

## A Study on Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety and Academic Achievement in English of Secondary School Students

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### ABSTRACT

Students frequently suffer from worry, which can impair their learning and performance even though English is an essential subject for success in both academics and the workplace. The present study focuses on the correlation research between Second language classroom anxiety (English) and academic achievement in English of secondary school students. 300 secondary school students were taken as sample from the population through random sampling technique. The researcher used two standardised tools- one is Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety Scale, originally developed by Horwitz et.al, (1986), as Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and later modified by the researcher (first author) and supervisor (Co-author) and another Self-administered Academic Achievement test in English to perform an achievement test in English followed by proper item-analysis (considering the discriminating index and difficulty level of items). It is concluded that there is significant difference in Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety (SLCA) between Female and Male secondary level school students. Female possess significantly higher SLAC than their counterpart. Similarly, Rural students having significantly high SLAC than Urban. It is concluded that there is significantly high Academic Achievement in English of Male students than female. It is also observed that, Academic Achievement in English is significantly high for urban students' w.r.t. rural. It is also concluded that there is a significant very high negative correlation between Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety and Academic Achievement in English for secondary school students. Government should take necessary steps by organizing the education system better so that no students get scared of their Second Language (English) and reduce their anxiety in English language learning in classroom.

**Keywords:** *Second Language Classroom Anxiety, Academic Achievement in English, Secondary School Student*

The consequences of second language (L2) acquisition for educational achievements have drawn a lot of attention, especially in the areas where English is taught as a second language, such as West Bengal. Academic accomplishment has been the focus of studies who aim to understand the influence of anxiety in L2 courses. The purpose of this study is to look at the connection between academic achievement and anxiety in the English

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classroom among West Bengal's secondary level school students. **Horwitz et al. (1986)** claimed that anxiety related to learning a foreign language can impede the development of language proficiency. In a similar view, **Young (1991)** highlighted the importance of fear in language acquisition and hypothesized that it may prevent pupils from being open to speaking. This study finds relevance in the findings of **Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014)**, who highlighted the frequency of anxiety among L2 learners and its negative influence on language acquisition in the setting of West Bengal, where English is taught as a second language. For educators and policymakers to successfully adopt policies that support language acquisition and academic performance among West Bengal secondary level school students, they must have a thorough understanding of the dynamics of anxiety in English language classrooms.

Knowing how classroom anxiety affects academic performance is important since it plays a big role in language learning. This study attempts to measure students' anxiety levels and relate them to their academic performance in English by using a validated second language classroom anxiety scale. **Cheng (2002)** highlighted the importance of addressing anxiety in language classrooms for effective learning. The study's conclusions can help teachers understand how critical it is to handle anxiety in language classes in order to improve students' learning outcomes and experiences. The results can also aid in the creation of focused interventions and tactics to lessen language anxiety and support improved academic performance in English for secondary pupils.

The literature related to the second language classroom anxiety and academic achievement of students revealed that there are many reasons behind English language Classroom Anxiety and Academic Achievement in English. **Botes, E., Dewaele, J.M. & Greiff, S. (2020)**, meta-analysis from 67 studies ranging from 1986-2018, validated the inverse relationship between academic achievement and FLCA in courses in foreign languages. Similarly, **Kabigting, R., & Nanud, J.A. (2020)**., **Gawi, M.K. (2020)**., **Kurtoglu, D., & Sabuncuoglu, O. (2021)**., **Bukhari, S.R., et al. (2020)**., **Halder, U.K. (2018)** and **Sankhian, A. (2018)** found similar analysis that higher anxiety levels in second language classrooms lead to decreased academic performance. They found moderately higher level of communicative apprehension, moderate test anxiety, low fear of negative evaluation and moderate foreign language classroom anxiety. The main cause of anxiety was speaking in front of others, followed by grammatical mistakes, pronunciation, and spontaneous speech difficulties. **Azher, M., Anwar, M.N., & Naz, A. (2010)**, in Pakistan, found female students to be less anxious, and **Dordinejad, F.G., & Ahmadabad, R.M. (2014)**, in Iran, found that girls had higher levels of anxiety than boys. Whereas, **Zulkifli, V. (2023)**, in Malaysia, did not find gender to significantly influence English Language Classroom Anxiety. On the contrary, researchers like **Zaman, S. (2017)**., **Andrea, T. (2022)**., **Azzahra, Z.G., & Fatimah, F. (2023)**, found no significant correlation between language anxiety and academic achievement. Also, **Usman, C.A. (2023)**, in Philippines, concluded that gender and parent's educational attainment strongly influenced students' level of English language learning anxiety than average monthly family income.

After reviewing the related literature, it can be concluded that there are various factors which can affect English Language Classroom Anxiety for which students' Academic Scores get affected. This becomes a major barrier for the secondary level students as it negatively affects their further achievements in both academics and workplace. And from the review of related literature, it is evident that there are different views on students' anxiety depending upon gender, locale and parental education and its level of correlation with the students' academic achievement. Thus, it becomes quite conspicuous that still much remains to be done in this

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regard, particularly in West Bengal, which warrants the present study to be conducted. The study is first of its kind and is expected to fill the gap in this regard.

### ***Emergence of the Problem***

Anxiety among West Bengal's secondary level school pupils studying English as a second language has grown to be an urgent concern. According to **Horwitz and Cope (1986)**, anxiety can have a big impact on academic performance and language acquisition. Students frequently suffer from worry, which can impair their learning and performance even though English is an essential subject for success in both academics and the workplace. The purpose of this research proposal is to close the knowledge gap regarding the severity of anxiety and how it affects academic performance. Through examining elements that contribute to anxiety in English classrooms, including curriculum design, socio-cultural impacts, and teaching tactics, the research hopes to shed light on practical approaches to lower anxiety and improve English language learning results. In order to create interventions and support systems that promote a good learning environment and support students' academic performance in English language proficiency, educators, legislators, and stakeholders must have a thorough understanding of this link.

### ***Significance of the Study***

Anxiety in the English language classroom can have a big impact on English academic performance. Excessive levels of anxiety might make it difficult for a learner to focus, understand, and communicate in the language. It may also have an impact on how well students participate in class discussions, complete their tasks, and feel confident while speaking English. By putting supportive tactics into practice—like making the classroom cozy and offering opportunities for practice and feedback—anxiety can be reduced and academic performance can be improved. Knowing this relationship can help teachers create more engaging lesson plans that reduce anxiety and improve student performance. Additionally, by concentrating on English as a second language, the study tackles a crucial topic in the context of international education and communication. The results of this study can help educators, curriculum designers, and legislators understand how critical it is to manage language anxiety in the classroom in order to improve student performance and advance language competency. By determining the Dependence on the correlation between Second Language Classroom Anxiety and Academic Achievement in English, it can be understood that how much the former influences the later. From the result of this correlation probable solutions will be found to the problems that occur in the professional life of the students.

From above the literature, the researcher found the gap in the area of Academic Achievement in English affected by Classroom Anxiety of secondary school students in West Bengal. So, the present research problem is entitled as “**A Study on Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety and Academic Achievement in English of Secondary School Students**”.

### ***Objectives of the study***

- **O<sub>1</sub>**: To study Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety of West Bengal Board Secondary School Students according to Gender and Locale.
- **O<sub>2</sub>**: To study Academic Achievement in English of West Bengal Board Secondary School Students according to Gender and Locale.

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- **O<sub>3</sub>:** To examine the correlation between Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety and Academic Achievement in English for West Bengal Board Secondary School Students.

### *Hypotheses of the study*

- **HO<sub>1.1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety between male and female secondary school students.
- **H.O<sub>1.2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in Second Language Classroom Anxiety between rural and urban secondary school students.
- **H.O<sub>2.1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in Academic Achievement in English between male and female secondary school students.
- **H.O<sub>2.2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in Academic Achievement in English between rural and urban secondary school students.
- **H.O<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety and Academic Achievement in English for secondary school students.

### *Delimitations of the study*

- The study was delimited to two major variables – Second Language Classroom Anxiety (English) and Academic Achievement in English only.
- The study was delimited to two categorical variables- gender and locale only.
- The study was delimited to 300 samples only.
- The study was delimited to two districts of West Bengal namely Kolkata and South 24 Paraganas only.
- The study was delimited to West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE) students only.
- The data were collected from secondary (class IX and X) students only.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### *Sample:*

The sample represents the small proportion of target population. 300 secondary school students were taken as sample from the population through random sampling technique. Out of the selected six schools, three were from rural region and three were from urban region. Students were randomly selected. On the basis of their availability, the scales were given to them. The sample were categorized into gender-wise and locale of school-wise.

### *Sampling Technique*

At first, a lottery was done among the schools of Kolkata and South 24Pgs. and then schools were selected in simple random sampling process on the basis of their availability. Then, the data were collected from five schools including rural and urban areas.

### *Variables:*

- **Major Variables:** Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety & Academic Achievement in English
- **Categorical variables:** Gender (female and male) & Locale (rural and urban)

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### *Tools*

In this study, one scale and one self-administered achievement test were used for data collection. The scale was adopted and modified by the researcher and his supervisor. The academic achievement test was developed and standardized by the researcher by performing item analysis. The used scale and achievement test are as follows:

- Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety Scale, originally developed by Horwitz et.al, (1986), as Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and later modified by the researcher and supervisor.
- Self-administered Academic Achievement test in English to perform an achievement test in English followed by proper item-analysis (considering the discriminating index and difficulty level of items).

### *Description about the Tools:*

- 1. Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety Scale (SLCAS):** The researcher adopted Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale by Horwitz et.al, (1986) and then the researcher modified the scale for the convenience of the purpose. There are 33 items to assess Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety. The tool was a 5-point Scale, i.e., to say, there were 5 scale points against each item, so that the respondents, degree of agreement to a particular item could be known. In the scoring procedure, Likert's method was used. In this method, a number of items regarding a particular issue has been conducted and then the subject was asked to indicate the degree of agreement towards each item on 5-point scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Some statements are positive and some are negative.
- 2. English Language Academic Achievement Test (ELAT):** This achievement test was developed by the researcher and the supervisor. A questionnaire of total 35 questions were framed and after performing item analysis, final 25 questions were selected which were in MCQ form to test factual, conceptual, procedural, and meta cognitive understanding of the students and their academic achievement in English.

### *Data Collection Procedure:*

At first Bengali medium secondary schools under academic control of WBBSE were selected randomly from Kolkata and South 24 Pgs. districts of West Bengal. Researcher used one scale and one achievement test simultaneously to randomly selected students of those selected schools and gave them 40 minutes to give their response to the items and the response sheets were collected from them. All the 300 responses were tabulated in the excel sheet and were sent for analysis on SPSS.

### *Standardization of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety scale:*

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety Scale**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.923	0.923	33

Researcher performed Cronbach's Alpha to measure inter-item correlation of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety Scale and found that its value is 0.923 as it is mentioned in the above **Table 1** the value is very high, so it is concluded that the scale is highly reliable.

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### **Standardization of Achievement Test by Item Analysis:**

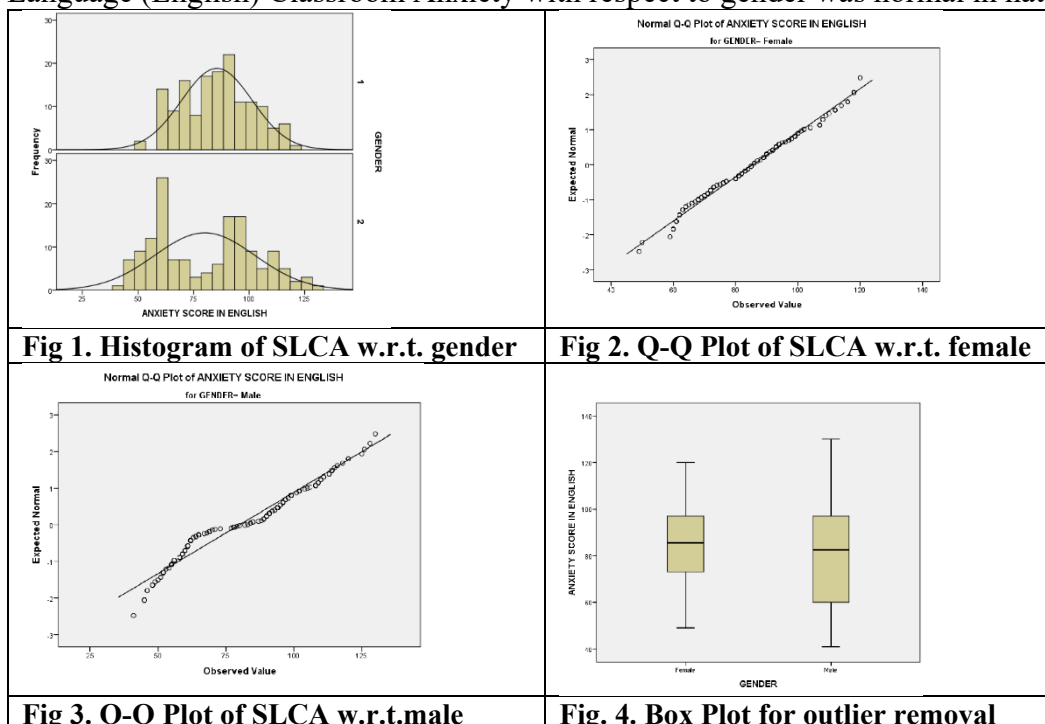
An achievement test is an assessment designed to measure an individual's knowledge, skills, or proficiency in a specific subject or area of learning. These tests evaluate how well a person has mastered material taught in a course, curriculum, or training program. For the achievement test, a questionnaire of 35 MCQ type questions was framed. Then item analysis was done. Few items are deleted after calculation of DV and D.I. and finally 25 questions were selected.

### **Rationale of using Parametric Test:**

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety (SLCA) with respect to Gender**

Anxiety Score in English	Categorical variable	Statistics	Std. Error
Female	Mean	85.53	1.298
	Median	85.50	****
	Std. Deviation	15.900	****
	Skewness	0.081	0.198
	Kurtosis	-0.605	0.394
Male	Mean	80.07	1.843
	Median	82.50	****
	Std. Deviation	22.570	****
	Skewness	0.202	0.198
	Kurtosis	-1.121	0.394

From the above **Table 2** In case of Female, the study showed that the co-efficient of  $Z_{Sk}$  was  $0.081/0.198=0.409$  and the co-efficient of  $Z_{Ku}$  was  $-0.605/0.394=1.535$ . In case of Male, the study showed that the co-efficient of  $Z_{Sk}$  was  $0.202/0.198=1.020$  and the co-efficient of  $Z_{Ku}$  was  $-1.121/0.394=-2.845$ . Both these values were under the range of  $\pm 3$  and fulfil the assumption of normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Hence the score distribution of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety with respect to gender was normal in nature.



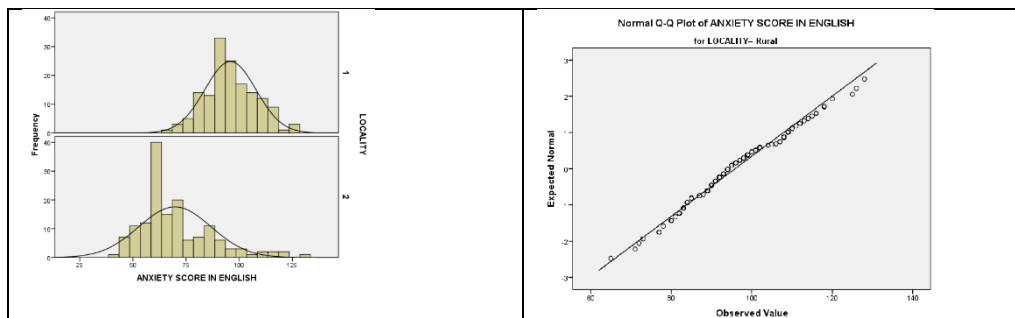
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**Descriptive Statistics of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety with respect to locale:**

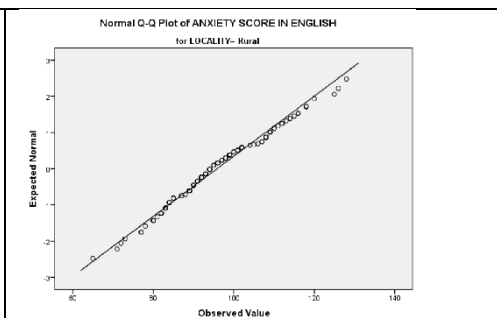
**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety with respect to Locale**

Anxiety Score in English	Categorical variable	Statistics	Std. Error
Rural	Mean	95.84	0.984
	Median	94.00	*****
	Std. Deviation	12.049	*****
	Skewness	0.294	0.198
	Kurtosis	-0.175	0.394
Urban	Mean	69.75	1.389
	Median	64.50	*****
	Std. Deviation	17.015	*****
	Skewness	1.163	0.405
	Kurtosis	1.351	0.556

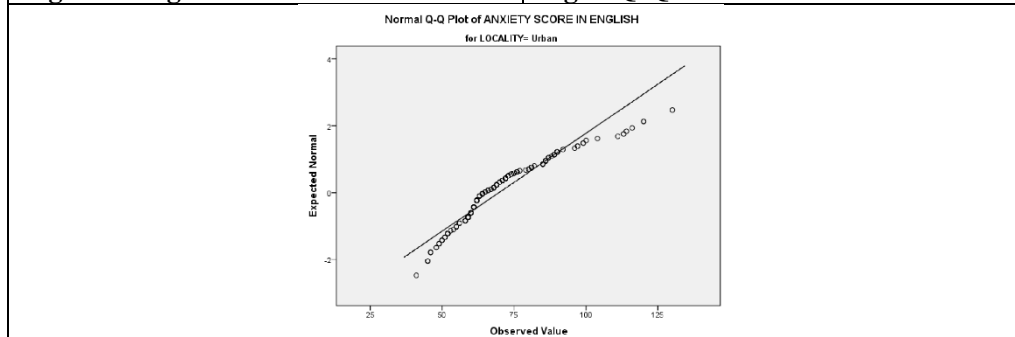
From the above **Table 3.** showed that the co-efficient of  $Z_{Sk}$  was  $0.294/0.198=1.484$  and the co-efficient of  $Z_{Ku}$  was  $-0.175/0.394=-0.444$ . In case of Urban, the study showed that the co-efficient of  $Z_{Sk}$  was  $1.163/0.405=2.87$  and the co-efficient of  $Z_{Ku}$  was  $1.351/0.556=2.428$ . Both these values were under the range of  $\pm 3$  and fulfil the assumption of normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Hence the score distribution of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety with respect to locale was normal in nature.



**Fig 5. Histogram of SLCA w.r.t. locale**



**Fig 6. Q-Q Plot of SLCA w.r.t. Rural**



**Fig 7. Q-Q Plot of SLCA w.r.t. Urban**

It was observed from the all above graphical representations of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety that:

- Histogram indicated that data can be considered as normally distributed. (Figure 1& Figure 5)

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- Q-Q Plot indicated that distribution of the score was almost on the straight line. (Figure 2,3,6 & 7)

From the above graphical representations, it was concluded that score distribution of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety was normal in nature. So, parametric statistics can be used for analysis the data.

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 1. Testing of Hypotheses and Interpretation of Result:

##### Testing of HO1.1:

**HO1.1:** There is no significant difference in Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety between male and female for secondary school students.

**Table 4: Group Statistics of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety with respect to Gender**

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety	Female	150	85.53	15.900
	Male	150	80.07	22.570

**Table 5: Independent Sample Test Between Groups (Female and Male)**

Gender		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
SLC A	Equal variances not assumed	41.17	.00	2.42	267.2	.016	5.460	2.254	1.02	9.898

The **Table 5** Analysis of t-test for equality of means between two groups shows that t value is 2.422 and its associated significance value is 0.016 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the **HO1.1** is rejected. It is concluded that there is significant difference in Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety between Female and Male secondary level school students, i.e. mean difference of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety between female and male group is significant.

##### Testing of Ho1.2:

**HO1.2:** There is no significant difference in Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety between rural and urban for secondary school students.

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**Table 6: Group Statistics of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety with respect to Locale**

Locale		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety	Rural	150	95.84	12.049	0.984
	Urban	150	69.75	17.015	1.389

**Table 7: Independent Sample Test Between Groups (Rural and Urban)**

Locale		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lo	Upper	
SLC A	Equal variances not assumed	10.205	0.002	15.324	268.413	0.000	26.087	1.702	22.735	29.438

From the above **Table 7** shows Analysis of t-test for equality of means between two groups shows that t value is 15.324 and its associated significance value is 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the **H<sub>01.2</sub>** is rejected. It is concluded that there is significant difference in Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety between Rural and Urban secondary level school students.

**Testing of H<sub>02.1</sub>:**

**H<sub>02.1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in Academic Achievement in English between male and female for secondary school students.

**Table 8: Group Statistics of Academic Achievement in English with respect to Gender**

Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Academic Achievement in English	Female	150	40.53	10.557	0.862
	Male	150	43.32	8.208	0.670

**Table 9: Independent Sample Test Between Groups (Female and Male)**

Gender		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Academic Achievement in English	Equal variances not assumed	11.997	0.001	-2.552	280.935	0.011	-2.787	1.092	-4.936	0.637

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From the above **Table 9** shows Analysis of t-test for equality of means between two groups shows that t value is -2.552 and its associated significance value is 0.011 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the **H<sub>0</sub>2.1** is rejected. It is concluded that there is significant difference in Academic Achievement in English between Female and Male secondary level school students, i.e. mean difference of Academic Achievement in English between female and male group is significant.

### Testing of H<sub>0</sub>2.2:

**H<sub>0</sub>2.2:** There is no significant difference in Academic Achievement in English between rural and urban for secondary school students.

**Table 10: Group Statistics of Academic Achievement in English with respect to Locale**

Locale	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Academic Achievement in English	Rural	150	36.32	0.849
	Urban	150	47.53	0.274

**Table 11: Independent Sample Test Between Groups (Rural and Urban)**

Locale		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Academic Achievement in English	Equal variances assumed	163.70	0.000	-12.566	179.797	0.000	-11.21	0.892	-12.97	-9.45
	Unequal variances			-12.566	179.797	0.000	-11.21	0.892	-12.97	-9.45
				-12.566	179.797	0.000	-11.21	0.892	-12.97	-9.45

From the above **Table 11** shows Analysis of t-test for equality of means between two groups shows that t value is -12.566 and its associated significance value is 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the **H<sub>0</sub>2.2** is rejected. It is concluded that there is significant difference in Academic Achievement in English between Rural and Urban secondary level school students.

### Testing of H<sub>0</sub>3:

**H<sub>0</sub>3:** There is no significant correlation between Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety and Academic Achievement in English for secondary school students.

**Table 12: Correlation between Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety and Academic Achievement in English**

Correlations		SUM SLCA	SUM AAE
SUM SLCA	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.778**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	300	300
SUM AAE	Pearson Correlation	-0.778**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	300	300

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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The above **Table 12** shows that the Pearson Correlation value is -0.778 and its associated significance value is 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the  $H_03$  is rejected. It is concluded that there is significant correlation between Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety and Academic Achievement in English for secondary school students. There is a highly negative significant correlation between Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety and Academic Achievement in English of secondary school students.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

With regard to gender, the study shows Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety has relation with gender and both male and female students have above the average range of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety. Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety of female students differs from male students, which implies that both students' group are not having equal Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety. For many different issues like their growing up, family culture and lack of opportunity female students having more Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety than male students.

The present study indicates that Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety has a relation with locale (rural and urban). These findings imply that Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety differs in rural and urban secondary school students. Students from rural areas face many difficulties and do not get proper guidance in English. On the other hand, for the students of urban area easily have the opportunity to take proper guidance and availability of resources. These reasons make the difference between rural and urban students in their Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety. The students of rural locale have more Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety than urban locale secondary school students.

With regard to gender, the study shows that Academic Achievement in English has a relation with gender. Academic Achievement in English of male students differs from female students, which implies that the both student groups are not having equal Academic Achievement in English. For many different issues like their growing up, family culture and availability of education, so female students having less Academic Achievement in English than male students.

The present study indicates that Academic Achievement in English has a relation with locale of secondary school students. Rural students face several problems like not having good teachers, lack of proper guidance but for the students of urban area easily have the opportunity to take proper guidance, availability of resources. These reasons make the difference between rural and urban students in their Academic Achievement in English. This study shows that students of urban area having more Academic Achievement in English than rural secondary school students.

There is a high negative correlation between Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety and Academic Achievement in English of secondary school students. Students having higher Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety have significantly low level of Academic Achievement in English due to stress, phobia, lack of confidence, surficial content knowledge, test anxiety and for other lacuna of their knowledge domain.

### **CONCLUSION**

In this westernized education system English language plays an important role and it is equally important for students to have better academic achievement in English. This study is an

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empirical study and tried to measure students Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety and Academic Achievement in English. The study includes for categorical variables which are gender and locale. Beside this, the study also tries to measure the effect of Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety on Academic Achievement in English.

Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety of secondary school students differs in relation to gender and locale. The findings indicate that students have Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety irrespective of gender and locale. But they need to improve themselves by improving their interest and for their education. The female students have more Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety than male students. Also, the students of rural area have more Second Language (English) Classroom Anxiety than students from urban area.

Academic Achievement in English of secondary school students differs in relation to gender and locale. Accordingly, to the study female students are having less Academic Achievement in English than male students. Female students need to increase their effort on English and reduce their anxiety. Also, the students of rural area have less Academic Achievement in English than students from urban area.

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that students need to be focused on their study habit by increasing their interest to achieve their goal in future life. Beside this, Government should take necessary steps by organizing the education system better so that no students get scared of English and reduce their anxiety in English language learning in classroom.

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