

ANXIETY OF SPEAKING ENGLISH IN CLASS AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN A MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The study investigates the reasons international students' suffer anxiety and explore how they cope with their fear and anxiety when speaking English in class. The study also examines teachers' perspectives and reactions towards learners' anxiety and investigates the students' perspectives of teachers' reaction to their feelings of anxiety. Horwitz's et.al (1986) categorization of variables that lead to foreign and second language anxiety is used as the theoretical framework. Data collection involves observations and interviews of 8 international postgraduate students of a Malaysian university and data was analyzed through discourse analysis. Findings indicate that Nigerians generally are not anxious of speaking. Differently, Iranians and Algerians suffer more from anxiety as a result of fearing negative evaluation and communication apprehension. The conclusions point out that the lecturers' strategies and students' reactions to their strategies are not related to cultural backgrounds but to affective filters and learning skills common to all human beings.

Keywords: anxiety, speaking English, coping strategies, international students

1. INTRODUCTION

English is the major language of science and the professions and the official language of many international and professional organizations. Almost every second, a prospective international student who wants to engage himself in further studies has to learn and attain a certain level of English proficiency as English is the medium of instruction and assessment in class in almost every university worldwide. However, for many learners there is a genuine fear of performing in the second language, a phenomenon known as (foreign or second) language anxiety which can hinder performance and achievement. Due to the huge sums of money and energy invested on studying and researching

abroad, classroom anxiety as an obvious factor that can hinder students' performance and achievement and decrease their willingness to participate in learning activities, is an issue deserving more investigation.

Although a growing body of research on major causes of anxiety in class has been conducted from the mid-1970s, there is a lack of investigation into cultural backgrounds as a possible factor that can contribute to anxiety when speaking in class and teachers' perspectives of students' anxiety is also another factor that few investigations have undertaken. The current study aims to seek the reasons for international students' anxiety and explore how they cope with their fear and anxiety of speaking English in class. Furthermore, this study examines teachers' perspectives and reactions towards learners' anxiety and investigates the students' perspectives of teachers' reactions to their feelings of anxiety.

The study is set out to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What factors make EFL/ESL international students in Malaysia anxious while speaking English in class?
- 2) How do international students cope with their anxiety of speaking English in class?
- 3) What are the lecturers' perspectives and reactions towards students' anxiety when speaking English in class?
- 4) What is the students' perspective of the lecturers' reaction to their anxiety of speaking English in class?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Early research on second language acquisition (SLA) emphasized cognitive variables like intelligence, language aptitude, learning styles, and so forth. After the research by Gardner and Lambert (1972), affective and emotional variables became important in the area of SLA (Chakrabati et al. 2012). Affective variables are "emotionally relevant characteristics of the individual that influence how he/she will respond to any situation" (Gardener and MacIntyre 1992). Most notably, after Krashen (1985) discussed affective filter hypothesis in the theory of SLA, there had been a lot of research done in this area. The affective filter hypothesis discusses variables that can work out as a filter that obstruct language acquisition. The affective variables which Krashen discusses are motivation, confidence and anxiety. Krashen insists that individuals learn second language only if they get comprehensible input and if their affective filters are low enough to let the input get in (Richards and Rodgers 2001). Affective factors are believed to play an important part in acquiring a second language. Comprehensible input might not be used by L2 learners if a "mental block" is in place, which inhibits them from getting the language. The affective filter works like a barrier to language acquisition when the learner is not motivated, not having confidence or thinking about failure, and the filter is low when the learner is not anxious or is trying to get involved in the language (Du 2009).

Horwitz et al. (1986) discussed foreign language anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p.31). According to Horwitz et al. (1986), no other area of study

makes self-concept and self-expression so close to learning. This topic makes anxiety in the area of foreign language learning distinctive from other academic areas. It might be possible that students suffering from general anxiety are experiencing Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), and it is not uncommon to find those who are good in general topics also having difficulties in learning a foreign language.

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) admitted that individuals who feel they are competent in their mother tongue can feel degraded when they are required to speak in their second language. In addition, individuals who learn a foreign language usually believe their self-perception will be under attack in their foreign language learning setting.

Horwitz et.al (1986) reached a conclusion that FLA can be related to three variables: a) communication comprehension b) fear of negative evaluation and c) test anxiety. Students who suffer from communication comprehension usually do not feel easy communicating in the second or foreign language among other people, especially if they are needed to use their listening and speaking abilities. People who experience a high level of communication apprehension “withdraw from and seek to avoid communication when possible”. Introverted and reserved people tend to be quieter and less willing to communicate. Students who suffer from fear of negative evaluation do not accept their language errors as a usual part of the learning but consider them a threat to their face. So they decide to remain silent and do not get involved in the class activities. Students who suffer from test anxiety consider foreign language learning, especially oral production, a testing situation rather than a chance to improve their linguistic and communication abilities.

Concerning self-concept and identity, Guiora (1983) argued that language learning can be extremely painful for some students because it threatens their face, sense of self and worldview. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategy conceptualize face which refers to a person's desire to be unimpeded (negative face) and to be approved of in certain respects (positive face). Some acts are intrinsically face-threatening. When an addresser commits a face-threatening act, he/she estimates the risk of face loss and the degree of efficiency of communication falls. A concept of face exists, doubtless, in every society and plays a part in inhibiting communication for large numbers of people whose control of a foreign language is imperfect. In many collectivist cultures, face is extraordinarily important as a constraint on behavior explicitly sanctioned by culture. For example, Chinese face emphasizes not the accommodation of individual “wants”, or “desires” but the harmony of individual conduct with the views and judgment of the community. As a public image, Chinese face depends upon, and is indeed determined by, the participation of others; it belongs to the individual or to the self only to the extent that the individual acts in full compliance with that face (Mao 1994).

Liu and Jackson (2008)'s study of the unwillingness to communicate and anxiety of Chinese learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in English language classrooms revealed that (a) most of the students were willing to participate in interpersonal conversations, but many of them did not like to risk using/speaking English in class; (b) more than one third of the students felt anxious in their English language classrooms, and they feared being negatively evaluated and were apprehensive

about public speaking and tests; (c) their unwillingness to communicate and their foreign language anxiety correlated significantly with each other and with their self-rated English proficiency and access to English; and (d) many of the variables of interest were good predictors of the students' unwillingness to communicate and of their foreign language anxiety, which were also powerful predictors for each other.

Individuals who are socially anxious are particularly concerned with humiliating or embarrassing themselves when under the scrutiny of others. Indeed, language anxiety may be part of a culture-based syndrome (Jones 2001). This is not to say that language anxiety is a mental illness; it is one set of culturally distinguished features that make up a 'syndrome'. As with many medical, psychological and social conditions, it has a continuum that extends from relatively mild and common to acute and rarer forms. In other words, an English language learner's ability to make effective situational appraisals can be hindered not only by linguistic differences but also by cultural differences. To conclude, general issues of self-efficacy and expectancy-value theory can be influenced by a fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, communication apprehension, and identity factors. However, these influences on anxiety do not occur in a vacuum. English language anxiety can be described as a social anxiety, dependent upon interactions with others. Therefore, the implications of English language anxiety from a socio-constructivist perspective must be considered (Pappamihiel 2002).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Setting and Participants

The target class was a PhD class from the Faculty of Economy of a local Malaysian university that was held once a week every Thursday from 6pm to 9pm in semester 1 2012/2013. The class was seated traditionally due to the style of students' sitting in two columns and teacher standing on a one step upper platform. There were both traditional and modern facilities including two large whiteboards, an overhead projector, a large number of comfortable desks, two air conditioners and one digital clock above the whiteboards. The course was Advanced Micro-Economics Theory and the class had 20 students.

The research is a case study of one single class. The researchers select a case study design because they managed to obtain permission to only use and observe one class for the present research from the faculty administration. The case study design has benefits for research studies. Merriam (2009) pointed out that the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. It offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its readers' experiences. These insights can be construed as tentative hypotheses that help structure future research; hence, case study plays an important role in advancing a field's knowledge base. Because of its strengths, case study is a particular appealing design for applied fields of study such as education, social work, administration, health and so on. An applied field's processes, problems and programs can be examined to bring about understanding that can affect and perhaps even improve practice. Case study has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, evaluating programs, and informing policy.

English was a foreign or second language for the students of this study. The sample for this research

comprised 8 students, three African Nigerians who were ESL learners, three Iranians and two Algerians who were EFL learners, all of whom were chosen purposefully. All the subjects were in the age range of 30-34. All were male except for an Iranian lady. The subjects' English level was IELTS 5.5. In addition, their first language and cultural background is different from the lecturer's. The lecturer is a Malaysian-Chinese and speaks fluent English. Malaysian students were not included as respondents for this study as we wanted to consider the effect of a teacher with different cultural background from the students'.

3.2 Data collection

Data collection for the study involved observations and interviews of the respondents. There were 5 sessions of observation that took place over the semester 1, 2012-2013 (specifically on November 1st, 8th, 22nd, 29th and December 20th). The observations involved whole class sessions of three hours each. The first session is attached in Appendix 1.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted either before or after class or during class breaks. Each interview took between 10 to 15 minutes and all were audiotaped. All the interviewees filled in a consent form agreeing to participate in the study. Due to ethical reasons, pseudonyms were used for respondents such as Iranian 1, 2, 3, Nigerian 1, 2, 3, and Algerian 1, 2. The interview data is analysed through discourse analysis and Nigerian 2's data is shown in Appendix 3 as an example. The interview questions are attached in Appendix 2.

3.3 Data analysis

Data was analysed using discourse analysis as the approach. Horowitz's et al (1986) categorization of the 3 variables that lead to second and foreign language anxiety (communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety) was used as a guide for data analysis. The strategies used by students for coping with anxiety were determined using information culled from the literature mainly from Prins (1986), Bailey et al (1999) and Gregersen (2003) (see Findings below) .

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Reasons for anxiety among international students

The observations and interviews revealed that most Nigerian students did not feel anxiety when speaking in class while Iranian and Algerian students showed symptoms of anxiety. The reasons for their anxiety are as follows:

Fear of being in public and shyness

According to Horwitz et al (1986) general personality traits such as quietness, shyness, and reticence are some reasons for communication anxiety. The degree of shyness varies greatly from individual to individual. When we ask about participants' feelings while speaking English in class, Iranian 2, 3 and Algerian 1 note shyness as a reason for their anxiety. Iranian 2 says "I am typically a shy guy, I don't like to start communication much" while Algerian 1 notes that "When I present I am a shy guy I feel somehow afraid ... it is because I'm afraid of facing the public." Iranian 3 says "I had more anxiety last term because I had presentation, so I had lots of anxiety to work more and to present in public."

Fear of negative evaluation

The interviewees voiced fear of negative evaluation by teachers and peers as another in-class concern as an important source of anxiety. They feared humiliation of being corrected in public especially if accompanied by disparaging remarks by the lecturer. They were also overly concerned with other people's opinions and had apprehension about other people's evaluation. For instance Iranian 1 noted "There is wrong belief that if you don't know English you lose your prestige. Sometimes I am afraid to ask question because they laugh at me" while Iranian 3 stated that "Usually I don't speak English among Iranians. Because when I first came to Malaysia my English was not good and they used to mock me for that, so I usually don't speak English with them."

Fear of speaking inaccurately

One of the concerns as a source of anxiety shared by Iranian and Algerian students in classroom is their bad feeling of speaking the language inaccurately with mistakes and not being able to find exact words. Their dislike for speaking inaccurately is not so much because of fear of negative evaluation by teacher and classmates but more because they feel satisfied making correct sentences with different structures that need a repertoire of vocabulary and grammar. Since they feel they do not possess this they prefer not to talk as making mistakes disappoints them. The Algerians note "When you are a beginner in a language you are a bit afraid when you commit mistakes and you have problem with the pronunciation and also you don't know so much about the vocabulary" (Algerian 1). In addition when he is asked about forgetting vocabulary and grammar, he states that: "Sometimes it happens to me because I am not a native speaker and it makes me feel frustrated and disappointed". The Iranians say that "I don't like speak too much. Most of the time it is difficult to find appropriate word" (Iranian 1).

4.2 Students' strategies for coping with anxiety

Keeping silent

According to Prins (1986) and Bailey et al. (1999), one of the most common coping strategies for adolescents is avoidance. As a result of anxiety, learners often choose to remain silent and are unwilling to participate in speech communication in class. Iranian 3 in her interview says that she does not speak voluntarily. Algerian 2 states: "if my background in the discussed knowledge is not very rich I just keep quiet and listen because the more you listen the more you learn."

Avoiding eye contact

Avoiding making eye contact with the teacher is a typical non-verbal reaction of anxious students (Gregersen 2003). Sometimes when the lecturer asks questions, students do not look at him/her. Instead they look down and pretend to busy themselves with writing or checking their bags.

Being with friends

It is an obvious thing in this class that students with the same nationality were sitting next to each other (e. g, Iranian students are always sitting in the second row in the left side next to each other and the Chinese were in front). It was also observed they do not talk English among themselves during

class. This observation was supported by Iranian 2 when the interviewer asked him why he always sits in the same place, and he answers it is more comfortable and feeling free to sit next to his friends”.

Expressive reactions

We speculate that smiling to mask one’s true feelings is a characteristic of non-verbal communication and that accordingly such behavior would be an expected response to intense classroom anxiety. The most common expressive reactions cited are smiling or laughing. Nigerian 2 laughed many times during the 10-minute interview, and in class, especially when he made errors in choosing a word in class.

4.3 The lecturer’s reaction and strategies to reduce students’ anxiety

Not calling student’s name

The lecturer prefers to ask questions to the whole class instead of asking a specific student and expects students to volunteer their reply. The lecturer does not put students on the spot in calling out their names to provide a reply. When he receives no answer after waiting for 2 seconds, he continues to talk without getting disappointed or angry.

Making jokes and stories

In order to break the ice the lecturer starts the lesson with a joke and it helps to warm up the students and grab their attention. The lecturer says “laughing at my jokes is also one part of your class performance”. Furthermore, the lecturer gives a lot of examples and supports his ideas with real world situations and stories. These strategies are approved by most of the students in their interviews.

Appreciating students’ answers

The lecturer provides indirect, rather than direct correction and encourages students to speak. He commends students even if they do not give a correct answer. For example, he says “Ok”, “He is good at numbers,” “That’s a possible perspective”, or “You are moving in the right direction”. This observation is supported by Algerian 1: “Even if your answers are not correct, the teacher does not correct you instantly. He appreciates answers, never looks down the answer”. Direct, on the spot correction in speaking activities, can undermine students’ confidence, and discourages learners who are anxious about “sounding silly” to experiment with new language (Lightbown and Spada, 1999).

Showing positive gestures

Nonverbal type of immediacy behavior such as eye contact and positive gestures can reduce anxiety and impact positively on motivation to learn (Christophel 1990; Frymier 1993). The lecturer keeps pleasant and establishes eye contact with students who are trying to answer a question. The gestures of the lecturer help students to understand both his language and the lesson. Supporting evidence are stated by Nigerian 1: “It is good he uses his body language, the body language he uses and what he wants to communicate.” “He makes fun and provides an intimate atmosphere in class via his body language for example once the mobile of one student rings he starts to dance with the music of the ringtone”. (Algerian 1)

4.4 Students' perspective towards the lecturer's reaction to their anxiety

All the international students, Iranian, Algerian and Nigerian, had good feelings and perceptions of their lecturer. They said "He is very good at it. He is very calm and patient and dedicates time to the students" (Iranian 3) while Algerian 2 said "This class is somehow vibrant. The lecturer is very friendly I mean he makes the learning fun and that's my point. So I do not feel anxious and I enjoy attending the class". Nigerian 2 said "treating us to jokes that make people feel relax in class, make people laugh, so that brings our senses back to what we are going to do".

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results revealed that Nigerians in general do not display anxiety when speaking. They are not shy, not afraid of being in public, and not anxious of speaking inaccurately. This is probably because English is their second language and their main language for instruction in college. They generally have a high proficiency in English and this could be a reason that decreases their anxiety. In addition, they are of higher proficiency level than their Iranian and Algerian classmates. However they did display expressive reactions when they made errors during the class sessions.

Different from the Nigerians, Iranians and Algerians students suffer from anxiety mainly in relation to communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation. They share similar reasons for anxiety such as fear of being in public, shyness, and inaccuracy when speaking. They have common coping strategies as well such as keeping silent and avoiding eye contact. From the class observed it cannot be concluded that cultural background provides students with different reasons for anxiety when speaking and different strategies for overcoming them.

It was also found that all Iranian students' cause for anxiety and coping strategies are not exactly similar. It could be indicated that it is possible to find differences in causes of anxiety and coping strategies from one person to other within a cultural group. In short, culture did not emerge as a discriminating variable that differentiates students' reasons for anxiety when speaking and their strategies for coping with the anxiety.

The lecturer of this class has been a very successful teacher in considering students' affective filters and has tried to help students via verbal and nonverbal strategies to overcome them and feel comfortable in class. From the results it could be said that all the students with various proficiency levels and cultural backgrounds appreciate the lecturer and his strategies. Therefore, it points out that the teacher's strategies and students' reactions to his strategies are not related to their cultural background but to their affective filters and learning skills common to all human beings.

The findings of this study has significance for lecturers about the causes of anxiety faced by students and gives them possible ways for mitigating anxiety while improving students' oral proficiency. The findings also can help lecturers to identify some of their own reactions that can possibly increase or decrease students' anxiety of speaking in class. In addition, this study provides students with possible anxiety provoking factors and gives them insight for reducing their own anxiety.

Biodata

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 (First session of Observation)

Researcher: DiaoZhiping

Place: DK 17, block E, faculty of economics, Universiti Putra Malaysia

Course: Advanced Micro-Economics Theory

Date/ Time: Thursday, Nov. 1, 2012; 6:00-9:00pm

The setting

It's a traditional middle-sized classroom with a capacity of 50 students. The lecturer stands in front, no chairs for him. The students sit in chairs on both sides, facing the whiteboard. Above the whiteboard there is a digital clock. We sit at the left back of the classroom.

The lecturer

The lecturer is a tall, middle-aged man with glasses. He is Malaysian-Chinese and speaks very fluent English. He is a staff member of Uni Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). ((OC (observer's comments): I knew it when I asked for his signature on the consent form at the fourth session. He said, "I'm from UKM, not from UPM" and told me that some lecturers in UKM give lectures in UPM and vice versa.))

While talking in class, he doesn't use projector or power-point for the entire sessions. He takes

pieces of paper in hand and writes down formula on whiteboard. When the board is full, he erases it himself and writes again. After showing each formula, he explains it to the class by asking questions, by his rich body language and with examples, stories and jokes.

He prefers to ask questions to the whole class and expects volunteers to reply. Different from other lecturers, he doesn't call names for questions. (OC: I wonder why. One: he is not able to remember about 30 names. Second, he doesn't want to put much anxiety on them.) Sometimes, he does ask a particular student to answer the question. At the first session, he points to the Malaysian-Chinese female student sitting at the front. When she is thinking, he keeps pleasant and encouraging eye contact with her. Then she gives the correct answer and he says "Good." He commends students even if they haven't given a correct answer. For example, he says "Ok", "He is good at numbers," or "That's a possible perspective." When he receives no answer after waiting for 2 seconds, he continues to talk without getting disappointed or angry.

The lecturer's body language plays an important role in the lesson. While explaining, he often leaves a key word for students to complete. At this moment, he speaks in rising intonation, stops before that word and looks at the audience from left to right and from right to left with his smiling and positive eye contact. His eyes are not big behind the glasses, but they are wide-open and sparkling. (OC: I can feel his eyes' power, although I sit at the back. His eyes transmit such information that you feel regrettable if you miss his lecture.) He uses gestures a lot, raising hands, moving palm or rotating index finger near the brain. He keeps walking on the podium and remains more time on the right. (OC: I think because either the students on the right are more active or I sit on the left.)

Nigerian 1 student told us that economics is difficult. Because of this, the lecturer is used to simplify things with examples, stories and jokes which cover various aspects including politics, history, friends and his own experience. When he is telling, most of the students sit forward and laugh with him.

Iranian 1

This Iranian has the most turns in class. He sits forward, upper body straight, with a serious face. When he answers a question, he looks at the lecturer, elbows on table, resting his chin on hands. (OC: he is not sure about it?) He is seated in the middle against the wall on the right. For all the five sessions, he doesn't change the seat. I asks him during the interview why he remains the same place without moving to front or back. He says he can't see the board at back, but doesn't mention the reason for not going to the front.

Algerian 1

He sits in the middle row on the left and likes to express his own ideas. (OC: As for the two most active students in class, he and Reza both sit in the middle. Is this a coincidence?) Each time he wants to say, he raises his right hand high to catch both the lecturer and the classmates attention, leans back and gives comments. At the second session of observation, he says something, but the instructor doesn't catch it and asks: "What did you say, continue?" He responds: "I am asking you that..." The class laughs. This happens again at later session. (OC: Does he feel anxious if giving improper opinions and less anxious by asking the lecturer?) When the lecturer cleans the board, he likes to talk to other Africans.

Others:

Many students keep silent or respond when all respond. They prefer to listen more. (OC: Does this explain they are anxious when speaking individually?) Most students remain the same seats and there are different groups. The majority of Chinese sit in front, Iranians on the right, and Africans on the left. At the first session, one student in front of me turns back and asks: "What's the last sentence?" I say: "I didn't copy it." Then he goes to ask the one in front of him. From the second session on, he is no longer there. (I guess he knows I am an observer.)

Appendix 2 (Interview Questions)

1. When and where did you start learning English? How were your classes in primary and secondary classes? How about your teachers? How much did you speak English in class?
2. How much have you been in foreign countries? What do you feel about speaking with native speakers? How do you find speaking English in class with classmates and teachers who are not native?
3. How do you feel when speaking English in class? How much is it difficult for you? Do you feel anxious or not? Why /not?
4. How often do you participate in class discussions voluntarily? Why?
5. What do you think about when you start to talk to your teacher or classmates?
6. What is your feeling about the audience in class while you are speaking?
7. How is the atmosphere of this class? What are the factors that you like and don't like in this class and make problem for speaking English? What do you think should be improved?
8. What do you think are the reasons of your possible anxiety and what can be done to overcome it?
9. How often is it for you that you can't find the exact word, phrase or sentence structure to express your idea when speaking English? How do you feel at that time? How do you cope with?
10. When you give a wrong answer to instructor's question, how does it affect you, e. g. loss of face, affecting your listening for a few minutes...?
11. What do you think of the instructor?
12. What does your teacher do to help you speak English without being anxious? How much do you like your lecturer's effort to make you feel less anxious?

Appendix 3 (Interview with a student and Discourse Analysis)

Researcher: DiaoZhiping

Place: DK 17, Block E, Faculty of Economics

Date: Thursday, Nov. 8, 2012

Interviewer: DiaoZhiping

Interviewee: Nigerian 2

Interview Time: 10 minutes

01 M: So, when and where did you start learning English?

02 D: It's our language.

03 M: Uhm.

04 D: Yeah, because Nigerian is an English-speaking country and it was going west by the British, 05 so English is the official language.

06 M: So, after your first language which is (Sowahidi) , what is your first language?

07 D: You know, in Nigeria we have about 250 local languages.

08 M: 250 languages?

09 D: Yeah, of three are prominent. So you are (homsar), you are-

10 M: (Despite) your mother tongue and after that it is English, right?

11 D: English, yes. English is our official language.

12 M: So, you learn it as a second language, right?

13 D: Yes.

14 M: Ok, so how long have you been here in Malaysia?

15 D: About four months.

16 M: How is your feeling about communicating with native speakers?

17 D: Oh ↑ (..), so now(...) they find it difficult to interact with English, so now.

18 M: Uhm.

19 D: Yeah, especially all the graduate students, ° especially all the graduate students° .

20 M: Graduate students.

21 D: Yeah.

22 M: So how do you feel about communicating with (locals) in English?

23 D: Yeah, I find it very difficult.

24 M: Very difficult? 「So they don't understand, right?

25 D: 「Yeah ((laugh))

26 D: Yea:::h, ah, only few of them, ° only few of them° .

27 M: Oh, so it has been difficult for you.

28 D: Yes, difficult.

29 M: Ok. How do you feel about speaking English in general, speaking English?

30 D: Speaking English in general? Oh (2.0), we cannot say we have English as one language, or 31 just it, but in community (...) er (...) we (..) think we should have it, it is better to have it in 32 community, ok? For example, now,(there is a say) that in my country we cannot choose just 33 one local language that, ok, everybody should speak (Auosar) or (Ibur) or (Uver). So all the 34tribes (are acquiescent), just that.

35 M: Oh.

36 D: So that's why (.) we said ok, let's use English (..) which is colonial language as our official 37 language understood. So if you say, ok, English should be one language ↑ (..), you are not 38 appropriate, ° you are not appropriate° , but=

39 M: = It unites the country, right?

40 D: Yeah, yeah, yeah, if we say a community or if a community said ok (.) the appropriate or

41 (2.0) the common language to be used should be English. It will better.

42 M: So everybody thinks that they are united.

43 D: Yeah!

44 M: I see. So (..) speaking English, is it difficult for you?

45 D: No,(xxxxxxx)

46 M: How often do you participate in class discussion voluntarily? You said (jumping)?

47 D: (..)Participation in class?

48 M: Hm.

49 D: I used to participate by usual, ° I used to participate° .

50 M: Ok. So how is the atmosphere of the class?

51 D: Yeah, yeah, it's very good, ° it's very good° . The atmosphere of the class is very good . 52hhh.

53 M: What factors do you like or don't like about the atmosphere?

54 D: (...) The factor I like, you know (..), the atmosphere is (.), if you are talking about the 55facilities provided especially in the university, the facilities provided make our study very 56convenient. The only thing I don't like is air- condition.

57 M: Oh, like here, 「 so cold.

58 D: 「Yeah, yeah. We are used to heat in Africa. That's why if I go to library, I59couldn't read in the library, 「((laugh)) because it is very cold.

60 M: 「Very cold, like freezing.

61 D: Yeah, yeah.

62 M: So, how often do you (.) you say my side, I want to say English, things in English, 63sometimes I forget, for example, I went to supermarket, I forgot "carrot", so I went to the guy 64and said ((using gesture)) 「"rabbit"」 , oh! Carrot.

65D: 「 ((Laugh))」

66M: So he gave me. Have you ever forgotten any word to say, or something-

67 D: Of course no, no, not at all.

68 M: So you always remember all.

69 D: Yes.

70 M: Oh, you are good.

71 D: ((Laugh))

72 M: Ok, what is your feeling while you present? You go up there, you give lecture to students, 73 how do you feel?

74 D: Yeah, because I am a lecturer, it's what I was been doing, so I find it very (.) you know, it is 75 (a form) to me.

76 M: So in your country, you have beena lecturer. 「 You have given lectures in English.

77 D: 「Yeah.

78 D: Not in English. I teach economics. You know in Nigeria we have to teach with English. So 79 it's very confident for me to go to the front to present-

80 M: So to present what you present in English, is it ok?

81 D: Yeah, yeah, ok.

82 M: Wow, you look very good with English.

83 D: ((Laugh)).

84 M: While (they want to teach) Mr. D, what does your teacher do to help you be active in class?

85 D: (..) Yeah, they do (..), they do ask questions to let us be active in class. And some of them 86also used to organize presentation that we should present, or review an article, you know, as a 87phd student, to give those articles to receive, sorry to (set) ((laugh)), to set for articles and review 88 and comment discourses in class

89 M: So his talking, how do his stories (.), is it ok?

90 D: Yeah, yeah, it tells, because work without play makes the brain off. ((Laugh)) So you cannot 91continue >teaching, teaching, teaching<, you know for three or two and a half hours without 92treating so jokes that make people feel relax in class, make people laugh, so that to bring our 93sentis ((pronounce wrongly)) senses back to what we are going to-

94 M: So some of the students here in Malaysia in UPM, they have anxiety, ok, they are afraid to 95communicate, they are afraid to talk to others, they are afraid to have presentation. What do you 96 think they should do to (avoid) it?

97 D: Oh (...) ((laugh)) I observe it, I observe that they are not out-spoken, they are not 98out-spoken ↑ , so and they (..) they are not what (2.0) they cannot change ability, it has to be a 99process, a process and then the process lies in three hands, I understand, the (comment), the 100institution and the (ability), because some parents, they are restricting their children, and then 101(Gohmend) also they encourage teaching in their language, they encourage to teach, you know, 102in foreign language as (one), but by teaching foreign language, because we have open mind to 103interact, I haven't been training or taught with our local language, so it is very difficult for us 104necessarily with locals to interact, that's why we like to go to English-speaking countries to(.) 105at least to easily communicate.

106 M: So, we've done.

Providing a general characterization

This is an interview taken between a researcher and a Phd Nigerian student on his feelings about speaking English as a second language in class.

Identifying grossly apparent features

It is clear from this interview that the interviewee talks a lot about his country including its history, its local languages, its community and his job. He explains in much detail why English becomes the official language and why he comes to English-speaking country.

Focusing in on structural elements

The interviewee prefers to answer some questions indirectly. When asked when and where to start learning English (01), he says "it's our language." (02). When asked for his first language (06), he replies "we have about 250 local languages" (07). When asked his feelings about communicating

with native speakers (16), he comments on all the graduate students. When asked his feeling about speaking English in general, he explains the reason why English becomes the official language. Moreover, He is used to repeat his answers in quite low voice (19, 26, 38, 49 and 51). Besides, the student laughs many times during this 10 minutes, especially when he is praised by the interviewer with “you are good” (71 and 83), when he speaks about other people (25 and 97), and when he makes an error in choosing a word (87).

Developing a description

These elements illustrate the methods that this Nigerian student uses to cope with his anxiety while speaking English as a second language. For certain questions, he likes to give an indirect answer. And his repeating of answer in low voice shows that he is either quite certain about it or not certain at all. Finally, by laughing he eases and relieves tension.