THE EFFECT OF PMI STRATEGY ON IRAQI EFL PREPARATORY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ANXIETY

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ABSTRACT:

Anxiety is the subjective feeling of anxiety, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic apprehensive gadget (Spielberger, 1983). It plays an important role in English foreign language classes and contributes to reducing learners' oral performance to proceed and develop. The problem exists among ESL/EFL learners from the beginning to more advanced levels. These learners wonder why they cannot speak English well because their compulsive efforts do not lead to their intended performance. The current study aims at finding out the effect of PMI strategy on Iraqi EFL preparatory school students' anxiety.

A non-randomized pretest-posttest control group has been adopted. The sample of the study consists of (63) students of Iraqi EFL 5th preparatory school, (31) students for experimental group and (32) students for the control group, the academic year (2018- 2019). The instrument of the study is speaking anxiety scale which have been exposed to jury members in the field of ELT, Linguistics and literature to verify their validity. The results of the study show that there is a statistical significance difference between the experimental and control group in their anxiety performance which means PMI strategy promoted a learning environment that provided opportunities for exploring and investigating ways of understanding their roles as speakers, that's to give them the opportunity to play many roles as (thinkers, speakers, speechmakers, and lecturers, etc.,).

1. AIMS:

This study aims at find:

1-   The effect of PMI strategy on Iraqi EFL preparatory school students' anxiety performance.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND:

Anxiety is a complicated mental term overlaying many variables. In its handiest form, anxiety may be described as "a preferred feeling of apprehension consisting of hyper-vigilance, accelerated sympathetic worried system pastime, and problem concentrating" (Kim, 1998). Anxiety takes numerous bureaucracy: phobia, social anxiety, obsessive-compulsive, and submit-stressful pressure. The physical results of anxiety might also encompass heart palpitations, tachycardia, muscle weak point and anxiety, fatigue, nausea, chest ache, shortness of breath, headache, belly aches, or tension complications. As the frame prepares to deal with a chance, blood strain, heart rate, perspiration, blood drift to the most important muscle corporations are extended, even as immune and digestive capabilities are inhibited the fight or flight response. External signs of anxiety may also include pallor, sweating, trembling, and pupillary dilation. For someone who suffers tension, this may result in a panic attack. Anxiety may want to also be defined as an affliction, dread, terror, or maybe apprehension (Cutrone, 2001).

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Anxiety has been discovered to intervene with many varieties of getting to know and has been one of the maximum notably examined variables in all of the mental and academic settings. Psychologists distinguish several classes of anxiety. Typically, tension as a personality trait isn't the same as a brief anxiety country.

In other words, trait anxiety is conceptualized as a surprisingly solid character feature whilst kingdom tension is seen as a response to a specific anxiety-frightening stimulus consisting of a critical check. More lately the term situation-unique anxiety has been used to emphasize the persistent and multi-faceted nature of a few anxieties (Maclntyre & Gardner, 1995).

2.1 Types of Anxiety
Anxiety may fall into different types includes**:**

1. General Anxiety and Academic Anxiety: Many views on anxiety, in general, depending on the areas of anthropology, psychology and education, have been presented in most cases related to the concepts of fear and threat to the physical integrity of the person or psychological well-being in his/her interactions with the environment. In the nineteenth century. Darwin (1872), mentioned in Worde (1998), believes that anxiety is an emotional reaction that is aroused when an organism feels physically under threat. In reference to Darwin's theory (1872) of evolution.

2. State Anxiety and Trait Anxiety: State anxiety is fleeting and not a permanent trait of an individual's personality. It is "a temporary state or condition of the organism that varies in intensity and fluctuates over time" (Spielberger, 1966). Spielberger (1983) gives us an example of state anxiety, "the apprehension he experienced before the examination." On the other hand, the Trait anxiety, is referred to as "a constant state without time constraints" (Levitt, 1980).

3. Situation-Specific Anxiety: The anxiety for the situation is that it may become a concern in a particular type of situation, such as during tests (called "anxiety test"), when solving math problems ("math anxiety") or when speaking a second language (language anxiety) Maclntyre & Gardner, 1994). Oh (1990) believes that foreign language anxiety is "a particular anxiety for students in a classroom characterized by self-centered ideas, feelings of inadequacy, fear of failure, and emotional reactions in the classroom."

4. Test Anxiety: Anxiety in test situations is a facet of anxiety that has also been the focus of investigation (Alpert & Haber, 1960). Sarason et al. (1952) defines the test anxiety as "the tendency to show the consequences of inadequate performance in an assessment situation ". In early research, it was thought that anxiety in test situations was related to movement or emotional response.

2.2 Anxiety and Foreign Language Learning

Many researchers presented different definitions of foreign language anxiety (FLA). Casado (2001) defines the anxiety of foreign language as a complex combination that deals with the psychology of learners in terms of their feelings, self- esteem, and self-confidence. Gardner (1991) explains that is the feeling of tension and fear specifically associated with second or foreign language contexts, including speaking, listening and learning, or arousing emotional anxiety and negative reactions when learning or using a second or foreign language (MacIntyre, 1999).

Horwitz & Gregersen (2002) suggests that FLA is responsible for the students' negative emotional reactions to language learning.

Learning foreign language is a complex process, involving many variables, for example, the social component, the psychological state of learners, the learning environment, and so forth. These aspects are related to internal factors that are part of the learner's personality. Although language learning and use are interactive activities that rely primarily on different types of relationships with others, the process of acquiring a foreign language is strongly influenced by the individuality of learners. The way we feel about ourselves and our abilities can facilitate or hamper our learning. The internal factors of the learner will have a positive or mainly negative effect. An emotion that affects language learning so that teachers can

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understand their students and help their students to have difficulties learning the language.

Horwitz et al. (1986) suggested a model for public FL anxiety, which consists of three performance anxieties: communication fear, anxiety testing, and fear of negative evaluation. Fear of communication is a kind of shyness that is fearful or anxious to communicate with people. An anxiety test refers to a type of performance anxiety caused by fear of failure. Fear of negative evaluation can be defined as fear of others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative attitudes, and the expectation that others will self-assess negatively. These three components are then seen as having a negative impact on FL learning.

2.3 PMI Strategy:

PMI is the abbreviation of (Plus, Minus, and Interesting). P (stands for Plus or good points), M (stands for Minus or bad points), I (stand for Interesting points).   PMI Strategy is beneficial specially to speaking development. PMI Strategy can foster language skills such as speaking and listening by creating a suitable context. PMI is a powerful language teaching tool that involves all of the students interactively all of the class periods. PMI can also provide the means for connecting students' emotions and cognition as it enables students to take risks with language and experience the connection between thought and action. Edward de Bono (1985) states that The Plus Minus Interesting is an attention-directing tool. Moreover, Plus Minus Interesting is an important Decision Making Strategy: The mind tools used so far in this section have focused on selecting a course of action from a range of options (Wormeli, 2005). From the statements above, this teaching strategy is considered an important processing activity and can be used within a range of classroom activities, examining issues, and also enhance the students' speaking ability.

A Plus Minus Interesting is a useful way of recognizing the value of an idea, rather than being influenced by the emotions that surround it. It works well by holding back action and reconsidering the positive, negative, and interesting aspect of the situation before making a decision about what to do,

particularly if the decision-making meant to be directed towards improvement in the situation. In doing Plus Minus Interesting, the students deliberately direct their attention first towards the Plus points, then towards the Minus points and finally towards the Interesting points.

In other words, Plus Minus Interesting chart can help the students to enlarge their opinion about the current issue in many aspects, not only think in one side, but the students become a wise decision maker because Plus Minus Interesting gives them a chance to think both in negative and positive sides of the issue itself by exploring and discussing the idea that they have already got from the issue.

Thus, that the students can explore their critical thinking and think clearly, they also speak bravely after considering a plus, minus, and interesting point from the statement given by the teacher.

In teaching speaking, a facilitator/teacher should plan many activities to increase opportunities for spoken production in the target language. It is hoped that the participants/students will have numerous opportunities in a range of speaking activities. One of the techniques that can be applied is PMI (Plus, Minus, and Interesting). According to Thomas (2000), this method is suitable to develop students' critical thinking through speaking activities. He agrees to de Bono who has developed material for the teaching of 'thinking'. This material is designed for native speakers, but its small group creative approach to problem-solving is particularly appropriate in the foreign language classroom. One of the techniques used is PMI (Plus, Minus and Interesting).

2.3 Steps for Implementing PMI Strategy in Classroom:

Wormeli (2005) states to apply this strategy in the classroom the following steps should be considered by the teacher.
Step 1: - The teacher asks the students "Why is it important to think about all sides of an issue or idea".

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Step 2: - The teacher asks the students to identify Plus-Minus- Interesting aspects of the issue or topic. By identifying these aspects, students will have clear cut thinking about the issue.

Step 3: - The teacher poses another question: the teacher asks the students to vote for all the three aspects of the issue i.e. Plus-Minus-Interesting and record their responses on the board which will be followed by classroom discussion to value the process.

Step 4: - Scoring: - After making the PMI chart, the group can score the table to make a decision about the topic. When deciding on whether or not to take a particular course of action, use a scoring system along with the PMI strategy.

Each idea in the plus-minus-interesting category will be given scoring which will range from (for example +5 to -5), which is subjective in nature. After scoring each idea, are tallied figures to decide if an action should be taken or not. In this procedure, time limit is there. Students can take 2-3 minutes at every step.

Table 1: the example of PMI (Plus- Minus- Interesting)

Plus Advantages/Benefits/Strengths/ Positives/Good things	**Minus** Disadvantages/Deficiencies/ Weaknesses/Minuses/ Negatives	**Interesting** Implications and possible outcome/Attention-grabbing/Out of the ordinary/Appealing
Provide Drill and practice to master basic skills. +5	Time consuming. -2	Multimedia is a combination of text, graphics, sound, animation, and video, interactive electronic or digital means of manipulation delivered to the user. +4
Attractive and entertaining strategy, bring virtual world in classroom. +4	Very expensive. -3	Multimedia is all about communicating in several ways. +3
Improve problem solving abilities. +5	Complex to create. -3	Use multimedia for wrong purposes (like piracy, pornography) -5
Provide access to multiple educational resources. +5	It is not always to configure. -4	All students collaborate at one place, by creating one shared product between them. +4
Total +19	-12	+6

3. METHODOLOGY:

The population of this study is the 5th preparatory grade in Baghdad Abu- Alaa Almuari preparatory school for boys, in the academic year 2018-2019. Two sections have been chosen randomly to be the sample of the study, section B which includes 31 students, is chosen randomly to be the experimental group.

And section C which includes 32 students, is chosen randomly to be the control group, so the total number of the sample is 63.

In order to obtain equivalent pedagogical changes for both groups included in the experimental design, equalization is needed. It is a fundamental process for any experimental study. Therefore, the following variables have been controlled to achieve this equalization: the age of students, the students' score on speaking anxiety scale, the students' score on the intelligence test, students' level of motivation, and the level of fathers' education.

The face validity of the instrument has been asserted as it was exposed to a number of jurors. The validity and suitability of the instrument has been approved by an agreement of 100% by all the jury experts.

A group of 100 EFL students from Abu- Alaa Almuari Preparatory School for boys has been randomly selected, other than the experimental and control groups in order to conduct a pilot administration of the instrument, the time allocated to complete the scale is found to be 15 minutes, and the result shows that the scale is suitable and practical to be implemented.

In order to identify students' speaking anxiety, a scale is adopted from Clevenger, T., & Halvorson, S. K. (1992) with some modification made by the researcher. The scale consists of (25) items. The rating scale comprises a five points Likert scale and each item has 5 responses, each response has given a score.

Pilot administration of the speaking anxiety scale conducted on a group of 100 students has randomly been selected from the 5th preparatory grade from Abu- Alaa Almuari preparatory school for boys to be the pilot sample. The pilot administration of the scale has been conducted to secure the clarity of scale's items, to estimate the time allocated to respond to the scale and to find items' discriminatory power in the light of students' responses. To compute the reliability, the researchers depend on the pilot sample's responses of the 100 students. The result indicates that the reliability of the anxiety scale is (0.84). This refers that the scale has an acceptable and adequate reliability coefficient.

4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Result Related to the Aim

The results of the final administration of the speaking anxiety scale on the sample of study which is consisted of 63 students indicate that the mean score of the experimental group is (59.71) with standard deviation of (7.356), and that of control group (72.62) with standard deviation (8.724). t-test has been used to identify the significance of the differences. The computed t-value which is (5.121) which is found to be higher than the critical t-value which is (2.000) at (0.05) level of significant and degree of freedom (61). See table (3)

Table (2)

Mean, Standard Deviation, and t- test value of the two Independents Samples in the Anxiety Scale Post -Test for the Experimental and Control Groups

Groups	No. of group	M	S.D	D.f	t-value		Finding
					computed	critical	
Ex.	31	59.71	7.356	61	5.121	2.000	Significant to experimental
Cont.	32	72.62	8.724				

The above table displays that there is a statistical significant difference between the experimental group and control group in their speaking anxiety in the post application of the scale in favor of the experimental group.

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

As shown in table 2, it's found out that:

All results of the present study illustrate the positive impact of the PMI strategy on students' speaking anxiety. The reasons behind the findings are due to the fact that using the PMI strategy produces opportunities for students to speak freely without anxiety. The results of the present study, from the researcher's point of view.

1. Motivates the students to talk and express themselves freely.

2. Associates the course material to true and authentic issues and introducing the issues in the class.

3. Using conversations inside the classroom allow the students to practice speaking skill as it occurs in real life as described by Ur (1983) "The most natural and effective way for learners to practice speaking freely in English is by thinking out some problem or situation together through verbal interchange of ideas, or in simple terms to discuss".

4. It expresses upon both affective and cognitive domains, thus restoring the significance of feeling as well as thinking.

5. It has a positive effect on classroom dynamics and atmosphere, thus facilitating the formation of a bonded group, which learns together.

6. PMI strategy can enhance listening, speaking, writing and thinking skills.

7. The finding shows that the PMI strategy enables students to build their self-confidence and advocate their autonomy in speaking as well as in any other skills.

8. The result also shows that anxiety is clearly an issue in language learning and has a debilitating effect on speaking English for some students. So it is important that teachers should be sensitive to this in classroom interactions and provide help to minimize foreign language anxiety.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The present study clarifies that the PMI strategy enhances students' speaking performance. The strategy has produced notable effects on the students' speaking performance.

In light of the empirical evidence revealed in this study and in relation to the researcher's own

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observations during the experiment, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. There is a diversity of reasons that inhibit students from speaking   English fluently inside their classrooms and in different kinds of situations.

  Some of these obstacles may be personal; for instance, some students suffer from communication apprehension, have nothing to say, afraid of criticisms, insufficient motivation or support, etc. Some of the causes are relevant to the teachers' awareness such as the technique of teaching adopted, disregarding oral speaking evaluation, allowing a restricted number of students to prevail interactive activities, the employ of the mother tongue in the class, etc. The other causes are related to the teaching material itself. These reasons, operating individually or together, prevent students to speak fluently without fear.

2. Producing real and interesting topics to the classroom by posing realistic moral or social issues is an outstanding way for stimulating students to speak at an unconscious level.

3. Using a strategy such as PMI is an effective way to stimulate the students to speak flexibly and refine their fluency significantly.

This may be due to the interesting, challenging and motivating atmosphere that this strategy provides since it allows the students to express their own opinions and points of view.

4. PMI Strategy enhances self-awareness, self-esteem confidence, and motivation.

5. It stimulates an open, explorative style of learning where creativity and inspiration are given scope to develop. This, in turn, promotes risk-taking, which is a necessary element in language learning.

6. This strategy supplies students with an enjoyable experience.

7. Stimulation is also promoted and sustained through the variety generated by the activities.

 Finally, PMI Strategy strengthens the bond between thought and expression in language and offers good listening practice.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

 The following recommendations are stated in the light of the study findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are put forward for the different parties involved in the English Language teaching and learning process

1. Syllabus designers have to allot time and give more importance to the practical aspect in teaching speaking skill.
2. The PMI Strategy can be used to improve the learners on speaking skill.
3. Important interest should be granted to the PMI strategy as it promotes advantageous and joyful learning and makes students parallel partners in the process of learning.

4. Teachers should develop a non-threating classroom climate, helping students to strength their speaking through encouragement, being empathetic, and avoiding authoritative and criticism.
5. Teaching creative thinking skills needs to be a part of our educational system and special courses in the curriculum should be designed to teach creative thinking in speaking and other skills.
6. Students' evaluative in the classes has always been anxiety – evoking. Students should be mindful that their acceptable performance would be praised and students would be encouraged to do their best in speaking English without panic of being punished by the teacher or laughed at by their classmates.

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