0
3	x		2
4		x	2
5		x	2
6		x	0
7		x	0
8		x	0

- Tania Cueto

English Levels	Former Approach	New Approach	# Repetition
1	x		2
2	x		0
3	x		2
4		x	0
5		x	0
6		x	0
7		x	0
8		x	0

- Alejandra Martinez

English Levels	Former Approach	New Approach	# Repetition
1	x		2
2	x		2
3	x		3
4		x	2
5		x	0
6		x	0
7		x	0
8		x	0

- Oscar Beltran

English Levels	Former Approach	New Approach	# Repetition
1	x		2
2	x		2
3	x		2
4		x	1
5		x	0
6		x	0
7		x	0
8		x	0

Negative Feelings: Most of the students disliked English Language since they studied at school, then in the university their feelings towards English did not change. They believe that they are not good at languages.

They express the teacher relationship influence in the learning

process. Besides, they perceive English as an institutional compulsory subject.

#### 4.4 Result of Recordings of Prepared and Non prepared oral activities

## 4.4.1 Non –prepared oral activities.

Categorization-Non prepared activity		Text
	1.	H. Who wants to begin ?...ok one by one..ok , Erika
	2.	you begin.
Vocabulay weakness,Forgetness of words	3.	Erika. They have both, como fue que te dije ? both the problem,

because,eeeeeeee the people is , como se dice

	5.	H.believe
Voc. Weakness,Use of L1	6.	E. no miedo
	7.	H.fear
	8.	Konrad. I , I think that these people have many problems because
Pronunciacion problem	9.	our our psychological , because, she not <u>afraid</u> and mmmm
Delay production, Grammar problem	10	social bacause she lost all your....(12 seg)
	11	H. their
Use of L1, Delay production, Grammar problem	12	K. oh si, they lost all your , all eh, all their( 5 seg)
	13	H.belongings.
	14	K. belongings, ummmmm
	15	H. Fabianis, yes ?
Gram /Voc Weakness	16	Fabianis. The problem social eh eh , they have lost , they have lost
	17	(11 seg)ummmmmmm their life( 14 seg)
Use of L1	18	cosas materiales y se perdieron vidas
	19	H. lives
	20	H. yes, Konrad
Grammar Problem	21	K. I think that she, they have other problems, the problems
	22	the moral problems, because, she...
	23	H. they
	24	K. because they think that don't like of the problems
	25	H. poor people ?
	26	K. poor people
	27	H. uhmmm Alejandra?
Pronunciacion problem	28	Alejandra. I thnk that problem is social and <u>psychological</u>
Voc Weakness,Use of L1	29	, perder es lost ?
	30	H. ummmm.

Gram/Voc weakness, Use of L1	1. Teacher. What have you done for those people ?
	2. Erika. I donate, donar, donate? ( se señala la ropa)
	3. T. clothes? To Alfredo ?
	4. E. (asienta su cabeza)
	5. E and shoes
Gram weakness	6. T. Fabianis?
Pronunciation problem.	7. F. no , I don't have opportunity.
	8. K. Uhm mmm. Eh I don't have at this moment I
	9. don't know nothing but I <u>think clothes</u> ...
	10. Alejandra. Nothing, no , no, nada
	11. T. why not?
	12. A. because no, it's interesting by the people and.
Use of L1	13. T. Fadia?
	14. Fadia. I don't know Alfredo help
	15. T. you don't know Alfredo ?
	16. Everybody. Jajajajja
	17. F.pensé que estaban hablando de Alfredo.

#### 4.4.2 Result of the Prepared Oral Activity.

Categorization		Text
Prepared Activity Grammar problems	1.	Erika. Cartagena is ready to receive 8 weeks is on distinct personality,
	2.	The original <u>wall</u> colonial city is now the <u>district</u> of el centro, eh
Vocabulay /Grammar weakness	3.	nearby is the modern the high, high district of bocagrande.

There are other districts, districts, and regional is the city but there

	5.	are many residential and industrial in Bocagrande moderns high
Voc. Weakness	6.	apartments <u>buildings</u> and hotels line the beach and casinos and
V/G weakness	7	discos. Most of these are are in the old city. El centro is <u>located</u>
G rammar Weakness	8.	then window <u>narrow</u> street the charming. The most popular places are: Plaza de san Pedro and Santo Domingo and restaurants and
Voc /Grammar	9.	all tabern dancing. One place to start is from Monasterio La Popa eh
V/G	10	eh (silence) with tour over the city. Another city ot visit, ehe ehe
	11	in Rosario island , <u>island</u> and Castillo San Felipe finally finally
	12	you can go Volcan del Totumo ehh, and Chiva.
	13	Alejandra. I wanna <u>share my experience</u> of my travel to San Andrés

Grammar/Pron problem	14	the last year I went of the ... <u>island</u> . It's so pretty place and pleasant
Grammar/Pron	15	the people is so friendly and they are very nice, they <u>pre- pare</u> for her
Gram /Voc Weakness	16	in anything and they <u>invite</u> you to enjoy in the <u>island</u> . I <u>visit</u> <u>tourist</u>
	17	place I like cueva de Morgan, Jhonny key, acuario and hoyo soplador
Grammar .	18	eh,,,, I drink eh,, different cocktails and <u>dinner</u> are so delicious eh,
Vocab/Grammar	19	the life night is great <u>you can</u> go to the disco and meet so many
	20	people from other cities to Colombia and foreigners, eh the music
	21	is <u>favorite</u> in the <u>island</u> is Reggae this music is eh like the <u>spirit</u>
	22	the vacations passed so fast but the days was <u>comfortable</u> and we
	23	<u>delight</u> eh comeback.
	24	Fabianys .I am talk about of the violence in Colombia since 15 years
Pronunciation problem/Delay prod.	25	ago the violence <u>increase</u> , <u>increase</u> in the country increase in the
Grammar Problem.	26	country, this is the <u>cause</u> person selfish uhmmm and not tolerance
Grammar problem	27	they have grows the culture for the society colombiana for example,
	28	the guerrilla, paramilitares and common violence eh ehe, the guerrilla
Voc Weakness/Pron.	29	is in growth that the <u>defense</u> for <u>authority</u> and the paramilitares
Repetition/delay product	30	don't agree, don't agree don't agree with the guerrilla and common
	31	violence eh, also is the main the society colombiana. The solutions
Grammar problem	32	for previous with the violence in the country is finish with <u>each group</u>
Pronunciation	33	<u>the</u> end and no violence wait.

## 5 Discussion

With regard to external factors that produce anxiety in relation to activities, the journal diaries, questionnaires

and the interviews applied in the study, show that all kind of oral activities produce a high degree of anxiety in students, especially non prepared oral tasks . Recordings

reflect the students' communicative competence in level seventh. This fact generates lack of participation in class with a strong rejection to oral learning tasks. Among the possible causes of this reticence, it is the fact that they do not want to be mocked in class. Also, Speaking skill was not encouraged in the first levels in the prior approach. Another possible explanation for that reluctance might be related to students' prior learning experiences. Some of them were educated in schools where English subject was not the curriculum priority or opportunities to speak were limited.

It is vital to mention that students are aware of their lack of some aspects of the language, such as, vocabulary, grammar and fluency.

According to diaries and questionnaires learners also suffer from test anxiety. One of the forms to test is to perform orally in class. The performance exposure is a crucial factor in anxiety. In terms of evaluation system at the Language Institute, students' oral performance is worth 30%.

Diaries comments reflect that students experiencing "State" anxiety, because their levels of anxiety increased before and during their performance. In other words, in specific situations.

The following table summarizes the oral activities developed during the vacation course related to the levels of anxiety.

Type of oral tasks	Low - Anxiety	High - Anxiety
1.Oral presentations (prepared)	+	
Topics:		
1.1 Personal Experiences	+	
1.2 Related to sts career	+	
2.Oral presentations (non prep.)		+
3.Role-plays	+	+
4.Giving opinions		+
5 Game	-	+
6.Oral examinations		+
6.Discussions		+

This information was supplied by the diaries, questionnaires and with the students interviews.

When learners have time to prepare their speech in oral presentations or discussions, students showed low anxiety but with a bit difference from high anxiety. This information is given by two sources; interviews, diaries and it is confirmed with students performance transcriptions. Students feel a little more confident when they perform prepared oral tasks. It is essential to mention that there are not notorious differences between the students' production of the prepared and non-prepared activities.

Concerning external factors that generate anxiety in relation to teacher-students relationship, both questionnaires and the interviews applied to the English teacher and the students revealed the teachers influence on students, either negatively or positively. Students show a high anxiety when they interact with

teachers. They feel fear and nervousness when they do not understand teachers' instructions, questions or corrections. Also, they got depressed with the teachers attitude to errors and the personal characteristics of the instructor. However, patience, sense of humor, humbleness, positive feedback and constant encouragement are important characteristics in teachers. These features seem fundamental to students in order to improve their learning process.

In this research , diaries supplied that the learners kept a good relationship with the teacher who was with them in sixth and seventh level. Besides, the entries diaries reveal the good treatment from the English teacher in level three. This fact instead of increasing students anxiety, it decreases it. The more students rely on teachers, the faster anxiety decreases. Establishing a good relationship with students is really important in creating a low anxiety atmosphere in the classroom.

As regards, the external factors which produce anxiety in terms of peer-to-peer relationship , both questionnaires and the diaries provided relevant information.

Learners compare their language proficiency with others, causing a degree of anxiety. This factor is reflected through both questionnaires, teacher interview and from the diaries sources. Some learners develop anxiety as a result of their competitive natures and their perception whether

they are progressing or not (Scove, 1978, cited by Brown 1995).

Students show a high anxiety in mixed ability class. They feel insignificant individuals with a low self-concept. They worry being "the worst". They panic when they study in heterogeneous group.

It is relevant to mention that this group decided to continue studying English as an isolated group. In other words, a group whose participants were psychology students with English learning difficulties.

Language learning anxiety in this psychology group seem to be Debilitating. Students have negative feelings towards the language . One of the possible causes could be the abrupt change. That approach had not prepared learners to perform orally. It must be said however that this does not mean students were not happy with it. Then students' experience in the new approach was frustrating.



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