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The Role of Cultural Sensitivity and Language Proficiency in Mitigating Foreign Language Learning Stress among University Students

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*doi: 10.33472/AFJBS.6.6.2024.7632-7646***ABSTRACT:**

In the diverse land of culture and language, the play of language acquisition and cultural sensitivity proves to have a very intricate as well as vital relationship in almost every field. However, in this particular study role of cultural sensitivity and language competency and its influence on foreign language stress is studied extensively, to bring out a clear picture why both the factors play a very important role in the educational field among higher education students. The purpose of this study was to investigate the association between stress related to foreign languages, language proficiency, and cultural sensitivity among Uttar Pradesh higher education students. Examining the effects of cultural sensitivity and language competency on stress related to foreign languages and determining the elements that contribute to this stress were the main goals. Researcher employed descriptive survey approach, the study focused on postgraduate and undergraduate students from five different departments at Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University. Using a straightforward random selection method, 168 students were chosen as the sample. The three measures that made up the data gathering tools were Language Proficiency, Cultural Sensitivity, and Foreign Language Stress. Each question on these 82-items Likert scales had a five-point rating. Descriptive statistics like two way ANOVA was used to evaluate the data. The study discovered that language competency and cultural sensitivity significantly affected the stress associated with learning a foreign language. The findings showed that students' levels of language competency and cultural sensitivity were positively correlated with their reports of less stress related to learning a foreign language. Furthermore, the study discovered a substantial interaction between language proficiency and cultural sensitivity, indicating a complicated and multifactorial link between these variables. The results of this study have important ramifications for language instruction and acquisition. To lessen the burden of learning a foreign language and enhance overall language competency, they emphasize the need of integrating cultural sensitivity and linguistic proficiency training into language education programs. The study also underlines how important it is for teachers to take their students' cultural backgrounds and linguistic ability levels into account when planning language lessons.

Keywords: Foreign Language Stress, Cultural Sensitivity, Language Competency and Higher Education.

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1. Introduction

Language is term, which holds diversity under it wings. When an individual tends to dive into the realm of diverse language and attain new language skills. They evolve the fear of inferiority, or face problem to come in terms with the language. Since learning an unknown language is not any regular feat. It requires utter determination and time. To attain mastery in any language one must be aware of the cultural nuances related to it. Each language holds a cultural significance and deep meaning to it. Hence a learner must be aware of the cultural nuances and be sensitive towards it. Hence the role of cultural sensitivity and language proficiency is vital in term of acquiring a new language. One would be considered to master a certain language only if they have a tight grasp of the vocabulary. Hence for attaining proficiency. One must be very active and determined towards the culture and the language, they wish to master.

While we, talk about the cultural awareness and the language competency. We cannot unseen the major wording that comes along with learning a new language, it is seen in most of the new language learners. It tends to influence and jeopardize the learner's capability and leave them to feel insecure and dejected. This particular term is 'stress' that influence the ability to acquire a new expression. Language stress is something which is very evident in the present time. And it's quite spread among the new learners when they are unable to perform well in a language classroom. Or when the language becomes a barrier for them to learn anything new and communicate with their peers. This is mostly seen in the environment with multiple cultures and variety of language that comes with it. A person who is raised in a diverse background are seen to be multilingual and adjust well, when put in a different culture. They are seen to adapt well into the culture and their ways, the linguistic abilities are very high among these students. Unlike the pupils who are not exposed to many cultures often face language stress and are unable to cope well in a new cultural surrounding. Hence, delving into the intricate variables that influence language learning experiences is essential for a researcher examining the relationship between foreign language stress, cultural sensitivity, and language competency in students enrolled in higher education. Many eminent researchers have worked on these concepts and provided their own insights as presented below.

The term 'Foreign Language Stress' describes the unease and strain people feel while they are learning or speaking a language other than their mother tongue Horwitz and Cope (1986). Stress can take many different forms, such as discomfort during conversations, anxiety over language skills, and fear of making mistakes (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Conversely, cultural sensitivity refers to the knowledge, comprehension, and respect that a person has for cultural variations. This is important for both language acquisition and effective communication (Bennett, 2008). Finally, linguistic competency is the degree of skill and fluency in a foreign language that affects a person's capacity to overcome linguistic and cultural obstacles (Bialystok, 2001).

There are several facets and a complex interaction between these components. According to Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), language competency serves as a fundamental component that moulds a person's experience learning a language and has a direct bearing on their degree of stress related to learning a foreign language. As people feel more competent and secure in their language skills, higher levels of proficiency are frequently linked to lower levels of language stress (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018). On the other hand, poorer skill levels might make linguistic stress worse, which would make you feel anxious and frustrated (Horwitz et al., 1986). But it's important to understand that language ability is not the only factor that affects how much language stress a person experiences. In this relationship, cultural sensitivity is a critical mediating factor. Cultural sensitivity influences how people perceive and react to cultural differences encountered during language acquisition, acting as a bridge between language

competency and foreign language stress (Bennett, 2008). According to Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001), people who are sensitive to cultural differences are better able to navigate a variety of cultural situations and overcome the difficulties involved in learning a new language. They exhibit increased receptivity to novel experiences, recognition of cultural heterogeneity, and the capacity to modify their communication approaches correspondingly (Bennett, 2008). Therefore, even in circumstances when their language ability is not as advanced, culturally sensitive people may feel reduced levels of foreign language stress (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014).

Moreover, cultural sensitivity can improve language competency by encouraging a better comprehension of linguistic conventions and cultural subtleties (Ward et al., 2001). Over time, language competency improves as people become more sensitive to cultural variations and acquire a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the language (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018). On the other hand, linguistic stress can obstruct language acquisition and proficiency development (Horwitz et al., 1986). Therefore, encouraging successful language learning and lowering language stress among students in higher education need developing cultural awareness.

Furthermore, the correlation among language stress, cultural sensitivity, and language competency is dynamic, changing over time in response to different contextual circumstances. For instance, immersion experiences abroad can help people become more culturally sensitive and proficient speakers of the language, but they can also make language learning more difficult because of the difficulties in adjusting to a new language and culture (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Analogously, educational environments that place a high value on intercultural competency and offer assistance to language learners have the potential to reduce language stress and promote the growth of both cultural sensitivity and language proficiency (Bennett, 2008).

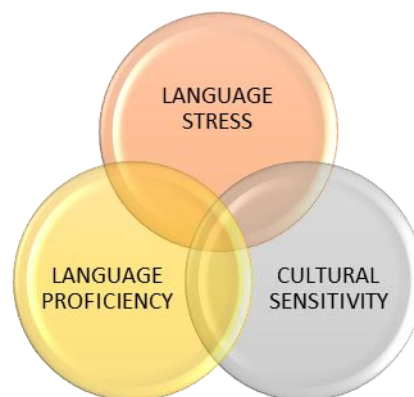


Figure: Interrelation between Language Stress, Cultural Sensitivity and Language Proficiency

Ultimately, the emphasis on foreign languages, cultural awareness, and language ability are interrelated concepts that influence how college students approach their language studies. Cultural sensitivity is a critical mediating factor in the link between language competency and the degree of foreign language stress that people encounter. To support successful language learning and lessen language stress among students in higher education, it is important to cultivate cultural sensitivity. In order to assist language learners and promote intercultural competency in higher education settings, educators and legislators must have a thorough awareness of the intricate interactions between these variables.

Therefore, the study tends to comprehend the role of cultural sensitivity and language competency and its impact on foreign language stress. For this we have discussed the certain variables and also discussed the relation that they share. So, that the study could justify the

impact they have on each other. It won't be possible without clarifying the relationship that they share. Hence the language stress, cultural sensitivity and language competency play an inevitable role in the language acquaintance.

Role of Cultural Sensitivity and Language Proficiency in Educational Field

In the realm of education, cultural sensitivity and linguistic competency have a wide range of effects on both the experiences and results of teachers and students. In educational settings, especially in increasingly varied and multicultural classrooms, cultural sensitivity often described as the understanding and respectful evaluation of cultural differences and similarities is essential (Banks, 2015). Culturally sensitive teachers are more likely to establish inclusive classrooms that recognize and celebrate the variety of their students' origins. Since students feel more recognized, appreciated, and understood as a result of this inclusion, student engagement and academic achievement may improve (Gay, 2018). However, insensitivity to cultural differences might cause minority students to feel excluded and alienated, which could negatively impact their general well-being and academic success (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Effective and correct language use is referred to as language competence, and it is another essential component of academic achievement. To fully understand the curriculum, engage in class discussions, and pass exams, students learning in a language other than their native tongue must have a high degree of linguistic ability. According to research, linguistic competence has a direct impact on academic success, with low proficiency creating major obstacles to learning and academic success (Cummins, 2000). Language competency of instructors is also essential as it affects their capacity to interact with students in an efficient manner, explain concepts to them clearly, and evaluate their comprehension appropriately (Lucas & Villegas, 2013).

The association between linguistic competency and cultural sensitivity is especially important when it comes to foreign language instruction. Language hurdles and cultural misinterpretations can make stress and anxiety that foreign language learners frequently suffer worse (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). By fostering a supportive learning environment that recognizes students' cultural origins and language limitations, educators who are both culturally sensitive and fluent in the target language can assist reduce this stress (Young, 1991). By fostering both language learning and cultural competency, this method equips students for success in an increasingly interconnected world (Kramsch, 1993).

Acknowledging and addressing the many cultural norms, attitudes, and practices that students bring to the classroom is a crucial aspect of cultural sensitivity in education. This understanding can help educators develop lesson plans that better meet the requirements of a variety of student demographics. One example of culturally relevant teaching that has been demonstrated to increase student performance is the inclusion of students' cultural references in all stages of the learning process (Ladson-Billings, 1995). These methods support kids' feeling of belonging and legitimize their cultural identities, both of which are critical to their social and intellectual growth. Alternatively, language competency includes the pragmatic abilities required for successful communication in a variety of circumstances in addition to the technical capacity to utilize a language. In order to model proper language use and offer insightful feedback, educators must be fluent in the language of teaching. Moreover, teachers can support bilingual and multilingual students more effectively if they have a deeper awareness of the sociolinguistic components of language usage, such as code-switching and language variety (Garcia & Wei, 2014).

In higher education, where the student body is highly diverse, this diversity can be particularly seen in the central universities of India, where students from the different landscapes come together to acquire knowledge. Even international students are also seen in the universities run by the central government. Hence cultural sensitivity and language proficiency are

indispensable. International students and students coming from various cultural background, face unique challenges that can highly influence their academic success and overall experience. These students often have to navigate a new cultural environment while simultaneously acquiring the academic language necessary for success in their studies. Institutions that prioritize cultural sensitivity and provide support for language development can significantly ease this transition, helping international as well as students from different cultural backgrounds to thrive for better educational facilities.

Cultural sensitivity and language proficiency, on the other hand, are not static qualities; rather, they can be developed via continuous professional development and reflective practice. Teachers can improve their cultural competence by participating in training that emphasizes cultural sensitivity, bias reduction, and inclusive teaching practices (Gay, 2018). Similarly, language proficiency can be improved through continuous language learning and engagement, which includes immersive experiences and working with native speakers of other languages (Kramsch, 1993). Beyond the classroom, cultural sensitivity and linguistic competency have an impact on larger educational policies and practices. In order to assist students, acquire the competency required for academic achievement, schools and institutions should implement inclusive curriculum that represent a variety of viewpoints and offer language support services like tutoring and language laboratories. Furthermore, it is possible to create evaluation procedures that are both linguistically and culturally sensitive, guaranteeing that every student has an equal chance to exhibit their abilities and knowledge (Cummins, 2000).

Subsequently two essential elements of a successful education are linguistic fluency and cultural awareness. Students are better prepared for involvement in a varied and interconnected world, the learning environment is improved, and student engagement and accomplishment are supported. All students can benefit from more inclusive and equitable learning environments if educators and institutions give priority to these components.

2. Literature Review

Following literatures were reviewed by the researcher to gain an insight on the previous works done on the topic of study. This review of related literature has extensively helped the researchers to read on the current works done on the field. Therefore, the following researches were found to be relevant with the current study, hence mentioned below-

Brainee (2024) conducted an extensive exploration on topic 'Investigating the Impact of Cultural Awareness on Language Learners' Motivation and Proficiency' The purpose of the study is to look at how cultural awareness affects language learners' motivation and ability. The study used a qualitative methodology to investigate the obstacles encountered by language learners as a result of inadequate cultural awareness. It entails a critical analysis of pertinent research to find viable approaches for helping students become more culturally conscious. The study focuses on language learners from various cultural origins that struggle with misunderstanding and cultural insensitivity when learning a new language. A review of the literature is part of the study design in order to assess previous research on cultural awareness and how it affects language acquisition. It seeks to shed light on the significance of respect and cultural tolerance in language learning settings. The literature that discusses how cultural awareness affects language learners' motivation and competency is chosen as part of the sample approach. A study of pertinent papers and publications is conducted in order to get information about practical approaches to improving learners' cultural awareness. The research review indicates that attitudes, motivation, and learning practices of language learners are significantly shaped by cultural awareness. Techniques like engaging in cultural events and receiving intercultural communication training have been found to be successful in raising motivation and enhancing language learning ability. The results emphasize how crucial cross-cultural

comprehension is to improving language learning results. Jiang (2023) conducted an applauded study on the topic 'Examining the influence of foreign language anxiety on organizational strategies and foreign language proficiency in Chinese secondary EFL learners.' The study looks at the connections between organizational techniques, foreign language proficiency (FLP), and foreign language anxiety (FLA) among Chinese EFL learners. Its goal is to investigate how organizational methods mediate the relationship between FLA and FLP. There were five processes involved in the data analysis process: measuring models using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), presenting descriptive statistics, testing for common method bias, investigating correlations using structural equation modelling (SEM), and doing mediation studies. The study obtained agreement from participants and their parents, ensuring ethical standards were upheld while using self-reported data. 524 Chinese Han pupils in the seventh and eighth grades made up the sample. The gender distribution was approximately equal, and the mean age was 13.66 years. FLP was measured using English test results, while age and gender were taken into account as factors in the research. The study discovered a negative correlation between FLA and FLP and organizational tactics. FLP and organizational tactics have a good correlation. Disparities in English competence between male and female pupils were noted. Since common technique bias was eliminated, the study offers empirical support for the use of intervention strategies by EFL educators. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the study recommends that future research include additional accomplishment emotions and cognitive techniques, as well as participant recruitment from a variety of Chinese ethnic groups. Masutani (2022) elaborated on topic 'Foreign Language Anxiety in the Classroom: How Can Teachers Support Learners to Alleviate Their Anxiety?' This study explores Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) among Iranian EFL students, emphasizing its symptoms, causes, and mitigation techniques for anxiety during language acquisition. It explores instructor perspectives on dealing with FLA and the use of quiet in EFL classrooms. Data on FLA symptoms and triggers were gathered for the study via semi-structured interviews with Iranian EFL students. A thorough grasp of learners' viewpoints was made possible by the use of surveys and interviews. Qualitative in-depth interviews with seasoned educators were also used in the study to examine teacher practices and perspectives. Iranian EFL students exhibiting FLA symptoms made up the sample, with anxiety over speaking English in class being the main emphasis. Experienced educators from other nations were also included in the study to offer thoughts for dealing with FLA in the classroom. The key findings include that, despite the experience of learners, FLA symptoms such as a fear of making mistakes and a reluctance to talk in English still exist. Collaborative rule-making, implicit mistake correction and vocal and nonverbal anxiety-reduction methods are strategies to lessen FLA. The unwillingness of learners to voice their ideas in the target language is one of the factors that cause FLA. In order to reduce FLA and foster communication in EFL classrooms, teacher perspectives place a strong emphasis on student-centered strategies. Online surveys were shown to be a secure and practical way to gather information during a pandemic; they have benefits over in-person interviews, but there may be disadvantages in terms of response precision and quick explanation. Wang and Willard (2022) elaborated on the topic 'The Relationship between Learning Styles, Study Effort and English Language Proficiency in Chinese Middle Schools.' The purpose of the study was to find out how middle school students in China performed on English exams and what their preferences were for learning methods and effort. It aimed to ascertain if academic achievement could be predicted by learning styles and whether effort was a compensating factor for language proficiency. 100 Chinese high school students who had studied English for six years participated in the study, which was conducted in a public high school in eastern China. An online questionnaire was administered to the participants, which measured their learning preferences based on the VAK model, their effort level in studying English, and their results on the middle school final English test. The

data were analysed using basic linear regression techniques. There were one hundred Chinese high school pupils in two courses who were older than sixteen years old. As first-year students, they were selected such that their language proficiency would be reflected in the most recent summative evaluation results from middle school final examinations. As opposed to kinaesthetic preference, visual and auditory preferences were better indicators of achievement on the English exam. One important predictor of academic performance was found to be effort. The study emphasized how crucial it is to take into account students' learning preferences as well as their effort when analysing their success on language examinations, especially when middle schools in China are involved. Abdullah (2021) explored on topic 'Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety among EFL Learners in Swedish Lower Secondary Schools'. The goal of Abdullah's (2021) study was to find out how nervous students who were learning English as a foreign language in lower secondary schools in Sweden were when speaking the language. A population of 120 EFL students from three distinct lower secondary schools in Sweden was the subject of the study. A survey questionnaire was used in the quantitative study design to gather information on the participants' degrees of anxiety related to speaking a foreign language. Convenience sampling was the strategy employed, and participants were chosen according to their accessibility and availability. Descriptive statistics, such as mean scores and standard deviations, were used in the data analysis to ascertain the participants' general degree of anxiety when speaking a foreign language. The study's conclusions showed that EFL students at lower secondary schools in Sweden had a modest amount of anxiety while speaking a foreign language. The study also found that a number of other variables, including nervousness about making mistakes, lack of confidence, and fear of receiving a poor review, contributed to this anxiety. Furthermore, compared to their male peers, female students appeared to have higher degrees of anxiety while speaking a foreign language, according to the data. The study sheds important information on the experiences of EFL students in Swedish lower secondary schools and emphasizes the necessity of focused interventions to deal with the problem of anxiety related to speaking a foreign language. The results can guide the creation of support networks and methods to assist EFL students in overcoming their nervousness and advancing their language skills. Huang and Ouyang (2021) extensively studied on topic 'Foreign language proficiency in higher education'. The study looks at language competency in Chinese language programs with an emphasis on instructional strategies. To address exposure to the target language, classroom interaction, and activity kinds, it integrates proficiency scores, focus group interviews, and classroom observations. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines qualitative information from focus group interviews and classroom observations with quantitative competency ratings. A better comprehension of language competency in the context of Chinese language lessons is made possible by this thorough technique. Higher education professors and students studying Chinese make up the sample. Ability tests, classroom observations, and focus group interviews yield data that is gathered to give a comprehensive picture of language ability in this particular school setting. Key concerns include exposure to the target language, classroom interaction, and the kinds of activities in Chinese language programs are covered in the qualitative data. In order to improve language competence, the study highlights how crucial it is for instructors to incorporate professional development activities. In general, the study offers significant perspectives on instructional strategies and linguistic competence in Chinese language learning. Gholami et.al. (2021) elucidated on topic 'Developing EFL Learners' Intercultural Sensitivity Through Computer-Mediated Peer Interaction'. This article investigates how Iranian EFL learners' intercultural sensitivity (IS) is affected by online interactions with speakers of other cultures. By concentrating on the growth of IS through interaction with intercultural speakers in an online community, it seeks to close the gap in previous research. Three groups participated in the study: an online group conversing with speakers from different

cultures, an experimental group having in-person cultural conversations, and a control group having in-person discussions. Because of the non-normal distribution of responses, non-parametric tests were used in the data analysis. Five characteristics made up the ISS questionnaire, which was used to measure IS. Iranian EFL learners participated, and the online group had the highest mean rank in IS development. To improve intercultural sensitivity, the study made use of an online peer-to-peer reflective digital literacy initiative. When compared to the other groups, the online group had shown the greatest improvement in IS. The facet of interaction involvement in the ISS earned the highest mean score. The development of learners' IS was positively enhanced by online conversation with intercultural speakers. The fact that the control groups intercultural sensitivity (IS) did not significantly improve indicates how well online intercultural conversation can help EFL learners' IS.

While going through the above-mentioned literatures the researcher found that a very few to no work has been done on the foreign language stress, cultural sensitivity and language proficiency combining together its positives and the negatives. Also, most of the works are done on the language students. But this particular study aims to bring together all the three factors and look at the impact it has on each other.

Rationale of the Study

Higher education has become more international, which has led to a more diversified student body pursuing academic goals in classrooms with a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The field of language learning is made more interesting by the diversity that it offers. Academic students, especially those pursuing language acquisition as a second or foreign language, may encounter considerable stress associated with their language learning pursuits. Many things might cause this stress, including as linguistic difficulties, cultural misinterpretations, and the expectation to succeed academically in a language other than one's own. Therefore, improving these kids' educational experiences and outcomes requires an awareness of how cultural sensitivity and language competency may help to mitigate this stress. Also, this study, could be the first of its kind, which emphasizes on the influence of cultural sensitivity and language competency among the higher education students. However, keeping its prospect open for further researches. This study would contribute to a lot in the field of research to understand the language acquisition barriers among the current youths and how we could overcome it with proper initiations.

Research Question

What is the influence of cultural sensitivity, language proficiency, and their interaction on the foreign language stress experienced by students of higher education?

Research Objective

To study the impact of cultural sensitivity, language proficiency and their interaction on foreign language stress among students of higher education.

Null Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant impact of cultural sensitivity, language proficiency and their interaction on foreign language stress among students of higher education.

OR

Null Hypothesis 1.1: There is no significant impact of cultural sensitivity on foreign language stress among students of higher education.

Null Hypothesis 1.2: There is no significant impact of language proficiency on foreign language stress among students of higher education.

Null Hypothesis 1.3: There is no significant impact of interaction between cultural sensitivity and language proficiency on foreign language stress among students of higher education.

3. Research Method

To make the research more valid and reliable, researcher in this particular study has been chosen Descriptive Survey Method as the method of research.

Population of the Study

Students of higher Education in Uttar Pradesh have been taken as population in the present study. Post Graduate students from different departments of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, specifically for the academic year 2023-24.

Sample and Sampling Technique of the Study

Present study is conducted on the influence of cultural sensitivity and language competency among undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate (PG) students of higher education. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (central University) is selected purposively but the sample is extracted from five Departments among more than 40 Departments of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (central University) by employing simple random sampling technique to select participants specifically the academic year 2023-24. The study aims to gather the insight from a diverse range of students enrolled in the institution hence only five Departments are taken in the sample. Specifically, sample of 168 students was drawn from the concerned institution which is a prominent higher education institution in Uttar Pradesh, known for its diverse student body. Adequate sample size and statistical power were the driving forces behind the selection of 168 individuals.

Tools of the Study

In the realm of research, tools serve as the essential instruments for collecting data, providing researchers with the means to delve into their chosen subjects. Among the vast arsenal of tools, the researcher has chosen Scale as the method of collection of data.

Here the researcher constructed three Scales to measure the Foreign Language Stress, Cultural Sensitivity and Language Proficiency among the students of higher education. This particular scales consists overall 82 items in total and each scale consists of 30, 28, and 24 items. Five-point Likert scale was followed in the item which is ranging from 'Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree'. These scales offer a quantitative way for researcher to assess respondents' opinions. The items of these scales are taken in consideration by taking opinions from the expert. The data acquired is enhanced by its minor fluctuations in reaction, which are made possible by its simplicity, which also promotes involvement.

Scoring of the Data

5-point Likert scale was use for the scoring of the quantitative data that was collected through the students, as they marked the most appropriate choice from the scale of 'Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree' which was rated from 1 to 5. Later the positive and negative questions were differentiated in the scale and scoring was done as per the nature of the questions. The researcher has rated the negative questions from the point 5 to 1. The students who ticked 'strongly disagree' they were rated 5, similarly, the students who ticked 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree' and 'strongly disagree' were rated 4,3,2,1 respectively.

Statistical Analysis are given in the Table 1 and 2

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Cultural Sensitivity and Language Proficiency

Dependent Variable: Foreign Language Stress (FLS)				
Cultural Sensitivity (CS)	Language Proficiency (LP)	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Lower Cultural Sensitivity	Higher Language Proficiency	66.66	7.055	55
	Lower Language Proficiency	72.28	8.023	30
	Total	69.47	8.146	85
Higher Cultural Sensitivity	Higher Language Proficiency	72.68	11.539	33
	Lower Language Proficiency	85.96	9.967	50
	Total	79.32	12.142	83
Total	Higher Language Proficiency	71.88	10.261	88
	Lower Language Proficiency	81.79	11.698	80
	Total	76.83	12.262	168

Table 2: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Foreign Language Stress (FLS)					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
CS	2260.661	51	44.327	3.633	0.016
LP	4377.128	46	95.155	7.800	0.001
CS * LP	1497.277	54	27.727	2.273	0.080
Error	122.000	10	12.200	-	-
Total	993037.000	168	-	-	-
Corrected Total	24947.661	167	-	-	-

a. R Squared = 0.995 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.918)

Impact of cultural sensitivity on foreign language stress among students of higher education

Table 2 shows that the cultural sensitivity F-value is 3.633, significant at the 0.01 level with $df=1/168$. It shows that there is a substantial difference in the mean scores of higher education students on the scale of foreign language stress of greater and lower cultural sensitivity. Thus, cultural sensitivity has a major effect on college students' stress related to learning a foreign language. Therefore, the null hypothesis which holds that cultural sensitivity has no discernible impact on students' stress related to learning a foreign language in higher education is rejected. Additionally, the mean score of foreign language stress for students in higher education with lower cultural sensitivity is 69.47, which is considerably lower than the mean score of 79.32 for students in higher education with higher cultural sensitivity (refer to Table 1). Therefore, it can be said that students in higher education with lesser cultural sensitivity had less stress when

learning a foreign language in comparison to students in higher education with more cultural sensitivity.

Impact of language proficiency on foreign language stress among students of higher education

From the Table 2, it can be seen that the F-value is 7.80 for language proficiency is significant. It shows that the mean scores on the scale of foreign language stress associated. With language proficiency differ significantly. So, there was significant influence of language proficiency on foreign language stress among students of higher education. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant impact of language proficiency on foreign language stress among students of higher education is rejected. Further the mean score of foreign language stress of students of higher education having higher language proficiency is 71.88 which is significantly lower than that of students of higher education having lower language proficiency whose mean score of foreign language stress is 81.79 (vide Table 1). It may, therefore, be said that language proficiency is important aspect and foreign language stress is influenced by language proficiency significantly.

Impact of interaction between cultural sensitivity and language proficiency on foreign language stress among students of higher education

The F-value for the interaction cultural sensitivity and language proficiency is 2.273 which is not significant at 0.01 level with df 1/168 (Vide Table 2). It indicates that the mean scores on the scale of on foreign language stress of students having lower and higher cultural sensitivity in higher education belonging to lower and higher language proficiency did not differ significantly. So, there was no significant impact of interaction between cultural sensitivity and language proficiency on foreign language stress among students of higher education. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant impact of interaction between cultural sensitivity and language proficiency on foreign language stress among students of higher education is not rejected. It may, therefore, be said that foreign language stress was found to be independent of interaction between cultural sensitivity and language proficiency of the students of higher education.

4. Conclusion

Language proficiency and cultural sensitivity have a substantial impact on foreign language stress among college students, with both elements being essential. University students frequently struggle with language learning stress, which is greatly impacted by cultural sensitivity. Higher levels of stress are linked to lower levels of cultural sensitivity because in a classroom setting when cultural origins are not sufficiently acknowledged and respected, children may feel misunderstood or alienated. On the other hand, stress may be decreased in a culturally aware learning environment by promoting inclusion and a sense of belonging. Similar to this, stress levels are strongly impacted by language skill, with more proficiency being associated with lower stress levels. Learners who possess greater proficiency in the foreign language they are studying are better able to comprehend and engage in classroom activities, which reduces their anxiety and dissatisfaction. The relationship between cultural sensitivity and linguistic aptitude, however, does not seem to have a significant effect on stress levels. This shows that although both variables reduce stress on their own, the total amount of stress that students feel is not considerably changed by their combined effect. To summarise, while they do not significantly alter stress levels, cultural sensitivity and language proficiency play a critical role in determining foreign language stress among higher education students.

5. Discussion

Given the complexity of stressors in language learning situations, it is reasonable to assume that there is no significant interaction between linguistic skill and cultural awareness in determining foreign language stress. Speaking and understanding other cultures are two factors that are clearly beneficial in lowering stress, but their combined impact may not show a clear-cut or direct correlation with stress levels. There may be other important factors that obscure the connection between language proficiency and cultural sensitivity. Some of these factors are individual learning styles, which determine how students absorb and remember new language material; prior language learning experiences, which mould students' attitudes and expectations regarding language acquisition; and cultural adaptation strategies, which affect how students adjust to unfamiliar cultural contexts and expectations.

These elements may considerably lessen the apparent effects of the interplay between language ability and cultural sensitivity by adding to the overall feeling of stress associated with learning a foreign language. It is possible that a wider range of factors than only language competency and cultural sensitivity affect the stress related to learning a foreign language if there is no substantial relationship. Because of this complexity, it is crucial to manage foreign language stress from an all-encompassing perspective that takes into account each student's unique experiences and qualities in addition to linguistic and cultural issues. In light of this, educational institutions and instructors should work to establish welcoming classrooms that are attentive to cultural differences, offer strong language assistance, and take into account the varied requirements and histories of their students. This all-encompassing strategy has a better chance of successfully reducing students' stress related to learning a foreign language and improving their entire language learning experience.

Suggestions

Numerous avenues for future research become apparent when one digs further into the complex terrain of foreign language stress among college students. The impact that cultural sensitivity has in reducing language-related stresses is one important thing to think about. Language learning and competency are critically dependent on cultural competence. Therefore, examining the ways in which cultural sensitivity affects students' language learning experiences and ensuing stress levels might provide priceless insights. But there is plethora of scopes on which further research could be conducted in the field of language concerning different factors and variables. These prospects for future innovation are:

- To investigate the impact of cultural sensitivity on reducing language-related stress among the students of higher education.
- Examine the effectiveness of multicultural curriculum, intercultural communication courses, or cultural immersion programs in creating a welcoming atmosphere for language learners.
- Investigate how cultural sensitivity intersects with variables such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and educational background in influencing stress related to learning a foreign language.
- Examine how stress affects college students' language proficiency. Pay special attention to the language skills—fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation—that are most closely correlated with stress.
- To learn more about the origins and trends of foreign language stress, conduct long-term studies tracking students' stress levels and language proficiency development.
- Examine the potential benefits of various language learning strategies and interventions for enhancing language proficiency and reducing stress in university students.

- Analyse the relationship between foreign language stress and personal traits including motivation, learning preferences, personality, and self-efficacy beliefs.

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