

Academic Register in EMI Classroom and Language Anxiety: A Case Study in ‘Structures of Feelings’



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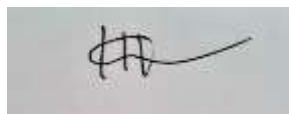
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.

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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Faouzia Farah', is positioned above a horizontal line.

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Abstract

This study examines how students in a 'neoliberal' EMI institution experience pressure to perform what is perceived as 'ideal' academic English. In general terms, 'neoliberal' is an economic policy that thrives on individual accountability, rather than institutions taking the responsibility of the stakeholders involved. The amplified pressure of such expectation is even higher in English Departments within EMI institutions. The students are expected to use 'polished' English in academic registers, which is commodified as 'ideal' English required for being successful in the professional world. Amidst commodification, learners' lived experience of English is forgotten. There are students who excel in academic registers, while there are others who suffer language anxiety. The researcher uses the theoretical lens of 'Structures of feelings' to explain this phenomenon among undergraduate students. This is an ethnographic qualitative study in which classroom observations followed by semi-structured interviews (n=6) on the focused group were conducted. All participants were fourth-year undergraduate students with differing levels of academic attainment, allowing the study to examine how these differences relate to students ability to use and maintain academic register, as well as how they perceive expectations surrounding academic English. By the end of the research it was found that 'hidden' curriculum, diverse academic attainments show dynamic experiences and how students in the EMI classroom manage to cope up with linguistic anxiety and how this anxiety, which appears to be a personal feeling, is constructed by certain infrastructural mechanisms.

Keyword: Academic Register, Structures of feelings, Anxiety, EMI expectations, Student experience.

Chapter ONE

Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

In the linguistic market of English, many varieties are found. Some Englishes, for instance, the ones from the inner circle (e.g., American, British, Australian varieties) are more equal while others from outer and expanded circles, using Kachru's model of worlds of Englishes (Kachru, 1984) framework (e.g., South Asian or East Asian varieties), are often considered as 'inferior.' In the discussion on 'unequal Englishes', Tupas and Salonga (2016) explains how this inequality can breed anxiety and inferiority among the speakers who speak such varieties. While this creates global inequality; locally, endogenously, or in specific contexts inequality may lead to inferiority..

Before discussing the study in depth, it is important to outline a few key concepts that are indirectly linked with language anxiety within the EMI classroom. In the current neoliberal societies, English is treated as a necessary skill for mobility and success, which leads to the global phenomenon of 'English fever', (Cho, 2013) where students and families invest time and money in learning English. This trend may contribute to challenges, often blurring the line between nationalist and global positions in relation to the adoption of language policies in many countries (Park, 2010). For instance, scholars have observed how English has started becoming prominent in non-English speaking countries as a medium of Instruction (EMI) since the late 20th century (Cho, 2021). Tertiary-level institutions promoted EMI more 'enthusiastically' promising greater success in the global job market. Within these institutions, academic register is often treated as a high-value skill in the 'linguistic market' (Hamid, 2016). Scholars such as Bourdieu (1991) explain that the knowledge of any specific language, in today's case, English, holds value as a linguistic capital, meaning it works like a resource that can give people social and economic benefits. This value is never fixed but shifts through different contexts and ideologies. Similarly, Park and Wee (2012, pp, 124-125) discussed how the value of English language is shaped by the indexical field. This refers to how speaking in an 'ideal' form of English can indicate or index certain identities, qualities and social positions. With this phenomenon in action, the language may become commodified, where EMI institutions can sometimes be framed as facilitators of a marketable

skill, rather than focusing on learners' real needs. According to some scholars, this has been often linked with linguistic insecurity than improvement (Piller & Cho, 2013; Hamid, 2016).

Moreover, the access to 'ideal English' is scarce. To capture how these inequalities are also lived and felt by students, Park's (2015) concept of 'structures of feeling' is crucial for this study. It refers to the emotional experiences people face with English as a global language. Showing that emotions like anxiety and shame are not simply a personal experience, since everyone in the room may feel anxiety to some degree. Rather it is a social condition. When someone has mastered 'ideal' English, she can 'sell' it as a capital and fulfill the economic aspects of neoliberalism via language. Through these theoretical lenses it is possible to explain why students in Bangladesh's EMI classroom are often anxious in academic registers.

This research can help understand how language anxiety emerges and is classified within the system of social hierarchies and institutional practices. The study explores whether EMI institutions create space for learners to grow and improve on learning and using language, or whether they are about creating identity, controlling access to skill improvement. Understanding the depth of these problems can help reshape linguistic ideologies and management (Spolsky, 2009) where students do not feel ashamed when they make mistakes while using academic registers and help change how universities view and teach English, so that students from all backgrounds can attain language skills within EMI institutions instead of feeling anxious for not matching an unrealistic standard. This research is significant because it raises questions about why some Englishes are seen as superior and explores how 'ideal English' is defined within EMI classrooms.

1.2. The Statement of the Problem

One key issue stems from how 'ideal English' or 'ideal academic language' is constructed and understood. The concept of any English being ideal is subjectively constructed by some perceived elite social groups often as a benchmark of correctness. In line with this tendency and from the background of the study, students from various educational backgrounds in Bangladesh willingly take admission into EMI institutions for higher studies, hoping to thrive in the current wave of globalization and to gain the status of speaking fluent English, as it is the 'language of opportunities.' However, this system can be insufficient for those who have fewer opportunities to master fluency in this register, yet there appears to be expectations that students arrive prepared to

participate fluently using an academic register. Despite receiving minimal explicit training in using a formal register for interaction in the classroom, both Bangla Medium and English Medium students may be held to the same expectations, regardless of their prior exposure to academic register. The gap between these expectations and students' actual performance can lead to language anxiety, particularly during any oral participation task. This gap between expectation and preparedness can be visible in the use of academic language, where students may feel more confused and anxious not because they lack knowledge but rather because they are uncertain about how to express the knowledge they attained appropriately.

1.3. Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the levels of anxiety induced by expected aptness, or readiness in academic registers while continuing their adaptability in the EMI classroom. The researcher has also studied students' experience of anxiety as they are deepened by the discourses on how an expertise in academic registers would make them market-ready or help them get employed upon graduation. This research aimed to investigate how students perceive 'ideal' English language in academic settings and to inquire if students feel anxious when using academic registers.

1.4. Research Questions

The research questions posed in these studies are,

1. How do students with linguistic 'anxiety' or 'insecurity' cope with academic registers in an EMI context?
2. How do students with diverse academic attainment experience and respond to academic register expectations in EMI classrooms?
3. How do students perceive the use of 'ideal' academic register in EMI classrooms in relation to future professional success?

1.5. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The research has been conducted within a private university in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This study has focused on qualitative data, by selecting a small group of students' (n=6) perspectives and this does not include teachers' opinions, large-scale surveys or quantitative data. Furthermore, it is limited to academic register and classroom contexts; local, social registers or other specialized jargon has not been addressed.

Additionally, the study does not focus on the definitions or comparisons of different genres and 'Englishes' such as standard English, 'perfect' English, informal English, formal English and colloquial English. This study also does not closely look into the psychological origin of anxiety because it may occur even when speakers speak in L1. As a result, it does not benefit the research to understand the phenomenon of language specific anxiety where anxiety emerges due to the expectations and fear of not being able to use the language appropriately.

Chapter TWO

Literature review

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher has discussed the theoretical concepts (i.e., academic register, structures of feeling, and linguistic capital). In addition the discussion covers empirical studies on theoretical concepts such as on spoken academic register in classrooms, language as capital and power, students experience challenges, anxiety and adaptation, and lastly, within Bangladeshi context.

2.2. Academic register

The definition of Academic register can be understood as a form of language constructed to fit the communicative purpose and context within academic settings. These are constructed through expectations shaped by genre and institutional norms. In linguistics, the definitions of register and genre have frequently overlapped; however, this research distinguishes the two using the framework provided by Swales (1990) and Bhatia (2015). Swales explains genre as a class of communicative events that belongs to a particular category if the speakers share a common goal. The experts in the particular field with a shared purpose set as standard for the members to follow. This structure encourages speakers to use a specific register and to discuss specialized content that may be inaccessible to outsiders. If the members follow the pattern based on expectations and conventions, the experts view the result as a prototype (p.58). This shows that Swales' genre follows a standard structure, it focuses on the communicative purpose. For instance, according to swales theory, classroom interaction can be understood as genre-based communication shaped by academic purpose. However, Swales' model has been criticized for focusing primarily on the grammatical and lexical categories within the discourse. Similarly, in real life context if students fail to maintain the ideal prototype, the students' performance might not exceed discourse expectations.

Bhatia (2015) extends Swales theory by also giving importance to institutional context, professional practice, and speaker roles influence how genres are performed, labeling it as critical

genre analysis (CGA). According to the author, genre theory conventionally focused on analyzing the context of producing and interpreting whereas social practice was given little to no attention while analyzing. Drawing on Bhatia's (2015) theory of CGA, it enables this research to examine genre as both professional and institutional practice, this suggests that academic registration in EMI classrooms is not only expected to be linguistic, but also follows institutional and social expectations and norms of communication.

A key concept in Bhatia's framework is interdiscursivity, which refers to the mixing of genres in real communication. In EMI classrooms, students often shift between storytelling, conversational language, academic, presentational rhetoric simultaneously, in such cases a mixture of genres occurs. Indicating that academic register is dynamic and mandates students to frequently adapt their registers to different communicative situations. This reflects how maintaining fluency in academic registers in EMI settings is not a fixed or isolated skill, but rather it is a complex and content-dependent process, where students must strategically adapt their language to different communicative goals and institutional expectations which may not be explicitly taught.

Predominantly, registers (written or spoken) are defined as sets of lexical items that are applicable depending on social situations within particular professional or social groups. In a classroom context this reveals that speakers' registers may change depending on the social settings and communicative goals. Through socializing, speakers may attain multiple registers in an attempt to articulate meaningfully. Moreover, speakers gradually enhance their registers by their surroundings (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2014). For example, formal settings may allow listeners to advance their formal speech, speakers that are specifically more exposed to local streets may acquire street slang. Similarly, a speaker may maintain multiple registers at the same time, for example, a lawyer may use both formal and legal registers within their workplace. The range of registers may vary from formal/informal speech, scientific register, religious register, academic register, legal register, slang, etc, all used in appropriate settings.

Furthermore, the register itself is socially shaped. Agha (2004) perceived register as a discrete repertoire (a collection of words, tone, and grammar) that is related to specific social practice or specific social groups. The author states that people have their own mental models based on the registers. Such as, if the speaker uses slang while speaking the listener may assume that the speaker is young or inexperienced. On the other hand, if the speaker speaks in a formal manner then the listeners may assume that the speaker belongs to the "upper-class." These

stereotypes often originate from biases and prejudices about the particular social groups' use of language. Furthermore, the author criticizes how registers may create inequality among speakers. Acquiring a certain register requires knowledge and exposure which some speakers may not have access to, this creates inequality. For instance, a register used among the doctors may be unfamiliar to other speakers. Some registers are used among the “upper class” which may not be familiar with the working class. This implies that certain ways of speaking may be associated with competence, authority, or social status. As a result, access to academic registers is unequal, as not all students have equal exposure to such forms of language. It indicates that money and power is indirectly linked to the register used by the speakers.

These existing studies have explained how academic register is structured (Swales, 1990: Bhatia, 2015) and how it is socially built and unequally distributed (Agha, 2004), there is still limited study on how students personally experience these expectations in the EMI classroom context. Additionally, being aware is particularly significant in EMI classrooms, where students are not only expected to understand the academic contents in English but also to perform using appropriate academic registers. This is more specifically evident in contexts such as Bangladesh, where EMI education is rapidly growing. In such cases, the academic register is overshadowed by expectations to excel by the time students enter tertiary institutions. In this study, it will not be viewed as neutral linguistic feature, but as a socially constructed expectation

Therefore, this study investigates how students with different academic attainments perceive and manage academic register expectations, and how these expectations shape their academic performance and linguistic anxiety.

2.3. Spoken Academic Register in Classroom Contexts and Student Experience

In the EMI classroom, students are expected to use academic language in ways that reflect both communicative goals and institutional expectations. However, in a practical scenario, When students are uncertain about how to speak in the right academic language they may feel anxious. For example, an article by Esther Jahns (2024) conducted a study in a German University on tertiary level students. The students were expected to speak in academic registers, however, due hidden curriculum students experienced strong emotional discomfort when expected to use academic registers. As a result, many anxious students avoided interactions and interpreted that

proficiency in academic language is instantly a sign of intelligence when other speakers could speak fluently. In reality, students avoided speaking even if they knew the answers or the content. While other students with academic register competence spoke more frequently creating participation inequalities. Galloway et al. (2014) for instance, studied adolescents' struggle of measuring up to reach the desired hidden curriculum expectations. The author explained how inadequate knowledge in the functions of academic language can be found in various ways such as lexical, syntactical, and communicative skills, and limited awareness regarding linguistic expectations may be the primary causes for such struggles in achieving excellence in academics. This led to challenges in using and maintaining academic register at tertiary level.

Furthermore, in the EMI settings, students are expected to use academic registers as a resource to perform competence and negotiate their position within the classroom. This shows that, to achieve fluency, students are expected to move beyond colloquial expression and align with implicit academic expectations. They may include course specific technical terms, maintain a structure, use hedging depending on the audience, and provide evidence-based statements that reflect the commonly accepted academic practices, where hedging functions as a conventional strategy to express caution and maintain credibility (Hidayati et al., 2008). Findings from Yulianti and Warsono (2016) found that students who use hedging strategies frequently tend to present their ideas cautiously, avoid strong claims and maintain appropriateness during classroom speech. This suggests that hedging functions as a significant pragmatic tool in spoken academic settings.

For instance, oral participation in a classroom is often valued when it provides informative introduction, adequate evidence along with the given statements, when the speaker is able to articulate in an audible tone spontaneously with confidence, while being aware how to express cautiously (hedging) and maintain other presentation protocols. These features are not naturally acquired in isolation; it is socially learned through participation in academic environments. These expectations are rarely made explicit; however, they continue to determine how speakers are evaluated.

Additionally, academic registers do not always appear in a fixed or predictable manner as academic registers are complex and dynamic. Biber's (2006) article stated there is a major difference between spoken and written academic registers. The researcher noticed during classroom observation that teachers used Stance frequently while speaking, meaning that they tend to express certainty, doubt, and evaluation, personal opinions (epistemics and attitudinal stance).

For example, during lectures, teachers frequently use “I think..”, “Probaby...”, “Absolutely...” “Obviously,” etc, where stance is evident. This study places emphasis on how students are misled into believing that academic registers must not sound uncertain and should provide factual information. However, Biber implies that academic register involves stance, doubt, and evaluation where students should be able to express critically.

Overall, the implicit and unspoken expectations within the EMI settings was described as the hidden curriculum, where the students were graded based on the basis of how they speak. Researchers such as Cazden (1987), Galloway et al. (2014), and Jahns (2024), all addressed the hidden curriculum where students lacked awareness of communicative and linguistic expectations required for academic performance and success. On the other hand, this research goes further by capturing students’ perceptions and their struggles in EMI classrooms. This research extends this ideology by discussing similar instances in a Bangladeshi EMI classroom setting. More specifically, it uses structures of feelings as a lens to understand such anxiety.

2.4. Language as capital and power

The use of language may be perceived merely for communicational purposes, however it can also serve various social functions . For instance, it can represent power, status and profit. This ideology was suggested by Bourdieu (1991) that language can reflect social position, maintain authority, and also enable the possibility to be judged like a product in a market. In this sense, Bourdieu compares language to a market system. This suggests that when speakers speak they are symbolically ‘selling something to the listener while the language being used has a value which can be referred to as linguistic capital. Furthermore, he introduces the idea of anticipation of profit, where speakers adjust their speech unconsciously to be accepted. This includes simplifying sentences, avoiding speaking, using ‘safe’ language and code-switching.

Bourdieu therefore argues that language can be perceived as capital and power which can be used as a lens in this research to understand how an EMI institution functions. For example, academic English operates as a linguistic capital that determines students’ value in EMI classrooms. This can impact their academic performance. On the other hand, classroom interaction is shaped by unequal linguistic capital between students where few interact confidently while others remain silent to avoid facing any challenges. In this context, students’ silence reflects

anticipation of negative evaluation or judgement that creates fear and anxiety to speak in a formal setting.

A similar concern with language, power, and inequality is highlighted by Blommaert, Leppanen, & Spotti (2013), who examined how multilingualism is often perceived as an advantage in the field of sociolinguistics; however, it receives very little attention within nation-state governance and institutions in terms of how multilingualism is managed. After globalisation, multilingualism has increased, yet it is often mismanaged rather than supported. He further re-evaluates sociolinguistic ideology by highlighting the deep-rooted assumptions surrounding multilingualism.

As a result, feelings of insecurity and perceived incompetence in the dominant language may stem from the system itself, which shapes the experiences of common ESL speakers. In this article, the researcher draws attention to how societal power and hierarchy shape ideologies about language. Here, one dominant language may determine who belongs and who does not belong to a particular geographical location, and it may measure who is speaking “normal” English and who is using “abnormal” English. Blommaert claims that language can be used as a disciplinary tool to categorise speakers who struggle to fit into elite groups. This also shows that authorities, such as educational institutions and policy frameworks, prioritizes a discourse of ‘excellence’ in academic English by demanding it as a key requirement for employability and professional development.

This section is particularly relevant to the present study due to its geographical settings, the social and societal situations. In Bangladeshi context, the English language itself is given more advantage when it comes to future career opportunities. As a result, students are encouraged to sound more fluent, reinforcing the idea that linguistic competence in English is directly related to future employability.

2.5. Student Experiences: Challenges, Anxiety, and Adaptation

Traditionally, in the field of second language acquisition, language anxiety was treated as an isolated term which was understood to be an individual problem, often linked to a learner's lack of competence in the target language. For instance, Krashen (1982) approached it with the lens of “affective filters” hypothesis focusing on how anxiety can block learners’ ability to learn language. Similarly, Horwitz et al. (1986) framed it as an individual learners’ trait through their foreign language classroom anxiety theory. Both of these approaches focus on psychology and ignore the

political and social factors of the linguistic market which suggest that it is the learner's responsibility, as if success or failure depends only on their emotions and competence. These views overlooked how power and ownership of the English language plays a bigger role in shaping the speaker's feelings. As a result, these perceptions also overlook the lived experience and how language can perhaps not be just personal feelings rather it can stem from a more powerful scripted system (Park and Wee, 2012). Chapter 7 of Park and Wee (2012) shows that such expectations are rooted in shaping English as a fixed entity and idealized standard, which naturally produces inequalities and anxiety.

Several empirical studies in East Asia show that expectations around English use in EMI settings are not only classroom-based. On the contrary, they are shaped by a broader social and economic value, which may contribute to the increased struggles among learners. For instance, Park (2010) highlights how Korean conservative newspapers share stories about people who succeed in learning English. These 'success stories' are not just about learning languages. Instead, they reflect South Korea's neoliberal values through the phenomenon of 'English fever.' In this context, English becomes tied to personal identity, educational achievement, employment opportunities and global competitiveness (Piller & Cho, 2013; Cho, 2015; Cho, 2021). The problem arises when the selection of these 'success stories' focuses on an individual's journey by portraying them as hardworking and talented. This attempts to naturalize the message that "anyone can be successful," while ignoring how speakers' class and money plays a huge role in who gets to access and master 'proper' English.

The unusual media attention suggests that mastering English is rare and unevenly inaccessible, depending on money, class and resources. This article addresses how conservative newspapers use 'semiotic leveling' which means to make something appear natural by highlighting or erasing certain inequalities in the newspapers. The empirical data came from dozens of newspaper articles, analyzed through discourse analysis with semiotic leveling as the key tool. The key findings implied that the English language is not just a medium of communication but carries a deeper meaning. It shapes a person's status and identity as a successful Korean in the neoliberal society. Furthermore class-based privileges are often concealed within these success stories to naturalize English competence which allows readers to question their personal lackings (effort, talent and discipline). From this research, the neoliberal tendency can be applied in Dhaka-based EMI contexts. While Park focused on media, a similar phenomenon can be found in EMI

classrooms, where ‘ideal’ academic register is levelled as student’s competence which can intensify anxiety among other learners.

Piller & Cho (2013) claims that English is being used in global academia, even in countries where English is not the native language. It aims to reveal how neoliberalism shapes the language policies in higher education. The study argues that English is used not because it is useful or practical, but because it has become a profitable mode of success in the educational sector. It is mainly the influence of neoliberal market forces that views English as a tool to acquire a higher global ranking, attract more foreign students, and look more international and modern. Furthermore, the study uses methods critical analysis focusing on a South Korean University, where the tragic suicides of the students and a professor were linked to rigid English-only policies. The key findings of this research show that English is not just a language, but a commodity. It compels educational systems to behave like businesses, where English-medium institutions are perceived as high-ranking educational institutions. However, this system also produces problematic consequences such as linguistic anxiety, insecurities, and inequalities among non-native English speakers. This research addresses students with diverse language backgrounds and their struggles with high expectations.

Cho (2016) examined the ‘linguistic insecurities’ and identity tensions of Korean interpreters in their competitive professional fields. These interpreters have lived or studied abroad and upon their returning to Korea, they were expected by their Korean employers to be fluent in English. The research observes how ideas of ‘neoliberalism’, an economic policy (Harvey 2005) can isolate returnees with demanding expectations to articulate in perfect native-like English, resulting in language anxiety. Moreover, Cho explains that “a language is a commodity that is convertible to a form of capital (p.688)”, suggesting that the English language is often treated like a profitable product under neoliberalism, and compels speakers towards perfectionism in hopes of a bright future and social mobility. A qualitative ethnographic method was conducted, including in-depth interviews with returnees, to collect narrative data on their feelings, struggles, and their personal stories. The study reveals that returnees’ hopes of gaining an advantage through their overseas English exposure were often unrealistic. Instead of feeling privileged, they felt insecure and inferior. Many returnees downplay their overseas experience due to high expectations which generate impostor syndrome among the non-returnees in their competitive workplace. Therefore, similar instances can be concluded that EMI students’ anxiety is not just personal but stems from

unrealistic social and institutional expectations. Additionally, it demonstrates how neoliberal ideologies shape linguistic anxiety in professional and educational settings in Korea. However, few studies have examined similar instances in Bangladeshi higher education.

Park (in Hall, 2014) refers to a Korean manager who spoke English fluently, moved to Singapore and assumed to speak ‘perfect’ English. However, in Singapore, his English was “not native enough.” As a result, Shin lost a promotion with no clear explanation of what was wrong with his English. Here, Hall highlights the term “lexical dissonance,” which refers to a gap between speakers' language use and others' perception of language use. This shows that English standards are often vague and unfair, adding to language insecurity. Furthermore, Hall’s critical analysis of other research articles finds that this insecurity affects not only individuals but also reflects broader social and workplace inequalities.

This article observes the relation between language ideologies and educational migration. Park and Bae (2009) highlighted the ‘jogi yuhak’ trend in South Korean families, where children are sent to schools abroad before pursuing tertiary-level education. This is mainly due to the language ideologies that the English language in certain places (like Singapore, the U.S., or the UK) is more advanced compared to South Korea because those locations claim to provide more “better” and “valuable” forms of English. However, after moving to Singapore, the families’ language ideologies are reshaped by reality through experience. A qualitative study was conducted using in-depth interviews with 12 ‘jogi yuhak’ families. The focus was to avoid generalizing the phenomenon of ‘jogi yuhak’ but to understand their lived experiences and how these experiences reflect language and place ideologies.

2.6. Structures of Feeling and Shared Classroom Experiences

While students may perceive their difficulties in using academic English as individual shortcomings, research suggests that feelings of insecurity and anxiety can be understood as part of a broader, socially structured experience. Park (2015) extends Raymond Williams (1977) ‘Structure of feeling’ which addresses the unspoken shared sense of feelings that a group of people in a particular time and place experience together. Park uses this theory into the linguistic field, he argues that the mundane anxious feelings about using English allows English to remain unequal. He introduces the concept of ‘structures of feelings’ to show how the role of English in Korean society, more specifically how people’s anxiety, insecurity, and feelings about English is linked to

larger structural inequalities. This imbalance is not the end result of personal or psychological weakness, but a social condition linked to power, identity, and social relations. Park proposed that studying feelings can help understand how to break free from the inequalities of the superior language. The methods in his research were not based on empirical data, however, it draws on historical and theoretical analysis to discuss the origin of English in Korea. Park claims that language anxiety is shaped by external social pressures which can intensify feelings of shame and guilt for not knowing native-like English. Furthermore, it also criticizes existing research, suggesting that there is a gap in research on deep, unspoken feelings. This article is valuable for this study because it opens space for students to share unspoken feelings regarding their personal experiences within the EMI institution. The ‘structures of feelings’ ideology is used as the lens for this study.

2.7. The Bangladeshi Context

Rashid and Sultana (2023) highlight the demand for the English language among Bangladeshi parents. There are mainly three types of schools: the Bangla version, the English Medium School, and the new school where the national content is taught in English (English version). Parents mostly opted for EV because it is cost-efficient and rooted in the cultural context of Bangladesh. Moreover, this article delves into how parents’ desire for a better future and status which led to EVE education to transform into a marketable product. The article uses a qualitative research method, where data were collected from 120 parents by questionnaire surveys, 3 group discussions with parents, and principals from 3 different EVE schools. This paper found that most parents chose EVE due to hopes of upward mobility and English proficiency. As a result, parents’ desire for English proficiency is strongly linked to hopes of economic success and prestige. While this study focuses on parental motivations for mobility through English, it does not examine how such expectations can result in language anxiety and personal experiences in EMI classrooms. However, this article shows evident societal and economic expectations remain on students into English-based institutions which mirrors Korean neoliberal ideologies, possibly resulting in guilt and language anxiety.

Islam & Ramalingam’s article (2024) explores how English proficiency can be a valuable skill for university graduates. Here, the concept of ‘linguistic capital’, derived from Pierre

Bourdieu, is used to explain that language can function as a valuable resource. The researchers interviewed 20 university graduates in Dhaka to explore how they use English in their daily lives. The finding was that most of the graduates perceived English as a symbol of success and modernity because of the chances to work abroad with international companies that function in a broader sector. Furthermore, the authors show how institutions treat English as a business language resulting in students joining coaching centers and taking private tuitions to reach “native proficiency.” On the other hand, Alharthi et al. (2020) show that English is not just a subject rather it is a social tool that impacts people’s future. It also highlights how this is connected to economic and social inequality, because not everyone has the same chance to learn English well.

Sarkar, Karim, Kabilan, and Sultana’s (2021) study sets out to explore how EMI has become a growing trend for Bangladeshi higher educational institutions. They link EMI to globalization and economic development due to harsh competition in the international economy. Their research aims to examine how teachers and students respond to the perceived EMI practices. Using a qualitative approach, the authors conducted classroom observations and semi-structured interviews to understand students' and teachers' experiences in private universities and explore participants' beliefs, coping strategies, and lived experiences in the EMI universities. The authors underline positive results on the surface, as EMI is often perceived as a sign of modernity and progress, however, some students reported to face difficulties understanding and expressing themselves in English. Whereas, teachers struggled to explain complex topics. As a coping strategy, teachers sometimes switch to Bangla when students seem confused in the classroom, and students often hold group discussions using Bangla outside of class or rely on memorization without understanding the content. This suggests that, despite strict policies, real classrooms often operate with a mix of Bangla and English, revealing tensions between the ‘ideal’ EMI classroom and the realistic code-switching classrooms in Bangladesh. Such tensions show a distinction between students’ authentic proficiency and the high expectations. Aside from the advantages gained by these tactics, they can create a barrier for students who wish to reach advanced-level proficiency in English.

In the Bangladeshi EMI context, students who encounter challenges in spoken English have been documented which shows that their speaking proficiency may impact their academic performance and participation during communication. For instance, Islam and Stapa (2021) found

that undergraduate students in private universities have shown relatively low proficiency in spoken English, with an average performance in IELTS. Some of the difficulties in spoken communication is due to limited opportunities for interaction in a large classroom size, complex nature of speaking, weak grammar and limited vocabulary. Students have reported feeling anxious and fear of saying the incorrect phrases which reduced their participation in speaking activities. These challenges suggest that spoken proficiency may not simply reflect individual ability, it can be shaped by broader institutional conditions. This can also be supported by a recent study done by Shahid and Kabilan (2025) which found some key factors that lead to speaking difficulties. For instance, the EMI system continues to abide by the traditional practices such as putting excessive focus on learning grammar and overemphasis on the written examination system from an early learning period. These major practices result in a lack of proficiency in speaking skills.

2.7. RESEARCH GAP

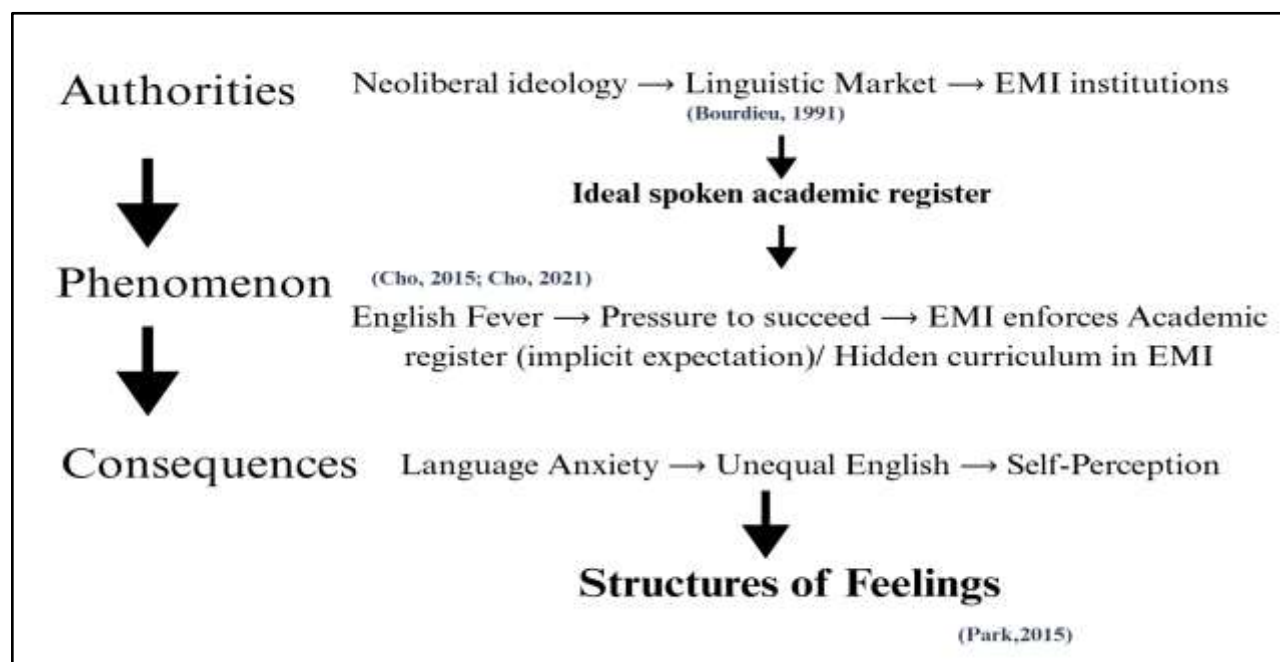
The existing literature has provided foundational theories, empirical data and the idea of hidden curriculum within EMI classrooms. It has shown how genre operates in a practical classroom and how academic register is defined according to many scholars. It also discussed how anxiety slips into being when students are unable to reach the unexplained expectations. Furthermore, the existing literature also shows that academic register is socially shaped, unequal, dynamic and often implicit. In the Bangladeshi setting, education has explicitly focused on learning English for success, status, jobs and future prospects while prioritizing grammar and written exams. However, there has been limited research done on students' awareness of academic registers within the classroom, and how it shapes students' spoken fluency and participation in Bangladeshi context. Therefore, this research focuses on how students with diverse academic backgrounds and attainment experiences academic register expectations in EMI classrooms, and how these expectations shape their linguistic anxiety and perception of future success.

2.8. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research looks into three main concepts to understand how language anxiety occurs due to the structured system. In contemporary times, neoliberal ideology has expanded across many parts of the world (Piller & Cho, 2013). The idea that individuals are primarily accountable for their own achievements and shortcomings gradually shifts the responsibility from

society/government towards individuals. This creates a sense of individual responsibility where success turns into a personal responsibility and failure is often interpreted as an individual shortcoming. In such an individual-centered society, language can be viewed as a form of commodity, where speakers who use it effectively may gain mobility and success. This leads to a phenomenon where societies experience English fever, they feel pressure to succeed and due to EMI institutions expectation of learners to use ideal English increases it enforces academic register while it being implicit. As a result, students may feel language anxiety, unequal English and self-doubt. These consequences can be viewed by the lens of structures of feelings (park, 2015). The conceptual framework has been shown in the following diagram:

Image 2.1: Conceptual framework



Chapter THREE

Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines what methods and procedures were carried out to collect data. In this section, research approach and design will be discussed. The geographical location and the participants involved in this will be discussed.

3.2. Research Approach and Design

This research adopts a qualitative ethnographic approach to explore students' experiences of anxiety related to academic registers in EMI classrooms. The researcher investigates to understand students' lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and emotional responses, which cannot be captured through Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986) or through purely quantitative surveys alone. Since, FLCAS provides general language anxiety results, it is limited to a surface-level self-reports, which does not address the lived experience of the students with academic registers in an EMI classroom. To understand how expectations within the EMI institution inexplicitly expect an 'ideal' academic register can create language anxiety among students during speech performance. Therefore, to address this gap, the researcher uses classroom observation and semi-structured interviews to compare data collections on speaking tasks only.

3.3. Research Context

This study has been conducted in an EMI private university in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This setting is relevant due to its diversity. Students from diverse academic streams study in this university, including Madrasa background, Bangla Medium, English Version (local national curriculum translated into English), English Medium. In this context, the EMI setting plays a crucial role to collect data where all the students are expected to speak in an ideal academic language which may increase the chances of experiencing language anxiety. The interview and

class-room observation is conducted on fourth-year students from the Department of English and Humanities. The primary reason why this research specifically targets fourth year students from the English department is because students from the English department nearing their last semester in university may be able to share some valuable information on their experiences and perceptions on the unexplained responsibility to manage academic registers during oral participation within educational institutions and outside institutions, especially within professional settings. This study does not focus on students from other distinctive departments who are not often expected to be proficient, and fluent in the English language as much as students from the English department. This study focuses on undergraduate fourth year students to understand their preparedness in spoken register.

Three theoretical lenses have been used to explain anxiety are, ‘Linguistic market’, ‘structures of feelings’ and ‘linguistic insecurities’. First, ‘Linguistic market’ suggests that language functions like a commodity, where some ways of speaking a language are more valuable than others. Speakers are expected to achieve advanced level proficiency even though language performance is usually measured vaguely in an unspoken and biased way according to certain elite social groups (Park & Wee, 2013, pp.138, 228). Second, ‘Structures of feelings’ refers to everyday lived experiences shared by a particular group of people who share the same cultural and historical background. This helps to understand how feelings like anxiety, alienation and expectations are shaped by social structures. Linguistic insecurities refer to the anxiety speakers feel about their language use. As a result, ‘linguistic insecurities’ and ‘structures of feelings’ can emerge as an outcome of the pressures created by the ‘linguistic market’. This allows the study to explore that anxiety is not a personal emotion rather it is a socially constructed phenomenon that compels L2 speakers to feel a sense of insecurity while using English.

3.4. Participants

The participants are fourth year undergraduate students from the English department with concentration elective for Applied Linguistics and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). The participants are divided into three groups by CGPA grouping to understand if there is a connection between students' academic attainment and their speaking abilities. The first group was categorized by CGPA ranging from 3.5 and above, the second group

ranges from 3.0 to 3.4 and the third group ranges from 3.0 and below. From each group two students have been interviewed concluding it to 6 participants.

CGPA Range	Number of Students
3.5 and above	2 Students
3.0- 3.4	2 Students
3.0 and below	2 Students

Table 3.1: CGPA ranks and number of students

The students were selected by purposive sampling (Creswell, 2014) with the assistance of the authority and course lecturer. This study categorised students based on their academic attainment because it allows the researchers to ask problem-specific questions during the interview to understand students' personal experiences regarding their academic performance. The participants were personally asked to state which group they belong to from the CGPA range. The students ticked the accurate slot without disclosing their exact CGPA to protect their privacy. Furthermore, this approach also attempts to grasp how academic attainments can play a role during oral participation. As a result, it supports the researcher to distinguish speakers' speaking strategies and challenges.

3.5. Data Collection Method and Procedure

The study employs classroom observations and semi-structural interviews to collect data. By the help of classroom observation, the researcher notes down what occurs and what are the features and patterns during the micro teaching session. This is followed by semi-structured interviews by 6 participants from the observed course. The questions used in the interviews were prepared by the researcher by the help of the research questions and previous state phenomena from the literature review. Both the data collection methods were recorded and noted to capture data accurately for the research purpose only.

3.5.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

From the observed classrooms, the researcher interviews 6 participants. The participants were selected by purposive sampling (Cresswell, 2014) to collect qualitative data. The interviews lasted approximately 20-30 minutes per person (see Appendix # for the interview questions). The questions followed on their perceptions and experiences felt within their speaking abilities during the oral participation. The researcher approached the focus group students and explained the research study to request for an interview. Once the participants gave their consent for the interview, the researcher and participants scheduled appropriate meeting time and place within the university. Three participants scheduled their interview during their free time on campus. On the other hand, due to some issues with scheduling suitable time and place. Three participants opt for an online audio call interview. The protocols followed for this research consists of ensuring ethical integrity, accuracy in the data collected and proper data security. The data was collected with the help of note-taking and audio recordings through the researcher's phone. The phone model name is SM-A528B.

3.5.2. Classroom Observation

The course selected for classroom observation is the last applied linguistic course before students graduate. This course is designed to prepare students for practical teaching if students opt for the teaching profession. The course consists of learning theories, teaching behaviour, understanding how to teach and maintain classrooms among young learners, classroom management, behaviour management, diversity, inclusivity, need-based learning and more. Students received valuable guidance for 2-3 months before their micro-session.

A formal email was sent prior to the classroom visit to the designated course teacher. The researcher obtained verbal and written consent from the authorities and the students before the commencement of micro-teaching sessions from the teachers and students to maintain confidentiality. An agreement was made with the course teacher that the observer will not interrupt the class to maintain a natural flow of the classroom. All sessions were carried out during the typical class hour, which is one hour and twenty minutes. Furthermore, the micro-teaching sessions were divided into five sessions allowing all the 15 students to utilize their time effectively. Each student was given 15 minutes to carry out their teaching session. During the sessions, when a

student conducted their micro- teaching, the rest of the class, including the teacher, assumed the role of elementary-level students. The teacher provided a rubric prior to the micro-teaching where students were expected to conduct their sessions in an organized manner, they must use appropriate teaching strategies, and must have communication skills where students must have strong voice, confident posture, and maintain English language during the session.

In this observation, the researcher mainly focused on how students maintain academic register during micro-teaching, whether students can shift from presenting to teaching within the given pedagogical context. Furthermore, attention was also given to observe students' response in oral participation while using academic registers to evaluate their lived experience of language anxiety, whether students prefer to stay silent, or rely on code-switching to communicate their ideas and to observe teacher-to- student interactions, their purpose of language change, responsiveness, formality and moments of hesitation.

3.6. Data Analysis Method

The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. This method involves identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within the qualitative data. The researcher first transcribed the interview recordings and reviewed observations notes multiple times to identify the patterns and features.

3.7. Ethical Consideration

Class observation, semi-structured interview, audio recording (via mobile phone) were conducted after receiving informed consent from participants and formal approval from the required authorities. Formal emails were sent to request permission for classroom observations and participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study. The participants were assured that their input is voluntary and they could withdraw at any time without any issues. The participants were also informed that they had the right to skip any questions they did not wish to answer. All data were collected and kept confidential to protect the participants' identities. No identifying details of the participants or the institution appear in the final thesis.

3.8. Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of the study, for instance, the sample size of the study is small which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The study is also limited to the fourth- year students from one single department. As a result, the data is significantly less generalizable. Secondly, the time constraints for many participants affected the data collection process. Some students did not wish to participate due to this inconvenience. Furthermore, some interviews were conducted online which may have limited the depth of interaction compared to the live interview sessions.

Thirdly, identifying clear language anxiety during micro-teaching observation may not be accurate because some participants admitted to feeling anxious for other reasons such as stage fright or performance pressure.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis

This chapter reports the findings from the data collected. The researchers asked three research questions. The following discussion develops around four themes covered in the research questions.

4.1. Theme 1: Anxiety and Coping strategies

This theme connects to the first research question that revolves around the idea of students feeling language anxiety during oral participation where they are expected to maintain academic register. This reveals that anxiety is not only widespread but also closely tied to performance pressure and spontaneity.

A consistent pattern found across all participants, during the semi-structural interview with each participant individually, all participants have admitted that they felt language anxiety during oral participation to some degree. While some students have reported feeling anxious due to stage fright, all the participants also felt conflicted during critical oral participation. One of the key challenges faced by students during the micro-teaching session was to maintain spontaneity. While students understand the traditional manner in which they present they struggle to stay spontaneous when they are asked abrupt irrelevant questions during the class, for example, “Ma’am, I do not like oily food! Please do not share junk food on the screen!!!,” the student teacher was unable to respond instantly in the required academic English. Instead of maintaining a teacher-like academic register to manage the classroom, the teacher later reverted to a promise of a burger treat to settle the situation. This confirms that even when students are prepared for a formal presentation, their academic register often falls short during sudden, informal interruption. One of the participants during the interview (participant B) highlighted that such instances may occur due to lack of exposure and practice which eventually leads to anxiety.

Interviewees also clearly stated how they are often concerned if they are using appropriate language depending on the context. For example, Participant A is comfortable with colloquial

language and uses English among friends and family. However, it is concerning for Participant A that they might accidentally use a non-academic register during high stakes.

To solve this issue, the participants practiced using formal English regularly, used spatial familiarization to overcome unfamiliarity, and spoke to people in the room. Rather than memorizing scripts, they preferred creating mindmap or storyline to maintain a natural flow during speaking. This suggests that students are actively trying to balance between maintaining an academic register and staying spontaneous in real-time situations. Furthermore, all the participants have acknowledged that they have drastically improved in spoken academic performance within class due to frequent practice. They addressed how the anxiety may appear when they struggle to say the appropriate word or phrases. For example, participant D mentioned that:

I used to feel anxiety during my first-year, but it has improved due to practice. Although there are situations when I cannot recall an English word or phrase correctly that is when I start feeling anxious (Participant D)

Another data revealed how anxiety increases during observation:

I feel like I have language anxiety but if I practiced regularly it would have improved. Especially When a strict faculty is observing me during my presentation, I struggle to speak perfectly even though I know I can speak well in other situations” (Participant E)

To cope with these challenges, students reported relying on external support to ensure their language seems polished. Four participants have shared that they often depend and utilize AI tools to improve the language enhancement for oral participation. They believe that it provides in-depth analysis on the context or topic, makes it more creative, brings more clarity and time-convenient while following the desired academic language to maintain formality.

This shows that students feel a lack of internal confidence in producing academic language independently. While such tools may support fluency, they also indicate that students have a gap in their ability to refine academic language.

Overall, this theme shows that participants in EMI classroom experience language anxiety due to institutional demands, pressure of evaluation and insufficient practice, especially when they are required to respond spontaneously. This pattern of anxiety among all the participants can be

viewed through the lens of structures of feelings (Park,2015). This suggests that emotional experiences such as anxiety are socially produced rather than individually isolated. In this study, students' similar feelings of pressure and uncertainty show that language anxiety is collectively shaped within EMI classroom practices.

4.2. Theme 2: Awareness and Implicit expectations of academic register (Hidden Expectations (classroom Observation))

This theme addresses the third research question where students' awareness and implicit expectations placed by the EMI institution can potentially lead to consequences. In this context, most of the participants expressed that they were unaware of expectations because they believed it was not heavily emphasized in their curriculum. For instance, participant A “noticed” and “casually adapted” the use of academic registers due to early exposure, while others who showed passive awareness noted that the “guidance is missing; we just have to figure this out.” This proves that the institution expects and prefers a fluent academic register but treats it as an automatic skill rather than training for betterment.

The data suggests that the curriculum heavily favors written academic register over oral academic performance. Collectively all the participants shared that they significantly improved in their writing academic register while “little to no attention was paid towards speaking skills.” Some participants also shared that they are slowly improving in their presentation skills. However, they still doubt if they can excel in future professional success due to the lack of practice and intensive training and fear the idea of using English in professional settings.

Unexpectedly based on intuition, despite the unawareness of maintaining an academic register within the EMI classroom, some students masterfully performed in the teaching register. Rather than following traditional presentation structure, students adapted to the given context and spoke in an elementary teacher tone. The students used simple English, provided examples and asked if students understood. The interviewee also reported that “young learners require easy simple language which cannot be functional if I used complex phrases to explain in the class.” This suggests that students occasionally demonstrate few elements of academic register despite not being explicitly taught.

To further confirm the implicit expectations, it was observed during the classroom observation that the faculty questioned and tested students with higher CGPA more frequently.

The students with more anxiety and less CGPA were asked fewer questions. Furthermore, during the feedback session, the teacher instructed and gave instant critical feedback to all the students. The participants acknowledged the significance of this course and emphasized longitudinal practice with a more speaking ability enhancement course. The interviewee noted that a single semester of practical training is insufficient. This suggests that academic register in EMI classroom operates as an implicit requirement rather than being explicitly taught skill. This creates unequal learning opportunities among students (park, 2015).

4.3. Theme 3: Differences in student experience (CGPA)

The study found a clear divide between students from different academic attainments. This theme aligns with the second research question to understand how students with different academic attainments respond to academic register expectations in EMI classrooms. For example, participants A and B (high rank) do not struggle with the language itself but occasionally feel social pressure. Participant A expressed being cornered into a specific stereotype where they are often labeled as the “smart kid” and expected to perform with excellence because of their fluency in any given academic register. It was noted that students with higher CGPA were asked significantly more questions by the faculty during the micro-teaching session. This may suggest that high attaining students are more likely to be expected socially to stay active participants, which can lead to more frequent use of academic registers in classroom interaction. From the perspective of social context, one student from this category felt that it was a disadvantage because other students assumed and judged them to be well-competent because of their speaking skills. However, on the contrary, they also expressed that if they pursued a future career in English it would be easier for them to achieve due to their speaking skills. The data pointed out that this stereotype is evident inside and outside the classroom even in the job sector. To contextualize, Participant A mentioned that,

Unfortunately I hate saying this but if I wanted to pursue a career in Bangladesh I would easily get more opportunities just because of this stereotype...They didn't look at the resume because I had good speaking skills and confidence. (Participant A)

Across all participants, a recurring pattern was the tendency to interpret both success and failure as individual responsibility. Participants who performed well credited all their skills to the efforts they put into reaching their goals while students who struggled often took the blame for the lack of effort or confidence. Particularly, participants rarely acknowledged the role of institutional support or how the curriculum is designed contributing to their improvement. On the other hand, participants believed that this register is something that is “noticed” ,“adapted” and learned through observing the academic surroundings (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2014), suggesting that they believed it to be socially acquired rather than being explicitly taught which shows that students internalize both achievements and academic difficulties, but also believe that social/environment plays a quite important role (Bourdieu, 1991; Park, 2015). Indicating that these two ideas co-exist among students which supports Bhatia’s (2015) ideology on professional practice.

Lastly, four out of six participants expressed that they are not ready yet to pursue future employment due to the high expectations (Jahns, 2024). They believe that they still require more exposure and training before pursuing employability. This indicates that differences in academic performance are not only linked to language ability, rather it also enables unequal exposure and participation opportunities, which eventually reinforces confidence gaps among students.

Chapter Five

Discussion

This study's findings can be understood in relation to the current literature on academic register, language anxiety and linguistic capital. The results support Swales (1990) and Bhatia (2015), who argue that academic language is a particular way of speaking/writing that is context-dependent and follows a norm that is practiced by the experts in the field. Additionally, it is shaped by societal and institutional expectations rather than being a standard skill. In this study, students' difficulty in maintaining academic register often emerges from inexplicit expectations.

The findings resonate with previous research studies on hidden curriculum (Cazden, 1987; Galloway et al., 2014; Jahns, 2024), which suggests that students often struggle because expectations are implicit. Similarly, students in this study were aware that academic performance depends on using appropriate language, even then they were uncertain about how students could consistently meet these expectations in oral communication. The findings suggest that few observant students notice the presence of registers occurring during school, however, they do not know how to control and use appropriate registers due to lack of experience. In addition to this most students may not even notice or observe this phenomenon which may lead to students being unaware of how language is expected to behave in certain situations. Another finding revealed that most students coming from Bangla medium backgrounds reported that they could not notice academic registers being used and often took accountability for their speaking skills. Furthermore, these study findings can be supported by Bourdieu's (1991) concept of linguistic capital, the study demonstrated that language is often accessible to those who can afford it. Leading to lack of exposure and practice from a very young age. This can also lead to the phenomenon of unequal English, a theory shared by Park (2015) indicating that this leads to diverse academic attainment with diverse experience among students.

Furthermore, most students tend to internalize their achievements and shortcomings in speaking skills as personal responsibility. These findings can be understood as ‘structures of feelings’ by Park (2015) where language behaves differently. In line neoliberal ideology, the institutional responsibility may shift and focus individuals with explicit expectations resulting in individuals feeling accountable for how they speak. Since expectations are set, students struggle to reach out and work on their anxiety. The findings of this study also highlights this issue where students often use AI tools rather than reaching for support where they may need to confront their lackings and unspoken feelings.

On the contrary of this research’s presumptions, some students have reported that they do not experience any pressure or expectations to maintain academic register. They mentioned that they are not aware of such expectations. As a result they do not feel anxiety to an extreme degree even when they struggle to speak. During classroom observations, it was observed that students who spoke with filler words such as “um..”, “so...” have shown significant improvement after they switched to Bangla during their oral participation where students are able to spontaneously shift registers from being authoritative to acknowledging students to being instructive as teachers during their micro-teaching session. One participant reported that she is fluent in academic registers but not in English. As a result, she shifts to Bangla when necessary. This also shows that students unconsciously try to maintain register more than maintaining spontaneity in English language. Perhaps this indicates that the EMI institution in which the researcher conducted the study did not empathize with the academic register allowing flexibility for students. This statement can be supported by a participant’s experience where they shared that they were more pressurized and expected to speak in proper English during their school life which was not evident during tertiary level. This reflects findings from EMI contexts where classroom practices often differ from idealized expectations of English use (Sarkar et al., 2021).

Overall, the existing literature and the findings of this study captures the lived experience of the students in the EMI classroom. Showing how these theoretical concepts function in Bangladeshi context, where academic register is not only a linguistic demand but also a source of

anxiety, inequality and identity formation among students. Whereas some students who are unaware of this phenomenon show opposing reflection. This study extends these theoretical concepts and shows how students are unconsciously aware of the register being used but they do not always know how to perform it in real-time speaking situations. Secondly, anxiety increases when students are expected to interact and respond spontaneously. Lastly, high academic attaining students encounter more expectations compared to other students.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study focused on understanding how language anxiety is shaped by academic register expectations in EMI classrooms in Bangladesh. These study findings suggest that students at their final year are expected to demonstrate a level of preparedness that aligns with future teaching roles, especially in terms of spoken academic performance. However, the data shows that students' ability to practice speaking skills still requires further development, to gain readiness for future professional settings. Furthermore, the study found that many students are not entirely aware of maintaining an academic register which is often expected by the EMI institutions. This reflects the presence of a hidden curriculum, where communicative expectations are assumed but not openly discussed continuing the cycle of unequal English. This may contribute to uncertainty and anxiety during spoken tasks.

Recommendations for future studies

Based on the findings of this study, several areas for future research can be further explored.

Firstly, this study was limited to a small sample of fourth-year students. This leads to deficient data. In future studies, interviewing a larger number of participants from different academic levels, such as first year students and fourth year students, as well as students from diverse departments. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how students experience it differently. Additionally, this approach would allow the researcher to treat this study as a comparative study.

Secondly, future research may benefit from adopting longitudinal studies along with mixed methods to understand the lived experience in depth. While the present study focuses on language anxiety on academic registers, incorporating longitudinal study may track trends, confirm cause-and-effect relationships, and analyze how life impacts long-term outcomes. This would strengthen the reliability and depth of the findings.

Thirdly, the future studies could investigate beyond tertiary levels and conduct research within standardized language testing environments such as IELTS, where speaking skills are explicitly assessed. This would help the researcher understand how students cope and manage academic registers, if students rely on colloquial language and whether students from EMI institutions and English proficiency testing institutions have similar patterns. This will enable the researcher to identify gaps between individual experiences and broader institutional or social structure.

Overall, further research in these areas would support the researcher to develop a more comprehensive understanding of various aspects of language anxiety in academic registers, particularly within various contexts and distinctive departments.

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Appendix A

Faouzia Farah (221013060) | faouzia.farah.deh@ulab.edu.bd | DEH

DATE _____

Student Consent Form For Research Interview

I [respondent's name] _____ hereby give my informed consent to, **Faouzia Farah**, a 12th semester student from the department of English and Humanities, to respond to an interview for her dissertation. I understand that the interview is conducted for academic research purposes. The research title is '**Academic Register and Language Anxiety: A Case Study in "Structures of Feelings"**'. I will be debriefed about the research topic prior to the interview.

I also understand that my participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. I can withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason. I will have the right to omit any question during the interview. The information collected from me will be treated confidentially. My name and my student ID number will stay anonymous and that, if published, my identity will not be identifiable in the research work. I understand that volunteering in this study may not provide direct personal benefit; however, the data may contribute as valuable insights for the student and others in the future.

The interview questions will focus on **Language Anxiety, Academic register, struggles and lived experience in spoken academic register.**

This study involves minimal risk. However, some questions may require participants to reflect on personal lived experiences and struggles behind speaking English in academic registers.

I have read and understood the above consent form. I hereby voluntarily agree to participate in this research interview.

Signature _____

Appendix B

Faouzia Farah (221013060) | faouzia.farah.deh@ulab.edu.bd | DEH

DATE _____

Student Consent Form For Classroom Observation

I, [respondent's name] _____, hereby give my informed consent to xyz, a 12th semester student from the Department of English and Humanities, to observe my regular class for her dissertation. I understand that this observation is conducted for academic research purposes. The research title is '*Academic Register and Language Anxiety: A Case Study in "Structures of Feelings"*'.

I understand that during the observation, the class will be **audio recorded only**. This recording will be used solely by the researcher to collect and analyze data for the study. The recordings will not be shared with anyone and will remain confidential.

I also understand that my participation in this research is entirely voluntary. I may withdraw from the observation at any time without any reason. The information collected will be kept confidential. My name and student ID will remain anonymous, and I will not be identifiable in any part of the research if it is published.

This study involves minimal risk. The observation will focus on classroom interaction, use of language, and experiences related to speaking in academic settings.

I have read and understood the above consent form. I hereby voluntarily agree to be part of this classroom observation.

Signature _____

Appendix C

Faouzia Farah (221013060) | faouzia.farah.deh@ulab.edu.bd | DEH

DATE _____

Teacher Consent Form For Research Classroom Observation

This is Faouzia Farah from the Department of English and Humanities. I am in my 12th semester and I am currently working on my dissertation. The research title is ‘**Academic Register and Language Anxiety: A Case Study in “Structures of Feelings”**’. For this research, I am required to conduct non-participatory classroom observations to explore patterns of language anxiety in oral participation.

I would sincerely appreciate your permission to observe your class sessions for my research purposes. The observations will be strictly non-participatory. I will not intervene in classroom activities, interrupt teaching, or interact with the students during the session. My aim is to only take notes for my research work. Courses and specific classes that involve frequent student interaction would be especially helpful for this study. If possible, I would be grateful for the opportunity to observe three to four class sessions to ensure meaningful data collection. This consists of two ordinary sessions and two presentation sessions.

All the information collected during the classroom observation will be treated confidentially, and the students’ names and ID numbers will not be disclosed in the dissertation. With your permission, the classroom observation will be audio recorded to ensure an accurate analysis of the academic discourse for research purposes.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary, and you may refuse to participate at any time.

I have read and understood the above consent form. I hereby voluntarily give permission for the classroom observation.

Signature _____

Appendix D

Interview Questions

1. Do you ever feel judged for how you speak during oral participation? Why? By whom?
2. Where do you think these expectations come from? (peers, institution, future jobs, relatives)
3. Is “Good Academic register” similar to professional English?
4. Are you aware that students are expected to use academic registers within institutions?
5. Did teachers explicitly teach you how to speak in academic registers?
6. Do you feel like you are improving, stuck or falling behind in your oral participation?
7. Do you think speaking good English is linked to being a “good student”? Intelligent? Successful?
8. Do you think academic English will help you in your future career endeavours?
9. What coping strategies do you follow to overcome challenges or possible language anxiety?