



The Implications of Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory in Pakistani Context: A Critique from the Perspective of Sociolinguistics

Nasim Gul¹, Afia Tasneem Wasti², Syed Sabih Ul Hassan³

Keywords:

Anxiety/Uncertainty,
AUM Theory,
Communication,
ICC,
Management,
Sociolinguistics.

ABSTRACT

Communication is one of the essential and complex elements in our life; essential in the sense that it is the lively spirit of life and complex in the sense that communication is culture and culture is communication. It becomes more complex when there is communication between people sharing different cultures and languages. In such situations, people in interaction and communication feel anxiety and uncertainty. Therefore, the study in hand intends to unfold the implications of anxiety and uncertainty management (AUM) theory in Pakistani context. The study aims to see how people in Pakistan manage and accommodate communication/interaction in speaking situations where linguistic and cultural diversity exist. A sample of 8 English teachers and 14 PhD and 10 MPhil English linguistics scholars were selected from the population of teachers and students of English Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST). In order to achieve the main aim of this proposed research, a mixed-method approach is followed. The data are collected through validated questionnaires consisting of both open-ended and closed-ended items on a five-point Likert scale. Analysis is done through SPSS. Percentages are calculated against all the items' responses then interpreted and explained the data accordingly. The major findings of this research study are: the participants of the study feel anxiety/uncertainty in communication i.e. they do not feel emotionally stable in communication in socio-cultural settings with strangers, they also feel psychologically dissatisfied in the process of communication. Interestingly, majority of the participants think that they can manage anxiety and uncertainty in communication taking place in socio-cultural contexts. Furthermore, critical cultural awareness leads to the anxiety and uncertainty reduction. Cultural diversity and linguistic diversity lead to the feeling of anxiety and uncertainty in communication in socio-cultural contexts. It is recommended that English in Pakistani context as a language/subject may be taught from sociocultural perspectives and anxiety/uncertainty management theory may be taken into consideration while teaching sociolinguistics to the students at a university level. For future researchers it is recommended to conduct such type of studies while looking into the implications of other sociolinguistics, intercultural communication theories in order to enrich students' target language cultural competence along with linguistic competence.

(Affiliation)

¹Lecturer in English, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Pakistan

²Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Pakistan

³ Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Pakistan (Corresponding Author)

INTRODUCTION

Based on general observations and teaching experience, the researchers agreed that the students in Pakistani context generally feel anxiety and uncertainty when they are communicating in English language in a real life situations. They are quite deficient in communication and interaction especially, in target language i.e. English (Gul., et al, 2022, and Ali., et al,2022). Communication is one of the essential and complex elements in our life; essential in the sense that it is the lively spirit of life and complex in the sense that communication is culture and culture is communication. It becomes more complex when there is communication between people sharing different cultures and languages. In such situations, people in interaction and communication feel anxiety and uncertainty. So, ultimately, the effects of anxiety and uncertainty cause misinterpretations, semi- communication, misunderstanding and even miscommunication in real life situations. Anxiety and uncertainty management (AUM) theory advocates reduction and management of the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty during communication. The (AUM) theory, according to Masaki (2022) supports communication and endeavours hard to bring effective communication.

Rationale of the Study

Many reasons could be quoted to justify the need of conducting the current study. Firstly, communication in a target language is highly affected by the feeling of anxiety and uncertainty i.e. mainly due to the cultural differences and language changes in real life situations. Secondly, many researchers for instance, Yoshitake (2022), Stephan et al., (1999), Stephan& Wang, (2011), Hammer et al., (1998), Gudykunst (1998), and (Gul., et al, 2023) applied the (AUM) theory on communication in diverse contexts mostly in foreign socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, the present study is intended to draw attention to communication and interaction in English language in Pakistani context in socio-cultural situations in order to investigate the feeling of anxiety and uncertainty. Furthermore, the study is also interested to record the major factors responsible for the feeling of anxiety and uncertainty in communication and interaction in socio-cultural contexts.

(Affiliation)

¹Lecturer in English, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Pakistan

²Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Pakistan

³ Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Pakistan (Corresponding Author)

Research Questions

- i. What are the implications of Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory in Pakistani context? From socio-linguistics perspectives.
- ii. What type(s) of strategies/adjustments are followed by the English teachers and students for the reduction/management of anxiety/uncertainty in communication?
- iii. What are the factors responsible for the feelings of anxiety/uncertainty in communication in Pakistani context?

Significance of the Study

The main aim of the current study is to examine the implications of the anxiety/uncertainty management theory in Pakistani context from socio-linguistic perspectives in order to throw light on the importance of anxiety/uncertainty management to the optimal level to make communication successful, effective and informative in diverse socio-cultural contexts. The study would enhance the knowledge of teachers and students at KUST in particular and English language teachers, learners and practitioners in general. Furthermore, this research study would count the factors responsible for the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty taking place in the process of communication in English language and would also suggest the ways through which these feelings of anxiety and uncertainty would be overcome.

Limitation of the Study and Scope for Future Research

This study is mainly concerned with one of the theories of Sociolinguistics and Intercultural communication i.e. (AUM)Theory originated by Gudy Kunst in 1987 and developed further in 1995. In this study mixed-method is followed as a research paradigm. Furthermore, in this study participants from KUST i.e. PhD, MPhil scholars and teachers are involved. Therefore, opportunities for future researchers are to design research study on other theories of sociolinguistics in order to study language from various perspectives in sociocultural settings, to use qualitative or mixed-method approach or and to conduct study on multiple universities students. They may also find important results.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Etymologically, Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory is propounded by William B. Gudykunst in (1995) is considered as one of the prominent theories of Sociolinguistics, Intercultural Communication (ICC) and Cross-cultural communication (Yoshitake2022). The primary domain and goal of this theory is to minimize the feeling of anxiety and uncertainty in the process of communication.

Gudykunst (1995) calls communication as a “process” of messages exchange and the creation of meanings, rather than “outcome.” According to this communication is a process not an outcome in itself. This process needs some steps to be completed. For instance, sometimes in some contexts meaning could not be conveyed and understood rather a mere message could be conveyed. While taking into account the same assumptions, communication would be effective when there is mutual agreed upon understandings between the participants Gudykunst, 1995, p. 15). It means that an in effective communication arrival at the transmitter’s meanings is more important than the message itself. It also implies that an effective process of communication is an isomorphic attribution which means when an individual produces similar meanings regarding the cause of behavior(s) that someone native speaker to the culture would create (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). For instance, professor in U.S may attribute a Chinese student at university level lack of participation only to the students do not know the teaching and learning materials; however, the student lack of participation in activity may mean one of two things. Firstly, the student may not want to pass negative remarks or to insult the professor by saying that the professor had not clearly explained the concepts well. Secondly, the second possibility is that for example, the student is trying to have face saving by doing so in order to hide that he is not very sharp and smart that is why he is unable to comprehend the materials. So, now we have recognized the importance of interpretation of others’ behaviors especially participants from other cultures involved in communication.

The main issue of power relations could be studied in teacher-student communicative interactions in classroom. Perceptions and beliefs of the teacher’s role varies across the world it always reflects in the underlined structure power distance and cultural and social values within the larger society (George, 1995 and Gul., 2022). The power distance relations is on the spectrum from maximum power distance to less power distance relations upon which world cultures are divided distributed (Hofstede, 1991). Many cultures or subculture on more powerful distance end that very spectrum leads to acceptance of power (Ting -Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 382).

This Power distance also leads to anxiety and uncertainty feeling in communication, interaction and speaking situations. Anxiety and uncertainty could be reduced when there is enough familiarity among the participants involved in the process of communication. The AUM theory explains the ways and principles for the reduction of anxiety and uncertainty while discussing the following core elements:

Anxiety and Uncertainty

In (AUM) theory, anxiety and uncertainty are two core elements, these are the feelings, coming during interaction and communication when they are managed well and supported strongly by means of socio-cultural awareness, in an effective and organized way, they bring effectiveness communication. There are technical differences between the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty as Berger and Calabrese's (1975) and (Gul., et al, 2022) state that term 'Uncertainty' refers to cognition and cognitive, mental feelings it is defined that the "inability to predict and explain our own and others' behavior" in the process of communication. It implies that uncertainty is related to cognition mental models while anxiety is an affective equivalent, regarded as "one of the fundamental problems" with which all individuals have to deal in interaction in socio-cultural settings. There are maximum and minimum defined levels of uncertainty and anxiety. So, we can predict and understand our own behaviors in connection to others more flexibly and accurately. We can also maintain enough motivation to have communicate with strangers in diverse contexts.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is also one of the core concepts in (AUM) theory that refers to effective management uncertainty and anxiety at an appropriate level. It means that it is necessary to be aware of one's own behaviors and attitudes and socio-cultural norms. To have such mindset regarding communication towards others that is "being mindful," or there would be the feelings of mindfulness which make us able to maintain, manipulate and manage the levels of uncertainty and anxiety at a very conscious level in communication with strangers or with less known people. Gudykunst (1995) says that participants in communication follow their own unfolded and implicit axioms when they communicate in mindless and automatic ways in multicultural environment. It means that being mindful and open towards others is the basic need of communication more specifically in communication with strangers. Conclusively, an excellent management of the maximum and minimum levels of (AU) leads to effective and successful communication. It implies that attaching the closest meaning to the message sent by the sender depends upon mindfulness. Hence, it is believed that mindfulness plays a vital role in managing uncertainty and anxiety in the process of communication.

Communication with Strangers through the Lense of the AUM Theory

When we are having communication with strangers in socio-cultural settings, we feel anxiety and uncertainty in communication. So, due to the effects of the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty the process of communication would be highly affected and break downs take place in understanding

communication. Communicating or Communication with strangers is considered as an approach to study sociolinguistics and intercultural communication. For instance, we communicate the way we want to do other things within the premises of culture and society owing to the fact that we raised in a specific culture, settings, environment and we have learned that culture language, rules, and norms. It means that every culture or subcultures have various norms of interaction. So, to understand the other's culture socio-cultural norms facilitate and manage communication or cross-cultural communication.

Often, communication takes place between people who have various degree of familiarity with each other. So, that is why strangers understanding is very important for understanding successful communication.

Understanding Communication with Strangers

In communication familiarity and strangeness build up a continuous continuum. So, "strangers" would be those people who share the most unfamiliar end of the same continuous continuum. Strangers have limited knowledge of new, target culture and environment and of their norms and values. On the contrary, the locals, the natives have little knowledge of the strangers as well. For instance, knowledge of their beliefs, interests, likes and dislikes and habits. So, prediction of others culture and social norms, values, customs and tradition are extremely necessary.

There are three levels of cultural prediction in communication. Firstly, the cultural level or the level of culture. This level means that all information about the others' cultures, and their dominant values, norms and rules. This is called the mere level of information available to participants involved in communication. So, better understanding and knowing of the strangers' cultures result in better predictions of cultural norms.

The 2nd level of information is called sociocultural. This level refers to the data regarding about to others' group membership. Finally, the third level includes psychocultural data i.e. knowing or information regarding the individuals' characteristics, that is the type of data most relevant to communication with friends. The feelings of anxiety are mainly caused by stress and fear of the situation in which communication is taking place. These feelings of anxiety lead to the intensity of negative feelings and disproportionate the aims of communication (Spielberger, 1976, cited in Stephan .,et al., 1999, Gul.,et al, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the main aim of this research, Mixed- method approach is followed. Mixed - method is one of the methods through which first the data are collected and then the data are analyzed, presented and interpreted. This research study is of a descriptive nature. The opinions of participants are sought for attaining the basic objectives of the study in hand. Related literature was studied, investigated based on which a questionnaire was adopted. As it is clear from the objective and rationale of this research that it is related to the socio-cultural aspects of language in diverse settings with a guarantee not to show the identity of the participants. Therefore, questionnaire is selected as the tool for data collection in a quantitative paradigm. Apart from being convenient in conducting/collecting data from the participants, comparatively easy to code, explain and analyze, the questionnaire is deemed to be the most appropriate tool for this descriptive study.

The questionnaire is formed on Likert scale consisting of five options. In total, the questionnaire is comprised of 13 items in which 10 items are based on open-ended questions and 3 items are based on closed-ended questions.

The population is comprised of the PhD and MPhil English linguistics scholars and teachers at the department of English Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) Kohat. On the basis of criterion sampling technique, a sample is chosen. The questionnaires are distributed among 8 English teachers and 14 PhD and 10 MPhil English linguistics scholars of the sample. Furthermore, data are collected, tabulated, presented in the form of tables and then subjected to a rigorous analysis with the help of statistical techniques while running SPSS on the data. Then, techniques are used in order to derive percentages, and average. While, taken into consideration the research objectives, an analysis of the data are carried out. Furthermore, a descriptive statistics is applied to the conducted data.

Pilot Study

Piloting of questionnaires is the pre-requisite of data collection in order to improve the validity and reliability of the study. At this stage pilot study is prepared keeping in view the objectives and significance of the study, in order to extract best possible and valid information regarding the present study prior to finalization of questionnaires. For this purpose 15 questionnaires were administered to the respondents in order to pre-test and some modification and addition are made wherever required. The purpose of the pilot study is to remove errors and ambiguities from the finalized questionnaires.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Participants' perception and feeling of anxiety and uncertainty in communication in diverse situations have been discovered and discussed in this section. The data and results are represented in tables and graphically. The analysis has been separated into two parts.

Table 1 **Questionnaire from students** **Part-One**

S.N o	Item/Statement	SA *	A	U	D	S D
1	I feel anxiety/uncertainty when I have communication/interaction in English language in real life situations. (For instance, in classroom discussion or presentation my topic in front of students and teachers).	1	10	0	6	7
2	When I have communication/conversation in a diverse socio-cultural setting I feel emotionally unstable.	3	13	0	5	4
3	When I have communication/conversation in a diverse socio-cultural setting I feel psychologically satisfied.	6	4	0	1 1	3
4	When I have communication/conversation in a diverse socio-cultural setting I feel that my communication is socially appropriate and communicatively effective.	3	4	2	8	7
5	I am confident enough that I can make adjustment(s) in communication in socio-cultural situations.	5	16	0	1	2
6	I am quite sure that I have the ability to predict and explain my own and others' behavior, cultural and norms of interaction.	7	11	0	3	3
7	I believe that one of the major causes of anxiety/uncertainty in communication is socio-cultural diversity/cultural differences.	11	13	0	0	0
8	I feel that I can manage the feeling anxiety/uncertainty to the optimal level in communication in target language i.e. English.	14	10	0	0	0
9	I believe that anxiety/ uncertainty is mainly caused by linguistic diversity/ language differences.	16	8	0	0	0
10	Cultural awareness of target language can reduce the feeling of anxiety/uncertainty in communication.	11	13	0	0	0

* SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree U=Undecided D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree

The table No. 1 shows participants' responses to the questionnaire items. This table contains data taken from MPhil and PhD English linguistics scholar enrolled in department of English KUST, Kohat in order to record their views on the implication of anxiety/uncertainty management theory in Pakistani

context from the socio-linguistics perspectives. For instance, to know how participants of the study feel when they have interaction/communication in diverse socio-cultural settings.

Table 2 Questionnaire Taken from English Teachers

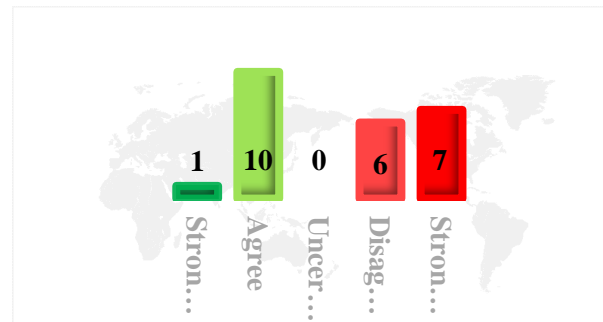
S.No	Item/Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	I believe that students feel anxiety/uncertainty when they have communication/interaction in English language in real life situations. For instance, in classroom discussion or in presentation of their topic in front of students and teachers.	6	3	0	0	0
2	When students have communication/conversation in a diverse socio-cultural setting they feel emotionally unstable.	3	4	0	2	0
3	When students have communication/conversation in a diverse socio-cultural setting they feel psychologically satisfied.	5	4	0	0	0
4	When students have communication/conversation in a diverse socio-cultural setting they feel that their communication is socially appropriate and communicatively effective.	3	6	0	0	0
5	I am confident enough that students can make adjustment(s) in communication in socio-cultural situations.	2	2	0	5	0
6	I am quite sure that my students have the ability to predict and explain their own and others' behavior, culture and norms of interaction.	1	2	0	4	2
7	I believe that one of the major causes of anxiety/uncertainty in communication is socio-cultural diversity/cultural differences.	4	5	0	0	0
8	I feel that my students can manage the feeling anxiety/uncertainty to the optimal level in communication in target language i.e. English.	2	2	0	3	2
9	I believe that anxiety/ uncertainty is mainly caused by linguistic diversity/ language differences.	4	5	0	0	0
10	Cultural awareness of target language can reduce the feeling of anxiety/uncertainty in communication.	7	2	0	0	0

Table 2 contains data taken from English teachers who are teaching English at department of English Kohat University of science and Technology, KUST, Kohat. The purpose of teacher questionnaire was to know the perception of the teachers regarding the implication of anxiety/uncertainty management theory in Pakistani context from the perspective of sociolinguistics.

1. Feeling of Anxiety/Uncertainty in Communication

The feelings of anxiety/uncertainty come in communication when communication takes place in foreign language that is English in the context of the present study. These feelings of anxiety/uncertainty affect communication negatively in socio-cultural settings. It implies that the feeling of anxiety/uncertainty takes place in communication in socio-cultural contexts which leads to ineffective communication or sometimes miscommunication is taking place.

Figure 1.

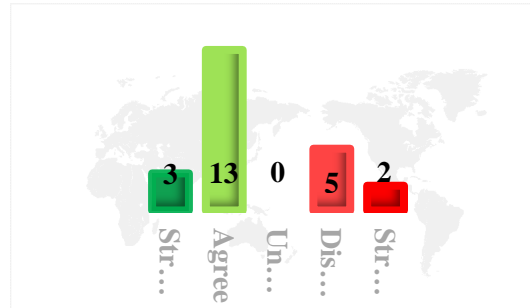


1. Feeling of Anxiety/Uncertainty in Communication

As shown in figure No.1 that 41% participants are agreed, 29% participants are strongly agreed with the statement i.e. “I feel anxiety/uncertainty when I have communication/interaction in English language in real life situations. (For instance, in classroom discussion or presentation my topic in front of students and teachers.” It implies that most of the participants feeling anxiety and uncertainty in communication.

2. Emotional Stability in Communication in Socio-cultural Settings

Emotional stability, in communication in diverse socio-cultural setting plays a vital role. Through emotional stability communication could be managed effectively in social contexts.



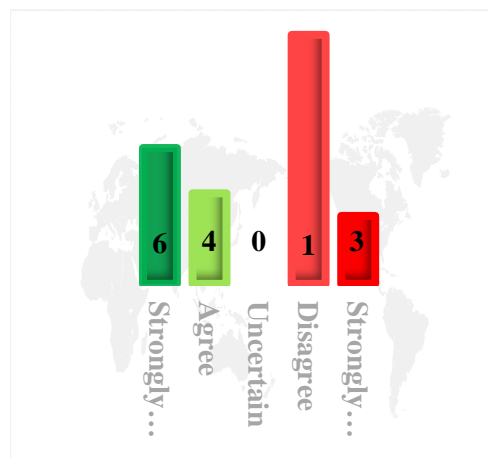
2. Emotionally Stability in Communication in Socio-cultural Settings

Figure No.2.

As mentioned in figure No.2 that 54% participants agreed and 20% participants strongly agreed with the statement that “When I have communication/conversation in a diverse socio-cultural setting I feel emotionally unstable.” It implies that they have issues in management of emotional stability which is required for successful communication.

3. Psychological Satisfaction in Communication in Socio-cultural Settings

When there is psychological satisfaction in communication in socio-cultural settings so there would be positive effects over the interaction between the interlocutors in the process of communication. Otherwise, psychological dissatisfaction leads to negative effects over communication.



3. Psychological Satisfaction in Communication in Socio-cultural Settings

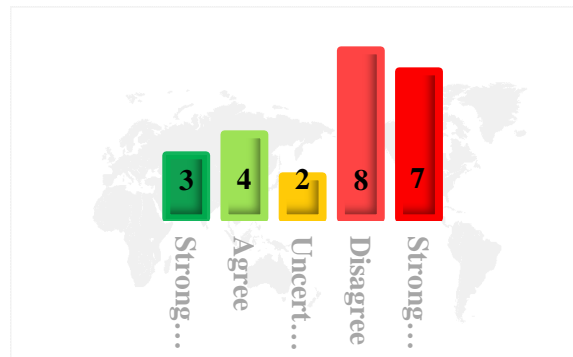
Figure No.3

As data in figure No.3 indicates that 45% participants are disagreed and 12% participants are strong strongly disagreed with the statement that “When I have communication/conversation in a diverse

socio-cultural setting I feel psychologically satisfied.”

4. Communication is Socially Appropriate and Communicatively Effective

When socially appropriate and communicatively/interactively effective communication takes place in social situations there would be the positive results of communication for the parties involved in the process of communication.



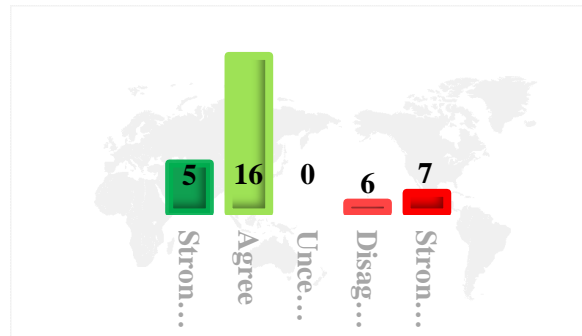
4. Communication is Socially Appropriate and Communicatively Effective

Figure No.4.

As data shown in figure No.4 describes that 33% participants disagreed and 29% participants strongly disagreed with the statement that “When I have communication/conversation in a diverse socio-cultural setting I feel that my communication is socially appropriate and communicatively effective.”

5. Anxiety/uncertainty Adjustment(s) in Communication in Socio-Cultural Situations

In socio-cultural situations anxiety and uncertainty adjustment/management in communication plays an important role because communication could be effectively and efficiently done when there is no breakdowns in the process of communication. These breakdowns take place owing to the poor management of anxiety and uncertainty feelings.



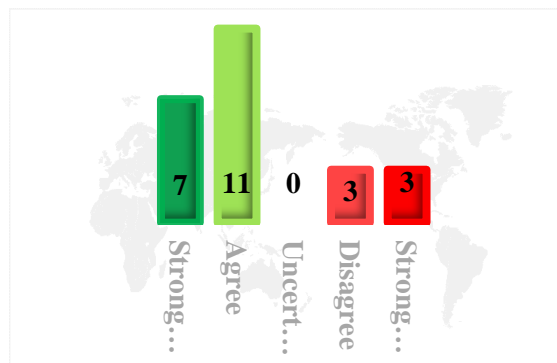
5. Adjustment(s) in communication in Socio-Cultural Situations

Figure No.5.

As data mentioned in figure No.5 indicates that 66% participants are agreed and 20% participants are strongly agreed with the statement that “I am confident enough that I can make adjustment(s) in communication in socio-cultural situations.”

6. Prediction of Behaviours, Cultural and Norms of Interaction

In communication or interaction when participants have the ability to predict behaviours of others, their cultural and norms of interaction so they would manage communication positively. They would also be able to reduce the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty take place in communication.



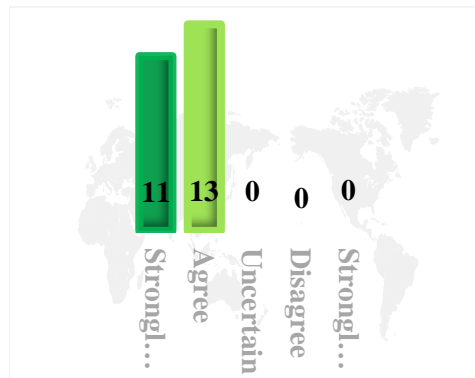
6. Prediction of Behaviours, Cultural and Norms of Interaction

Figure No.6

As data described in figure No.6 shows that 45% of the participants are agreed and 29% of the participants are strongly agreed with the statement that “I am quite sure that I have the ability to predict and explain my own and others’ behaviour, cultural and norms of interaction.”

7. Socio-Cultural Diversity as a Major Cause of Anxiety and Uncertainty in Communication

Socio-cultural diversity is considered one of the major causes of anxiety and uncertainty in communication. It indicates that socio-cultural variations lead to the feeling of anxiety and uncertainty in communication.



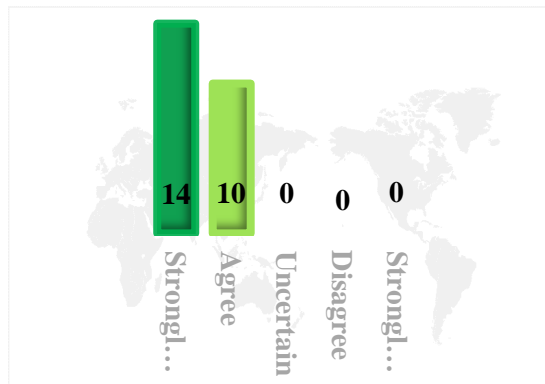
7.Socio-Cultural Diversity as a major cause of anxiety and uncertainty in communication

Figure No.7

As data indicates in figure No. 7 that 54% participants are agreed and 45% of the participants are strongly agreed with the statement that “I believe that one of the major causes of anxiety/uncertainty in communication is socio-cultural diversity/cultural differences.”

8. Management of Anxiety/uncertainty Feelings to the Optimal level in Communication

When there is no anxiety/uncertainty in communication so the process of communication would not be effective. So, the optimal level of anxiety/uncertainty is required for communication in diverse socio-cultural contexts.



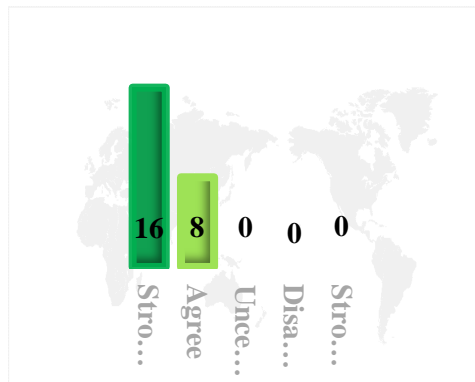
8.Management of anxiety/uncertainty feelings to the optimal level in communication

Figure No.8

Data in figure No. 8 shows that 58% of the participants are strong strongly agreed and 41% of the participants are agreed “I feel that I can manage the feeling anxiety/uncertainty to the optimal level in communication in target language i.e. English.”

9. Linguistic Diversity as a Major cause of Anxiety and Uncertainty in Communication

Linguistic diversity or variations in language as also considered one of the major causes of anxiety and uncertainty in communication. The feeling of anxiety and uncertainty could be reduced when awareness about linguistics diversity is enhanced.



09. Linguistic Diversity as a Major cause of anxiety and uncertainty in communication

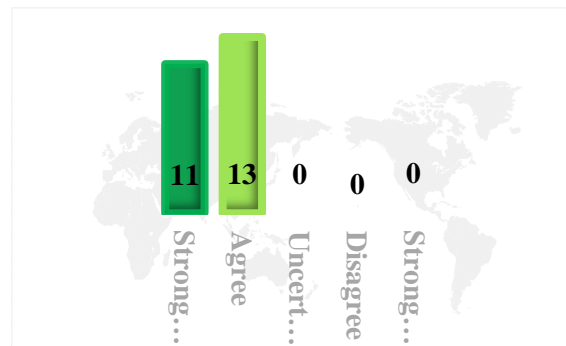
Figure No. 9

It is evident from figure 9 that all the participants agree or strongly agree that linguistic diversity may be considered one of the major cause of anxiety and uncertainty while communicating in a second or

foreign language.

Cultural Awareness and Anxiety and Uncertainty Reduction

Cultural awareness plays a vital role in successful communication and interaction. It could be one of the leading factors to reduce the feeling of anxiety and uncertainty taking place in communication in English language.



10. Cultural Awareness and Anxiety and Uncertainty Reduction

Figure No.10

Questionnaire:

Part-Two

Part two of the questionnaire consists of open-ended questions in order to develop in-depth understanding on the implications of anxiety/uncertainty management theory in socio-cultural context.

1. According to you what would be the implications of Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory in Pakistani context?

Understanding language in contexts

Socio-cultural knowledge about target language

The social aspects of language

Language and culture awareness would be enriched

Maintaining anxiety and uncertainty to the optimal level

Balancing anxiety and uncertainty to the optimal level

2. Could you enlist the major factors responsible for the feelings of anxiety/uncertainty in the process of communication in English language?

Participants' responses towards the major factors responsible for the feelings of anxiety/uncertainty

in the process of communication in English language are listed below

- Low competence in speaking skills,
- Less exposure to target culture,
- Less exposure to the original texts written by the native authors,
- Socio-economic background,
- Lack of socio-cultural awareness
- Negative attitudes towards English language community
- Lack of Critical language awareness
- Lack of critical cultural awareness
- Low target language cultural competence
- Low linguistic competence
- Deficiency in understanding language in contexts

3. Could you suggest any strategy for the adjustment of anxiety/uncertainty in communication/interaction in real life situations in Pakistani context?

- Need awareness of the anxiety/uncertainty management theory
- Purposes of communication should be clear the participants
- To give knowledge of the theory to the students
- To share factors that contribute to the of anxiety
- To share factors that contribute to the of uncertainty
- To have the knowledge the social norms of the interaction
- Familiarity of the strangeness of the strangers
- Stranger is a barrier to communication
- To teach language within the premises of culture
- To teach language with reference to culture
- To teach culture through language

CONCLUSION

As shown in table No.1 and 2, the data, in response to items No.1 to 10, reveal that the participants feel anxiety/uncertainty in communication i.e. they do not feel emotionally stable in communication in socio-cultural settings with strangers, they also feel psychologically dissatisfied in the process of

communication. Interestingly, maximum of the participants are of the opinion that they can manage anxiety and uncertainty in communication taking place in socio-cultural contexts. It implies that they know the technique of mindfulness in communication but they are having issues in managing anxiety and uncertainty to the optimal level i.e. the in betweenness of maximum and minimum level of anxiety. One of the majors findings of the study is that the teachers and students/scholars enrolled in MPhil and PhD English linguistics at the department of English could not maintain, manage anxiety/uncertainty to the optimal level i.e the appropriate level of anxiety/uncertainty which is required for successful, effective, and informative communication. It is also found out in the participants responses that socio-cultural knowledge is necessary for communication in the target language. Socio-cultural aspects are the main aspects of communication in diverse settings. Lack of socio-cultural knowledge could lead to break downs in communication. From the socio-cultural perspective, Pakistan is considered a multi-cultural and multilingual country across the world (Shamim, 2011, as cited in Imran. S, 2020 and S.Hassan., et al, 2023). Therefore, awareness regarding linguistic and cultural diversity is necessary for students and teachers as well. The same need for cultural knowledge and cultural competence is also found out in the participants responses. According to one estimate there are round about 77 languages spoken in Pakistan (Panda and Mohanty, (2015). For example, Urdu is the national language or lingua franca across the country people comprehend Urdu language. Though, Urdu is the mother language of 7.57% of the whole population of Pakistan. It implies that in Pakistani implications of anxiety/uncertainty management would be of enough importance. Data collected from the participants indicates that to use appropriate language in communication in socio-cultural contexts can reduce the chances of anxiety and uncertainty from communication. So, communication free from the highest or the lowest level anxiety/ uncertainty would be successful, effective and flexible communication. It means that with the uses of culturally and socially appropriate language anxiety and uncertainty would be managed and maintained to the optimal level. Furthermore, responses to the open-ended items also contributed to the major findings of the study. For instance, it is found out in participants low competence in speaking skills, less exposure to target culture, socio-economic background, lack of socio-cultural awareness, lack of critical language awareness and deficiency in understanding language in contexts are main factors lead to anxiety and uncertainty.

From the above-mentioned major findings, it is concluded that most of participants feel anxiety and uncertainty in communication in socio-cultural settings. They feel emotionally unstable in communication in diverse socio-cultural contexts with strangers. They also feel psychologically

dissatisfied in communication. Majority of the participants have the opinions that they can manage and maintain anxiety and uncertainty in communication taking place in socio-cultural contexts. It is also concluded that they know the technique of mindfulness in communication but they have issues in managing anxiety and uncertainty to the optimal level. It is also found out that understanding language in contexts, socio-cultural knowledge about target language and language and culture awareness would enrich the participants' knowledge of how to maintain and balance anxiety and uncertainty to the optimal level.

Recommendations

The following points are recommended based on the major findings and objectives of the study:

1. Critical cultural awareness needs to be included in sociolinguistics course in order to enhance students' socio-cultural knowledge.
2. Target language would be taught with special reference to target language culture, social norms and norms of interactions.
3. Anxiety/uncertainty in communication would be managed and maintained to the optimal through appropriate (socially and culturally) language uses in communication.
4. In Pakistani context English teaching would be more beneficial if it is practiced in accordance with the target language culture.
5. English language would be taught from socio-cultural perspective in Pakistani contexts, inside the classroom environment.

REFERENCES

- Yoshitaka.M(2022) Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory: Acritical examination of and intercultural communication theory: *Intercultural communication studies*, 11(2),177-193.
- Gudykunst, W. D. (1995). Anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory: Current status.
- Ting-Toomey, S., & Chung, L. C. (2005). *Understanding intercultural communication* (p. 352). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hofstede, G. (1991). *Cultures and Organizations. Software of the Mind*. London: McGraw Hili. *Culture's Consequences. Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations*.
- George, P. G. (1995). *College Teaching Abroad. A Handbook of Strategies for Successful Cross-Cultural Exchanges*. Allyn and Bacon, A Division of Paramount Publishing, 160 Gould Street, Needham Heights, MA 02194..
- Stephan, W. G., Stephan, C. W., & Gudykunst, W. B. (1999). Anxiety in intergroup relations: A comparison of anxiety/uncertainty management theory and integrated threat theory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23(4), 613-628.
- Stephan, C. W., Stephan, W. C., Demitrakis, K. M., Yamada, A. M., & Clason, D. L. (2000). Women's attitudes toward men an integrated threat theory approach. *Psychology of women Quarterly*, 24(1), 63-73.
- Ni, L., & Wang, Q. (2011). Anxiety and uncertainty management in an intercultural setting: The impact on organization–public relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 23(3), 269-301.
- Hammer, M. R., Wiseman, R. L., Rasmussen, J. L., & Brusckke, J. C. (1998). A test of anxiety/uncertainty management theory: The intercultural adaptation context. *Communication quarterly*, 46(3), 309-326.
- Gudykunst, W. B. (1998). Applying anxiety\uncertainty management (AUM) Theory to intercultural adjustment training. *International journal of intercultural relations*, 22(2), 227-250.
- Gudykunst, W. B. (Ed.). (2005). *Theorizing about intercultural communication*. Sage.

- Imran, S. (2020). *Pakastani University English Language Teachers' Cognitions and Practices* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Portsmouth).
- Shamim, F. (2011). English as the language for development in Pakistan: Issues, challenges and possible solutions. In H. Coleman (Ed.), *Dreams and Realities: Developing Countries and the English Language* (pp. 291-310). London: British Council.
- Ali, A., Gul, N., & Sabih-Ul-Hassan, S. (2022). An Investigation into the Reading Comprehension Problems Faced by the Pakistani Students at University Level. *City University Research Journal Of Literature And Linguistics*, 5(1), 134-148.
- Panda, M & Mohanty, A.K, (2015). Multilingual Education in South Asia. In W. E Wright, S. Boun & O, Garcia (Eds.), *The Handbook of Bilingual and Multilingual Education*. (pp..542-553). West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell
- Sabih-Ul-Hassan, S., Gul, N., & Imran, S. (2023). Factors Responsible for Wrong Pronunciation of English Words by Students at Undergraduate Level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. *Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 4(1), 70-78.
- Gul, N., Sabih-Ul-Hassan, S., & Imran, S. (2022). An Exploration of the Factors Responsible For English Language Oral Fluency Problems Faced By the Undergraduate Level Students in District Kohat. *Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 3(2), 95-109.
- Gul, N., Ali, M., & Sabih-Ul-Hassan, S. (2022). AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE SECONDARY LEVEL STUDENTS IN SPEAKING ENGLISH IN DISTRICT KOHAT KPK PAKISTAN. *Pakistan Journal of Social Research*, 4(2), 1018-1027.