ABSTRACT: This study aims at determining intercultural sensitivity and foreign language anxiety of undergraduate students at Lasbela University, Baluchistan. It investigated a research problem quantitatively and qualitatively. First, the intercultural communication sensitivity questionnaire developed by Chen and Starosta (2000) was used to collect data. Secondly, this study examined students’ foreign language anxiety in classroom. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was administered to investigate students’ anxiety in English. Moreover, focus group interviews were also conducted to get rich understanding of research problems. Forty six respondents participated (fourteen female & thirty two male) in the focus group interviews. The results of the study indicated students’ significant intercultural sensitivity. In contrast, a moderate level of foreign language anxiety was recorded. Moreover, no correlation between intercultural communication sensitivity and foreign language anxiety was reported ($P = 0.379 > 0.05$). In addition, results of the focus group interviews revealed respondents’ positive perceptions about other cultures.

Keywords: Intercultural communication, foreign language anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, cultural perception

Introduction

Language anxiety is considered one of the frequently examined variables in language learning. It is a matter of concern for language teachers and researchers in general and Pakistani context in particular. This study investigates foreign language anxiety and intercultural communication sensitivity in Pakistani context. It studies issues thoroughly and achieves in depth understanding of the foreign language anxiety and intercultural communication sensitivity. Moreover, the purpose is also to understand students’ perceptions of the concerned issues in second language learning. The study analyses students’ intercultural communication with people from different cultures. This attempt is made to report and contribute findings of learners’ intercultural communication sensitivity, perceptions and foreign

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language anxiety in the existing body of knowledge.

**Literature Review**

Linguists have taken keen interest in understanding foreign language anxiety (FLA) issues and intercultural communication. This upsurge in research has motivated researchers to explore more about FLA and intercultural communication.

The following cited literature confirms that people tend to learn and understand their culture in the company of their family and friends who share the same cultural values. Culture is defined in various ways. For example, Lustig et al. (2006) define culture as a shared set of beliefs and values; it involves intercommunication between different cultures. However, in the study of culture, Rosaldo (1984 as cited in Hinkel, 1999) points out that culture is not only a set of beliefs and norms described in research rather she believes it emerges from people around the world; the way they live and the way they frame reality. Moreover, she discusses that people who live outside may fail to understand the way culture ties social and cognitive concepts. An Extensive view of culture is expanded in research studies by Lustig with research fellows (2006). They observed that a competent interaction fulfils some core objectives in the context it takes place. More importantly, with culture, a great deal of research is conducted to describe intercultural communication competence. Thomas (2003a as cited in Lustig et al., 2006) described intercultural competence as a capability to avoid misunderstandings and it generates opportunities to involve all in order to resolve existing issues. Various definitions help us to understand culture, intercultural competence and beliefs, values and norm. People learn culture when they interact with others and are socialized (Lustig et al., 2006; Moor, 2007).

Research has suggested and confirmed that language and culture are entwined. Language covers human life and cultures permeates in the ways of doing things possible (Rathje, 2007). There has been a great debate on language and culture; however, such issues still need much exploration and research for richer understanding. This study is limited to intercultural communication sensitivity and foreign language anxiety. Before discussing literature about foreign language anxiety, various definitions of anxiety in language learning context is given below.

**Foreign Language Anxiety**

Researchers have defined language anxiety in various ways. According to Spielberger (1972), “…anxiety is an unpleasant emotional state or condition which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension and worry” (p. 482). This refers to learners who feel tense and get worried in relation to second or foreign language. According to Horwitz
Language Anxiety and Intercultural Communication Sensitivity

et al. (1986) language anxiety is a very distinct set of self-perceptions, beliefs, and feelings associated with language learning. Further, Horwitz (2010) and her colleagues discuss that language anxiety has negative effects on learners. Language anxiety to MacIntyre (1999) is an arousal of negative emotion in the process when learners learn second language and use it. Research in second language supports that language anxiety aroused in learning strongly affects performance and language achievement (Horwitz, 2010). Mostly, anxiety is determined in speaking skills. For example, when learners speak other language and they feel nervous and tense during the process of communicating. Likewise, Aida (1994) reported language anxiety primarily as related with speaking skills.

Foreign language anxiety is very significant because of learners’ emotional and physical representation of uncomfortable experiences (Tallon, 2006). Anxiety is reported by a number of studies as having potential negative effects on academic achievement. For instance, cognitive, social and personal effects are reported in research (Tallon, 2006). In the view of Horwitz (1995) it is a serious oversight if researchers argue L2 anxiety and they avoid to describing emotional sides of students to language learning.

It is confirmed and reported in some studies that learners’ performance is affected by language anxiety. As a result, their performance is poor with less learning. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1994a) ability of students is interfered by anxiety. They have knowledge but they are restricted in the process of learning. This indicates that L2 anxiety minimizes performance and maximizes feelings of fear and nervousness in language learning. In citing some studies, Moor (2007) conducted a research on intercultural sensitivity and foreign language anxiety on Spanish learners. The findings were reported that language anxiety level of Spanish students increased while intercultural sensitivity decreased.

Students enter universities to achieve the desired target. It may be to pass the subjects and get the degree for pragmatic purposes without any motivation to learn. On the other hand, there are some students who are interested to learn foreign language to improve their communication skills. And they become able to know about other cultures, norms and beliefs. In learning language, they experience nervousness, fear and stress throughout the process (Philips, 1992). Students’ lack of sufficient knowledge in foreign language may be one of the reasons for anxiety in classroom. Additionally, L2 anxiety may also occur due to cultural differences between student-teacher; student-students in foreign language classroom. Thus, differences in intercultural communication among students may increase level of language anxiety in classroom (Moor, 2007). Earlier, it was reported in research studies conducted by Onwueguzie, Bailey and Daley (1997) that on university
Campuses, in foreign language classes, anxiety is provoked. Further, they suggested that differences which are misunderstood in the relation between instructor and learner may also increase anxiety in classroom. This may be a reason of different backgrounds. This was also confirmed by McCroskey (1998) who described teachers from different nationalities and cultural background in foreign language classroom. And this variety may create a problem for students who may not be able to understand what teachers think about good or rude behavior in classroom. Foreign language anxiety is researched varying in different cultures. Horwitz (2001) conducted research and found that Americans were less anxious compared to their European counterparts. It is confirmed through some studies that language anxiety pervades in all cultures but it is recorded in multiple ways.

Keeping in view research on intercultural communication and language anxiety, the present study was designed to determine intercultural communication sensitivity and foreign language anxiety of undergraduate students at Lasbela University, Baluchistan. Additionally, intercultural communication and foreign language anxiety have not been sufficiently described in the existing body of knowledge. Therefore, an attempt was made to describe the ICCS and FLA and contribute and supplement in the existing literature.

Research Methodology

This study employed quantitative and qualitative approaches to determine intercultural sensitivity and foreign language anxiety. The respondents who voluntarily participated in this study were 46 undergraduates (14 Female 32 Male) at Lasbela University Baluchistan. They were randomly selected from the Faculty of Water Management. All participants were between 18 and 23 of age. In the following sections, we describe questionnaires and focus group interviews which were used for collecting data from participants.

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

Foreign language classroom anxiety scale was developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) to examine students’ level of anxiety in learning. The scale consists 33 items based on 5 point Likert scale. The FLCAS reflects students’ anxiety in communication, test and evaluation in FLA classroom. For validity and reliability of FLCAS (see validity and reliability Horwitz, 1991).

Intercultural Communication Sensitivity Scale

Chen and Starosta (2000) introduced ICCS to determine students’ level of cultural understanding. This survey contains 32 items geared toward assessing individuals’ perceptions in relation to communicating with culturally diverse people. The participants rated the items on 5-point Likert
scale (1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 =
Strongly Agree). The scale assessed the students’ perceptions of how they
feel in response to communicating with individuals who are culturally diverse
from themselves. Sample items include: (1) I often feel happy about
interacting with people from different cultures (2) I respect the values of
people from different cultures (3) I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct
counterpart’s subtle meanings during our interaction.

Reliability and Validity

Moor (2007) recorded an alpha coefficient of .86 for the sample of
students in the study. For the present study, we obtained alpha coefficient of
.76 in the pilot study on 24 participants.

We distributed questionnaires among respondents and tried to know whether
they had any difficulty regarding a set of items in questionnaires. The
respondents however did not reveal any kind of difficulty about provided
questionnaires. Therefore, a validity of questionnaire is ensured.

Focus Group Interviews

Focus group discussion was used to listen and understand
participants’ intercultural communication sensitivity and foreign language
anxiety. Pappamehiel (2002) describes that the basic object of focus group is
not virtually to interpret individual responses but to look for trends that
come out of groups. Keeping this in mind, the focus group approach was
used particularly to understand students’ perceptions toward intercultural
communication. Focus group interviews are very helpful for researchers to
investigate emotions such as revelations of anxiety among learners.

First, interviews were conducted from 12 participants. Two focus
groups were conducted from the group of six participants each. For
interpretation, a content analysis approach was used to analyze focus group
interviews.

Data Analysis

In the following sections, we present participants’ responses which
helped us to determine and interpret their intercultural sensitivity and level of
foreign language anxiety in English classroom. First, we present descriptive
statistics of intercultural communication analysis. Second, we present
descriptive statistics of foreign language anxiety. Third, the data of focus group
discussion is presented for better understanding of the issue under study.
Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Intercultural Sensitivity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures</td>
<td>4.2826</td>
<td>.54418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures</td>
<td>4.0217</td>
<td>.61424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 I don’t like to be with people from different cultures</td>
<td>2.1522</td>
<td>1.09478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 I often feel happy about interacting with people from different cultures</td>
<td>4.2609</td>
<td>1.04211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 I feel shy when being with people from different cultures.</td>
<td>2.6522</td>
<td>.76645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures</td>
<td>2.4348</td>
<td>.62011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 I know my culturally-distinct counterpart is interested in my point of view during our interaction</td>
<td>3.1087</td>
<td>1.01605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.</td>
<td>2.8261</td>
<td>.87697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 I am aware of when I have hurt my culturally-distinct counterpart’s feelings during our interaction</td>
<td>4.0000</td>
<td>.78881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures</td>
<td>2.2826</td>
<td>1.20486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 I can tell when I have upset my culturally distinct counterpart during our interaction</td>
<td>4.0217</td>
<td>.90650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 I think my culture is better than other cultures.</td>
<td>4.1522</td>
<td>.81561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 I feel discouraged when people from different cultures disagree with me</td>
<td>4.1957</td>
<td>.54240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 I can tell when my culturally-distinct counterpart is paying attention to what I am saying</td>
<td>3.9130</td>
<td>.66084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 I think people from other cultures are narrow minded</td>
<td>3.7174</td>
<td>.75020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 I respect the values of people from different cultures.</td>
<td>4.2826</td>
<td>.91075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Majority of students agreed that they were sure of themselves if they happened to communicate with different cultures. This is indicated in the statement 1# “I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures” (mean=4.28, SD=.544). Likewise, a majority of students agreed to the statement 2# that they can be sociable if they happened to
communicate with people from different cultures. Thus, some students disagreed to the statement 3# “I don’t like to be with people from different cultures” (mean= 2.15, SD= 1.09). It shows that students like the people from different cultures. They prefer to interact with them. Such liking is reflected in the lowest mean score. Moreover, students report that they feel happy when they tend to interact with other cultures. The statement 4# “I often feel happy about interacting with people from different cultures” (mean=4.26, SD=1.04). Students’ happiness in other people’s cultures is very meaningful because it indicates their interest in different cultures. The statement 9#“I am aware of when I have hurt my culturally-distinct counterpart’s feelings during our interaction”. This shows that learners are very sensitive to other cultures. Majority of students strongly report that they have feelings for their counterparts from different cultures because it is advocated with mean (4.00SD=.788). Further, statements 11#12#13# indicate that students feel something good about their cultures and if they mistakenly hurt other people with different cultures they reveal what they have committed in interaction. Moreover, students also believe that their culture is better than the other cultures. Respect for values in other cultures is strongly indicated in this research.

It suggests that participants venerate the values, beliefs and norms which are practiced in other cultures. Along with values, students also report that they accept and respect different behavior of people from different cultures as it is displayed in the statement 17. Descriptive results indicate that students have some subtle feelings for other cultures. It is reported that students feel confident in interacting with people from different cultures and they do not accept existence of differences in cultures. Thus, students self-rated that they keenly observe other cultures and obtain as much information as they can. Interestingly, majority of students also show that they feel confident when they converse people from different cultures. They also report that they are open-minded to other cultures.

Moreover, students’ responses vary on different statements. But the collective analyses of the results in terms of mean and standard deviation indicate students’ intercultural sensitivity significantly in this study. It may be summed up that students self-rated significant intercultural communication sensitivity.

Now, we present participants’ different response on foreign language anxiety questionnaire. The following table shows descriptive statistics of collected responses. We interpret data using mean and standard deviation.
### Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of FLA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.</td>
<td>3.1522</td>
<td>1.68612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 I feel confident when I speak in English class.</td>
<td>3.2174</td>
<td>1.50426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.</td>
<td>3.3261</td>
<td>1.24819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 The more I study for English test, the more confused I get.</td>
<td>2.1522</td>
<td>.81561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.</td>
<td>3.1304</td>
<td>1.25802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.</td>
<td>1.8913</td>
<td>1.13975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.</td>
<td>3.5870</td>
<td>1.64081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 When I'm on my way to English class, I feel sure and relaxed.</td>
<td>3.9783</td>
<td>1.02174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.</td>
<td>4.0000</td>
<td>1.05409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English.</td>
<td>3.7609</td>
<td>.82151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.</td>
<td>3.2826</td>
<td>1.52990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.</td>
<td>3.6087</td>
<td>1.14462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.</td>
<td>3.8913</td>
<td>1.01605</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A majority of students report that they get upset or feel nervous if they do not understand every word the teacher speaks, and this is rated with high mean score =4.00 SD =1.05. Likewise, students report that they get upset if they fail to understand teacher’ error correction in classroom which is displayed in item 15# (mean = 4.00= SD= 1.21). Similarly, a statement 4# (mean = 3.63 SD = 1.12) indicates it is frightening for students if they do not understand what the teacher says in a classroom. Thus, significant level of anxiety is reported in statements which are related with teacher's role in classroom. Moreover, a majority of students also feel nervous if the teacher asks questions when they are unprepared to answer (mean = 3.89SD=1.01). This situation makes them anxious about their English class. It also refers to students’ willingness to prepare in advance for question-answer sessions in
Results of descriptive analysis indicate a fear of negative evaluation as one of the most significant components in foreign language anxiety.

On the other hand, participants’ responses also show that they do not avoid going to English classroom and preparing for it. They were confident to attend English class. It is revealed in the statement 28# (mean= 3.97 SD=1.02). Descriptive results show that students are sure and relaxed towards English classroom. Interestingly, to prepare for English class, students report that they do not feel any pressure or stress. Many students agree that they do not feel nervous or anxious when they prepare for English class. In contrast, they feel anxious when they tend to speak in their English classroom. Nervousness in speaking is indicated in the statement (mean 3.58 SD=1.64). Secondly, a moderate level of anxiety in communication is reported.

Further, results also indicate that students do not think that they are less competent than their counterparts in English. In addition to it, they do not think about irrelevant material which has nothing to do with English in classroom. The lowest mean score in item 6# (mean= 1.91 SD=.783) supports that students avoid thinking about irrelevant material in English class.

The analysis of descriptive statistics indicates students’ level of foreign language anxiety. First, fear of evaluation is reported high. Secondly, anxiety in communication is indicated in students’ responses.

**Focus Group Interview Data**

A content analysis is done to interpret qualitative data. For this study we only focus on major themes revealed in interviews. Students’ perceptions about intercultural communication were recorded and analyzed.

**Students’ Perceptions toward Other Cultures**

Students report that they perceive intercultural communication as a gateway to reach other cultures. They prefer to be with people from different cultures wherein they reveal that they would seek as much information as they could. Since one of the students remarked:

I always feel pleased to be among other cultures wherein I learn how people behave and what they think is good or bad for them. I feel excited when I find an individual from different cultures with different identities.

**Confidence about other cultures**

Similarly another student mentioned:
I feel confident to speak with other cultures. This gives me insight into their way of life. As a result I come to understand how people perceive, believe and behave in other cultures different from that of mine.

Students discussed that they feel confident and happy with other cultures. They prefer in knowing about beliefs, norms and values existing in other cultures.

**Respect for Cultural Values and Norms**

Students also report that they respect values, norms and beliefs of people with different cultures. In this context, one of the students remarked:

> I respect other cultures. I believe if I respect other cultures so I receive in return the same. Each culture is unique in its own with distinct beliefs and values. I venerate when people practice their cultural beliefs and values. This process actually enriches me and contributes to my knowledge.

Simultaneously, another student supported the idea in discussion:

> Other cultures move me quickly and I happen to knowing about them. I have nothing to with what they believe is good or bad but I feel respect for them because they contribute something different in the community in terms of display of their beliefs and values.

Students discussed that they had strong feelings of respect and sensitivity for other cultures and for people who practice different values and norms in the community.

**Students’ Nervousness/ Language Anxiety**

During focus group discussion, students were also asked whether they experienced nervousness in classroom. Foreign language anxiety was also reported in communication. As one participant discussed:

**Communication apprehension**

> I often feel tense when I speak in English in classroom. Since, I avoid making mistakes but I do during interaction. This idea makes me nervous and I often avoid speaking in front of others in classroom.

Another student carried out discussion further:

**Fear of teacher evaluation**

> I always get worried with when I speak in English in front of my teachers. This feeling makes me shy. And I often stay calm when I am called to speak in classroom.
Moreover, same idea was supported by another student:

**Lack of interest in other people**

I get upset if I indulge into communication with follows with different beliefs and values. So I do not get interested in other people because of feelings of nervousness and confusion. It may be good to understand various people and their values they practice in the community. But I get confused in such situations.

Some students feel nervous and get confused if they communicate people having distinct beliefs and values. They reveal that they feel shy to speak in front of people and less interested to knowing about their set of values and norms. In this study, students experience the feelings of nervousness in communicating in English in classroom. Focus group data supports the idea that students avoid speaking in front of others in English in classroom.

A qualitative analysis of focus group interviews shows students’ respect, sociability and sensitivity for people from different cultures wherein different values and beliefs are exercised. On the other hand, some students reported their nervousness and anxiety in speaking in classroom. It is also reported in this study that students experienced feelings of shyness and anxiety in front of their teacher. As discussed in descriptive analysis, a fear of teacher evaluation is marked high.

**Findings**

This study basically deals with intercultural communication and foreign language anxiety separately. First, students’ responses were calculated and analyzed descriptively. In intercultural communication, the descriptive results reveal that majority of students feel happy if they indulge into intercultural communication. Feelings of respect, sensitivity, and sociability are strongly reported in this study. It however indicates that students venerate other cultures and enjoy knowing distinct values and beliefs which are practiced in various cultures. Whereas, a focus group interviews also support the descriptive results. Positive feelings such as respect for other cultures were the main theme revealed in content analysis.

This further indicates a very significant intercultural sensitivity of students for other cultures. This study also reveals that students feel motivated to interact and glad to know much about different cultures. This study is aligned with other studies in context of intercultural communication; for example Moor (2007) studied intercultural communication and reported significant intercultural sensitivity. An analysis also shows that students do not object other cultures’ values and norms and behaviors. Thus, students’ sensitive feelings for different cultures are clearly reported in this study. They report that they are confident, open minded, sociable and extrovert to the
people with different cultures and different social identities. This study corroborates with researches of Aida (1994), Wang (2005) and Horwitz et al (1986). Students exhibited different responses on items. Items related with fear of negative evaluation were high anxiety provoking as analyzed earlier. Students were found moderately anxious if they failed to understand what the teacher corrected or spoke in classroom. Thus, students were overwhelmed with language rules prescribed for learning any foreign or second language. Speaking English in classroom was also reported as anxiety provoking component. This study indicates that students experienced moderate anxiety in general, language rules, teacher error correction, teacher evaluation and speaking English in particular. A focus group interviews also supported descriptive results in which fear in teacher evaluation and nervousness in speaking in front of their fellows in classroom were main themes.

Quantitative and qualitative results reveal that students respect other cultures and they feel good about them. Positive perceptions about values and norms of other cultures indicate students’ sensitivity significantly. Interestingly, students were very confident and showed their interest about other cultures. Moreover, students were found nervous about teacher evaluation in classroom. In addition, they experienced anxiety in communication. To sum up, foreign language anxiety is reported moderate in this study.

**Conclusion**

This study showed students’ significant intercultural sensitivity for other cultures. It also indicated sensitive feelings which are revealed for people who practice different cultural beliefs and values in the society. In addition, a display of respect for other cultures was significantly reported as one of the basic components of intercultural communication. Quantitative and qualitative results corroborate and indicate sociability and love for other cultures. Moreover, students’ motivation, interest, sociability, respect and happiness in knowing about other cultures were also displayed. Apart from intercultural sensitivity, descriptive results of foreign language anxiety revealed that students experienced a moderate level of anxiety in English in classroom. Moreover, focus group interviews support and confirm that students feel nervous and anxious in speaking anxiety in front of others and show a fear of evaluation. In addition, this research indicated no correlation between intercultural communication sensitivity and foreign language anxiety. Additionally, it indicated more anxiety provoking situations which were related with teacher’s mode of correcting, speaking English and language rules. This study indicates students’ significant intercultural sensitivity and nervousness in speaking English in classroom.
References
