**The Effect of Social Phobia on English Language Learners’ Classroom Participation**

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**Abstract**

Social Phobia (SP) is a serious disorder with deep roots in childhood that could possibly lead to poor relationships and social isolation among some children in educational contexts. While several studies have explored SP in educational and clinical psychology, there is scant research examining this potentially important variable in the English Language Teaching (ELT) field. The present study aimed to explore the possible relationship between SP and classroom participation (CP) among male and female young learners. To this end, 95 students (75 females & 20 males; age range: 9-16) with different EFL proficiency levels were selected through convenience sampling from an English language institute in 2017. After gaining parental and institutional consents, the researchers asked the participants to fill in Social Phobia Anxiety Inventory for Children (SPAI-C) and a Classroom Participation (CP) questionnaire. Correlational and mean difference inferential statistics (t test and Mann-Whitney) were used to analyze the data. Based on the results, female learners showed significantly higher social phobia and were less willing to participate in classroom activities. While there was a significant negative correlation between SP and CP among female learners, there was no correlation between SP and CP among male learners. The findings imply that social phobia has a considerable effect on female learners’ classroom participation, an issue which requires language teachers’ especial attention.

**Keywords:** *English as a Foreign Language (EFL), classroom participation, social phobia, gender*