

Teachers' Perception of Language Anxiety in the ESL Classroom

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A considerable number of second language learners suffer from language anxiety when they enter the second language classroom. A majority of school goers in Sri Lanka study in either in Sinhala or Tamil and are exposed to the English language only in the English language classroom. Students carry this anxiety to the ESL classroom even at the university level. Most of them express their anxiety of the language in different forms, to the extent that students simply refuse to speak in English. The results of earlier research indicates that anxiety was often stated as one of the major causes of decreased motivation to learn, interference to learn and poor performance in the ESL classroom (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Gregerson, 2003; Karunakaran, Rana & Manwarul, 2013). This study was designed to explore teachers' perception of how language anxiety affects students' participation in the ESL classroom. 8 English teachers teaching students of four different student proficiency levels of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Kelaniya were selected for this study. The research methodology used in this study is a mixed approach where a questionnaire and a semi structured interview were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The findings of this study will aid the researcher to contribute to ESL classroom of the University of Kelaniya to improve speaking abilities of the second language learners.

Key words: language anxiety, teachers' perceptions, speaking, ESL classrooms

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