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**The Impact of Language Anxiety on Academic  
Achievement among Learners of EFL:  
Case study: 2<sup>nd</sup> year English Language Department  
Students at 20 August 1955 Skikda's University**

*A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the  
Magister Degree in Applied Linguistics and language Teaching.*

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## *Dedication*

I am deeply indebted to my husband and two sons Radji and Mohamed for their patience, understanding, encouragement and help during my study. I dedicate my Magister dissertation to them because they are simply my whole world.

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## Abstract

This study aimed to explore foreign language (FL) anxiety experienced by university students in Algeria. Research has shown that affective variables do not operate independently of one another; instead, the causal relationships among them are complicated. Moreover, the environment where language learning takes place is paramount to the whole educational process. Consequently, we hypothesize that if personal and instructional factors related to foreign language anxiety are properly investigated, having as a purpose to reducing it, then learners' academic achievement will be probably better. To confirm the cited hypothesis, a total of 51 second- year English language subjects at 20 August 1955 Skikda University participated in this study. The background questionnaire, the questionnaire of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, Self-perceived Proficiency Scale, Motivation Scale, Anxiety towards In-Class Activity Questionnaire, and Anxiety towards Test Types Evaluation were used in the study. The data was analyzed with multiple research methods including descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, independent-samples t-test analysis, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Statistical analysis of the data has yielded the following findings: First, the results revealed that there existed different levels of FL anxiety in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year English language students at 20 August 1955 Skikda University, Algeria. Twenty-seven percent of the subjects showed high-level FL anxiety; 59% showed medium-level FL anxiety; and 14% showed low-level FL anxiety. Among the four categories of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, the most anxiety that the subjects experienced was communication apprehension followed by test anxiety. Second, six personal sources (i.e., personality, communicative competence, English achievement, motivation, self-perceived proficiency in English, and the amount of time spent in studying English after class per week) were found statistically to have significant correlation with students' FL anxiety levels, but three variables (i.e., gender, baccalaureate stream, and residential region) showed no significant correlation with FL anxiety. Third, this study indicated that classroom activities, teachers' behaviors and characteristics, and the types of tests were the main sources arousing 2<sup>nd</sup> year English language students' FL anxiety. Finally, several pedagogical strategies were offered according to the findings in this study: (1) helping students build a healthy self-perceived proficiency in English, (2) using a wider range of measurements in evaluating students, (3) arousing students' motivation in English learning, (4) creating a low-anxious classroom, and (5) changing teachers' role and beliefs.

## List of Abbreviations

**FL:** foreign language

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**FLA:** Foreign language Anxiety

**FLCAS:** Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

**ATIAQ:** Anxiety Towards In-class Activity Questionnaire

**SPSS:** Social Package for Social Sciences

**CA:** Communicative Apprehension

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition

**LCDH** Linguistic Coding Deficit/ Differences Hypothesis

**AMBT:** Attitude/Motivation Battery Test

**LMD:** Licence, Master, Doctorate



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## 1. Background and Motivation of the Study

Accompanying the increasing importance of the communicative function of English, more educators have departed from the traditional grammar translation method, teacher-centered approach and have begun to adopt a task-based, student-centered approach in class because these teaching approaches focus on the variations of learners' learning styles and concern about students' affective states. According to considerable theoretical studies, the influences of the affective side of a learner which contribute to success or failure in FL learning have been supported (Brown et al, 2001; Horwitz, 2000; Sparks & Ganschow, 1991). The evidence shows that the students' affective state plays a major role in their learning difficulty and on the effect of the problem or both.

As Arnold and Brown (1999) claim, a broad understanding of affective factors leads to a more effective language learning because attention will be drawn to how we can overcome problems created by negative emotions and how we can transform those negative emotions into more positive feelings, and then facilitate the improvement of both language learning and teaching. Thus, it is essential for teachers and educators to pay attention to students' feelings and emotional reactions, and they need be prepared to flexibly change their teaching plans based on students' needs and reactions. Among affective factors, the role of anxiety, which is one of the negative emotions, is particularly assumed to be important in determining students' achievements in FL classes. Proponents of this hypothesis describe FL learners as having a 'mental block' which hinders their ability to learn (Sparks & Ganschow, 1991).

Over the last decades, a great body of studies has been conducted on language anxiety in FL and second language learning (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a; Scovel, 1978). Based on empirical research, language learning situations are specifically prone to anxiety arousal (Price, 1991).

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) viewed language anxiety as a particular form of anxiety because there was something unique in the language learning processes which made some students nervous. Reviewing the literature shows that there were six categories of potential sources of FL anxiety: personal and interpersonal anxiety, learner beliefs and attitudes, instructor beliefs, instructor-learner interaction, classroom procedures, and testing (young, 1991). Moreover, the correlates of FL anxiety were widely ranged from highly personal to procedural (or situational). The factors of self-esteem, individual differences in learning, classroom activities, teaching methods, and instructor-learner interactions all could be categorized as sources that might contribute to FL anxiety (Oxford, 1999a).

Contrary to what is happening abroad, fewer studies in Algeria have been conducted and acknowledged the effects of anxiety on foreign language learning. Only some empirical studies have touched on the sources of anxiety, and none of them have focused on the students of 20 August 1955 Skikda's University. It happened that the researcher is in a permanent contact with those students as a teacher and a manager of the intensive language learning centre at the aforementioned University; from some friendly conversations with them, truth shows that most of the students are unhappy foreign language learners. They feel frustrated, pressured, and nervous during some English classes. These uncomfortable feelings can be triggered by the instructors' attitudes or characteristics. They suffer high levels of language anxiety in class when the teachers are rigid, serious and authoritarian, or when they are ridiculed and humiliated by these grim teachers. On the other hand, they feel relaxed, motivated and less anxious when having the humorous, easy-going, amiable, and patient teachers' classes. They would do their best and perform well in classes. These experiences demonstrate that there might be a certain degree of connection between learners' foreign language anxiety and instructors' behaviors and personalities. Besides learners variables such as self-esteem, beliefs, motivation, language

proficiency and so on, the current study attempts to examine to what extent the teachers influence students' foreign language anxiety as these feelings impede their ability to perform successfully in English learning. So it is quite necessary to have an investigation on FL anxiety, identify its contributing factors, and develop useful strategies to control it, or at least reduce it.

## **2. The Purpose of the Study**

While the previous Research has done much to statistically demonstrate the existence of second/foreign language anxiety, many researchers view that “even without empirical proof; the mere awareness of foreign language anxiety, even on an intuitive level, is testimony enough to its existence and worthy of fuller investigation” (Shams, 2006, p.14). Reviewing past research, Ohata (2005) concludes that language anxiety cannot be defined in a linear manner but rather it can be better constructed as a complex psychological phenomenon influenced by many different variables.

For this reason an investigation of some learners' variables such as learning beliefs, personality trait, self-efficacy, learning strategies, language proficiency, social anxiety and gender on one hand and situational variables such as instructor's beliefs, classroom activities and teaching methods, competitive environment and test-taking situation on the other hand may help to have a better understanding of this construct and its correlates, discover the general state of foreign language anxiety among 2<sup>nd</sup> year English Language students at 20 August 1955 Skikda's University in Algeria and explore how teachers and students can cope with it and minimize its negative impact.

### **3. Research Questions**

Based on the study's purpose, this dissertation hopes to answer the following questions:

1. What is the general level of foreign language anxiety among 2<sup>nd</sup> year English language students at 20 August 1955 Skikda's University?
2. What personal factors are related to foreign language anxiety?
3. What instructional factors are related to foreign language anxiety?
4. What strategies could teachers and students use to reduce foreign language anxiety?

### **4. Research Hypothesis**

The present research is based on the following hypothesis:

Anxiety existing within the learners of EFL is a natural matter, where the combination of different factors whether external as the classroom and the teacher, or internal as gender and the other different psychological factors like motivation, communication competence and personality...etc. generates this feeling of anxiety. But exceeding a certain level, it is known as having a negative impact on the learners. So, we hypothesize that if the real causes of language anxiety either personal or situational are properly investigated, having as a purpose to reduce its rate within the classroom, then students' performance and academic achievement will be probably better.

### **5. Significance of the Study**

This study may have some implications on English teaching. First, it may attract teachers' attention to the students' English learning anxiety and lead them to find more ways to reduce it. Second, the results of this study intend to find out the potential sources of

English language anxiety, which can help teachers adjust their instruction and cultivate an agreeable learning environment to deal with language anxiety. Finally, this study may contribute to further investigation in English teaching and learning in Algeria.

## **6. Theoretical Assumptions of Foreign Language Anxiety**

There are three theoretical assumptions described as follows:

1. Most learners' foreign language anxiety comes from certain types of in-class activities. Many of these activities are oral-oriented in-class practices. The learners are afraid of expressing their ideas in foreign language. This assumption can be explained by Young (1990). Young states that a variety of complex psychological constructs causes foreign language anxiety such as communication apprehension, social anxiety, and self-esteem. Communication apprehension is defined as "an individual's level of fear of anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (Richmond & McCroskey, 1989). It describes that those people who suffer communication apprehension are unwilling to communicate with others. Talking with other people in English troubles these learners. The second source of second language learners' communication anxiety is social anxiety. Social anxiety is an anxiety that results from the prospect or presence of personal evaluation in real or imagined social situations (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Second/ foreign language learners feel nervous whenever they are motivated to make a desired impression on others, but are not certain that they will do so (Chen, 2002). Their motivation and the doubt of wondering if they can do so arise their social anxiety. Second language learners' self-esteem can also be seen as a major reason of communication anxiety. Coopersmith (1967) says that Self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that individuals hold towards themselves. Self-esteem affects learners' second language acquisition. In second language learning,

those unsuccessful language learners often have lower self-esteem than successful language learners. What's more, having low self-esteem will cause language learners' speaking anxiety. Price (1991) points out that having low self-esteem tends to suffer high levels of language anxiety. The learners with low self-esteem are worried about their peers' thought, or they fear peers' criticism. Thus, these learners dare not to speak and are anxious when they meet oral tasks (Krashen, 1980, cited in Young, 1991). Consequently, the oral-oriented in-class activities are highly possible to cause learners' second language anxiety.

2. Second language instructors' characteristics and behaviors do affect learners' language anxiety in the classroom. Young (1990) points out that instructors' negative evaluation, harsh error correction, public criticism and authoritarian causes learners' second language anxiety. Some teachers tend to evaluate students negatively or criticize students in public. This kind of teachers causes student's anxiety. To the learners, those teachers create a horrible social environment. The students feel nervous during the classes, and then they are unwilling to attend the classes. On the contrary, those friendly, humorous and patient teachers create a warm social environment for students. Those teachers help students reduce their language anxiety in the classroom. In a nutshell, second language instructors influence learners' language anxiety. Students' language anxiety is reduced when the teachers are kind, interesting, and positive. Those rigid, stubborn, authoritarian, unfriendly and emotional teachers increase students' language anxiety.

3. Since foreign language anxiety is highly related to achievement, it's important to help foreign language learners to reduce language anxiety (Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997). After analyzing the sources of English language anxiety, the researcher of this study attempts to offer some solutions for instructors and learners to reduce anxiety. Most learners suffer high levels of foreign language anxiety due to the oral-oriented in-class activities. They fear that if they can't speak fluently or express

their ideas smoothly in class, they will be ridiculed by their classmates or teachers. Moreover, many learners hold wrong beliefs. Some of them believe that having the same accent as native speakers is paramount; others believe that English can be mastered within a few years. These illusions need to be broken. This study will offer certain ways not only for instructors to enhance learners' oral abilities and try to help learners reduce language anxiety but also for learners to get rid of some wrong concepts about learning English language.

## **7. Methodological Procedure**

Anxiety, along with the other individual and environmental factors bear a heavy responsibility in determining the learner's success as far as EFL learning is concerned. The impact of environmental and individual factors may be anxiety-provoking ones. The latter factor, which is anxiety, is a key one to learners' success. The teacher on the other hand plays a major role in reducing or increasing the feelings of anxiety experienced by his students.

The study used both a causal comparative research approach (t test and ANOVA) and a correlation research approach (Pearson correlation) as its research design. About 51 second year students of English language at 20 August 1955 Skikda's University in Algeria participated in this investigation. They were required to answer a battery of questionnaires through four successive days (30 minutes per day). Six instruments were used in the present study, including Background Questionnaire, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), Self-perceived Proficiency Scale, Motivation Scale, Foreign Language Anxiety towards In-Class Activity Questionnaire (ATIAQ), and Anxiety towards Test Types Evaluation. All data analysis has been performed with the system of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 17.0).

## 8. Operational Definition of Terms

To make clear the focus of the study, the following terms are defined.

**L1 (First Language):** refers to the native language of the speaker.

**EFL:** EFL is an abbreviation for English as a foreign language. It refers to English learning by nonnative speakers living in a non-English-speaking country (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992).

**In-class Activities:** Generally speaking, an activity refers to anything that learners do in the classroom. Specifically, in-class activity is defined as “a reasonably unified set of student behaviours, limited in time, preceded by some direction from the teacher, with a particular objective” (Brown et al, 2001, p.129). Group discussions, peer-editing, oral presentations, games, drills, role-plays, listening exercises, and drama are all types of in-class activities.

**Language proficiency:** According to Richards, Platt and Platt (1992), language proficiency refers to the degree of skills with which a person can use a language, such as how well a person can read, write, speak, or understand language. In the study, the students’ language proficiency refers to their English proficiency.

**Communicative competence:** The term, communicative competence is the aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally with specific contexts (Brown, 1994, p. 227).

**Self-efficacy:** Self-efficacy is a judgment of one’s ability to organize and execute given types of performances (Bandura, 1997).

**Foreign Language Anxiety:** Foreign language anxiety, which has been defined as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 284), can strike at different stages in the learning and speech production process. In this study, it generally

refers to the anxiety students perceived during their courses within the classroom setting. In this study the terms: language anxiety, foreign language anxiety and foreign language classroom anxiety are used interchangeably and all have the meaning of English language classroom anxiety.

## **9. Limitation of the Study**

The study focused on the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety, personal and situational variables of English language students at 20 August 1955 Skikda's University. In order to carefully manage the study; it was delimited to only 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of the above mentioned university. It would have generated more generalized information if it had included wider area samples of different study years and universities through out the country.

## **10. Structure of the Dissertation**

Research proposal has been presented as an introduction to the study. The whole work is organized into four main chapters.

The first chapter introduces a general overview regarding the problematic concept of anxiety from several viewpoints (psychology & SLA research) to put the reader in picture and prevent ambiguity. First, it will attempt to define language anxiety according to the recurrent literature research. Then, it is going to present its types, forms and components in relation to the probable causal factors. Finally, correlates of foreign language anxiety associated with some personal and instructional factors within classroom are going to be discussed.

Chapter two will almost be devoted to the effects of language anxiety on the process of learning, and how it may hinder the acquisition of the four skills, vocabulary and grammar and consequently, it will negatively affect academic achievement. Language anxiety is manifested in many ways in learners, thus, attentive instructors have to detect it and find solutions to alleviate it or at least to cope with it in order to create a healthy learning environment.

Chapter three is going to describe the methodology used within the study; because of the complex relationships among personal factors, the study has used descriptive statistics, causal comparative research approach (t test and ANOVA), and correlation research approach (Pearson correlation) as a research design.

Chapter four will give the analysis of collected data and overall results, provides the interpretation of all findings and statistics and answer research questions and hypothesis. In addition, it will formulate some possible pedagogical implications and draws limitations of this study as well as expected areas of investigation from future studies.

## CHAPTER ONE

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## Introduction

The focus of research in second language acquisition (SLA) has been basically on issues such as language pedagogy, contents of pedagogical curricula and probable ways to improve them. Thus, the findings of this research remained restricted to the learning and teaching of the language itself, in other words to the cognitive aspect with minor attention being paid to the affective variables learners bring with them into language classroom. It was only in the 1970s, that the SLA researchers – influenced by the domain of psychology- began to study the significant role played by personality and motivational variables in second language acquisition (Shams, 2006). They argued that, in order to gain a holistic understanding of this process, learners' affective variables need to be taken into account to cater for their needs and interests (Samimy, 1994). Furthermore, as the emphasis of learning has shifted from the narrow concern for developing learners' linguistic competence to the need for communicative competence, learners are challenged to be able to speak in the target language spontaneously in various social contexts. In order to meet this challenge, attention has diverted to studying the role of affective variables such as learning strategies, motivation, personality traits , etc... that can hinder the process of learning a second/ foreign language. Among these affective variables, learner anxiety has been recognised as an important area of investigation in second language acquisition because of the negative impact it can have on students' performance and success. Language anxiety ranks high among factors influencing language learning, whatever the learning setting (Oxford, 1999a), and has become central to any examination of factors contributing to the learning process and learner achievement. Arnold and Brown (1999, p.9) contend that anxiety is “quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process and that there are few, if any, disciplines in the curriculum which lay themselves open to anxiety production more than foreign or second language learning”.

This chapter reviews literature from one specific perspective: anxiety as a psychological construct and its probable causal factors in an educational setting. First of all, some related problems with the concept have been discussed, and the difference between L1 anxiety and L2/FL anxiety are particularly presented as an introduction to prevent confusion in the reader's mind. Then, we shed light on the two main approaches to the study of anxiety construct, give some definitions concerning the nature of anxiety as well as its types and establish the conceptual foundations of the construct of 'language anxiety' in terms of its three components: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. These components have been discussed with relation to some factors that cause language anxiety while learning the target language.

To study language anxiety, it is fundamental to gain some understanding on the concept of affect. This is due to the fact that anxiety is only one of the many affective variables among other intrinsic learner's variables (Scovel, 1978). Affect in language learning involves various aspects of emotion, feeling, and attitude of the learner. Affective sides of language learners may influence their language learning processes, positively or negatively. Thus, a right understanding of affect in foreign language learning can lead to more effective language learning and teaching.

As it is agreed upon, language anxiety phenomenon is a complex psychological construct; in a learning setting, it has to be investigated from different perspectives. In this study our focus of interest has been devoted to: firstly, correlates associated with some learners' variables such as self-esteem, beliefs, language proficiency, language strategies, social anxiety, motivation, trait personality and gender. Secondly, correlates associated with situational variables like instructors' beliefs about teaching, classroom procedure as in-class activities, teaching methods, in addition to competitive environment and test-taking

situations. Despite being hard to characterize and assess, these variables are vital to the learning process and can either promote or hamper FL learner's success.

Generally speaking, this chapter has mainly been concerned by anxiety conceptualization despite the complexity and ambiguity of the construct; It attempts in the first place to define its types, forms as facilitative or debilitating and components in relation to the probable causal factors. Then, correlates of foreign language anxiety associated with some personal and instructional variables within educational settings have mainly been investigated.

## **1. Complex Definitions of Anxiety**

In L2/FL learning, attention has been given to anxiety because of its considerable effects on L2/FL learners. The initial research, however, produced mixed and perplexing results regarding the relationship between anxiety and L2/FL learning. Inconsistent conclusions were drawn as to the effect of anxiety on L2/FL learning is due to the fact that anxiety is “neither a simple nor well-understood psychological construct” (Scovel, 1978). This variation and even confusion in conceptualization of language anxiety creates different approaches to study this phenomenon.

### **1.1 Individual differences**

From the early beginning of its existence, the field of psychology has been trying to achieve two different and perhaps contradictory objectives: to delve into the *general principles* that rule the human mind and to explore the *uniqueness* of the individual mind. The latter direction has formed an independent subdiscipline referred to as individual difference research. As the term suggests, individual differences are characteristics or traits

in respect of which individuals may be shown to differ from each other. Perhaps, it would be easier for researchers to find conclusions and therefore be generalized on all human beings; so that, their therapy would probably suit everybody. Nevertheless, the affective constitution of human being ego is more complicated than that. One of the most important differences between social sciences and natural sciences lies in the existence of individual differences. Separate pieces of metal treated under the same conditions, will respond in exactly the same way, whereas, two persons, even twins may vary significantly in response to stimuli. Accordingly, difference or variability is a basic feature of human beings.

Many researchers find individual differences detrimental and decisive to social sciences and this is also applicable to the domain of educational studies. As a matter of fact, second language acquisition (SLA) researchers may become rather perplex with individual differences when these prevent learners from acquiring a particular language aspect over time, because there will always be a category of learners to whom some findings and recommendations do not apply. Many may think that first language acquisition do not depend on learners' variability because it almost leads to native-level proficiency in the language. But contrary to this common belief, research had demonstrated that individual differences are active even in this domain (Bates, Dale, & Thal, 1995; Shore, 1995) resulting in different learning styles and meta-cognition, as well as subsequent strengths and weaknesses in achievement and success in our native language. To learn a second or foreign language is significantly more diverse and more complicated than acquiring an L1 and a great deal from which stem that difficulty is attributed to the impact of individual differences. Since the latter are considered as a fuel or an impetus to success, but what do we really mean by 'individual differences'?

The construct refers to dimensions of enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree. Or, in other words,

they concern stable and systematic deviations from a normative blueprint (Dorneyi, 2005). Among individual differences or variables- as it was later on referred to- we can find: motivation, personality, aptitude, intelligence, learning strategies, learning styles which were deeply investigated and research has provided conclusive results. But, research on other individual variables such as anxiety is not comprehensive. Although the construct of anxiety has important theoretical and practical potential, further research is needed to do it full justice.

## 1.2 Problems with the Concept

Some research conceptualized anxiety as part of self-confidence in Clément's model (1980) and is therefore often seen as a component of motivation, other considered it as an emotion, a variant of fear (MacIntyre, 2002). Thus, anxiety is reported in the majority of literature as a complex, ambiguous, and difficult to isolate from other individual variables.

There is no doubt that anxiety affects L2/FL performance, most learners describe the experience that in an anxiety-provoking climate their L2/FL knowledge often deteriorates: they forget things that they otherwise know and also make silly mistakes. According to Arnold and Brown (1999, p.8) "Anxiety is quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process". For this reason, it has been in the limelight of SLA research for decades (Scovel, 1978; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Young, 1999). Given the importance and the high profile of anxiety, it is surprising how ambiguous the conceptualization of the concept becomes when we go beyond the surface. As mentioned above, there is an overall uncertainty about the basic category: Is it a motivational component? A personality trait? Or simply an emotion?

Furthermore, anxiety is usually not seen as a unitary factor but a complex made up of constituents that have different characteristics. Psychologists divide anxiety into:

*trait anxiety* : it refers to a stable predisposition to become anxious in cross-section of situations and *state anxiety* : which is the transition, a moment-to moment experience of anxiety as an emotional reaction to the current situation.

Thus, anxiety is a complex construct with several different facets. However, as Scovel (2001) describes, in contrast to this multifaceted view, non-specialists tend to equate anxiety with fear or phobia, and in the language teaching methodological texts the variable is considered to be a potential enemy that need to be eliminated at all costs. This perception, according to Scovel and many other researchers, is simply erroneous and confirms the belief that anxiety is the most misunderstood affective variable of all.

In 1986, Horwitz et al. conceptualized a *situation-specific anxiety* construct that they called foreign language anxiety; this construct is relatively independent from other kinds of general trait-anxiety and specific to the L2/FL learning situation, as MacIntyre (1999) defines it, language anxiety involves the “worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language” (p.27). Once the conceptualization of foreign language anxiety has been established as far as the relationship between this unique construct and the learning situation (Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre, 1999; Gardner and MaIntyre, 1993; Oxford, 1999a); numerous authors had undertaken research on potential sources of language anxiety , they suggested that language anxiety might have its origins in numerous aspects of the language learning situation (e.g. classroom procedure including unknown material, instructors’ methods, attitudes and beliefs, perceived negative evaluation on the part of teachers or peers, fear of speaking in the second/ foreign language...). It would seem logical that a poor capacity for learning languages might also be a cause of anxiety. As Horwitz (2001, p. 118) points out: “It is easy to conceptualize

foreign language anxiety as a result of poor language learning ability. A student does poorly in language learning and consequently feels anxious about his / her language class”.

However, it may be that anxiety is not only the result of poor language ability and achievement, but also that anxiety itself may interfere with existing language ability and therefore be a cause of poor language learning and performance. Supporting this view, MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) submitted in their evaluation of Horwitz et al's (1986) theory that their own results tend to indicate that anxiety leads to deficits in learning and performance. Later on, the same authors (1991, p. 302) state: “language anxiety consistently, negatively affects language learning and production”. Researchers have been interested in exploring its relationships with achievement in the second/ foreign language. Indeed, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993, p.183) called language anxiety “the best single correlate of achievement”. According to Horwitz (2001) anxiety has usually been seen to be detrimental to students' learning and achievement in second and foreign languages. Similarly, Spolsky (1989) pointed out that although anxious learners try harder to be successful; anxiety plays its debilitating role on their performance and achievement. So, is language anxiety a cause or an effect of poor language achievement?

Since the mid-1990s there has been a debate between Horwitz and Macintyre, on the one hand, and Sparks and Ganschow, on the other hand. The disagreement between the two camps is whether anxiety is a cause or an effect of poor performance in a language class. Horwitz and MacIntyre believe that foreign language anxiety causes poor performance and achievement. Sparks and Ganschow argue that there may be a confounding interaction between language skills and anxiety. This argument is based on their Linguistic Coding Deficit/ Differences Hypothesis (LCDH). So, what is the Linguistic Coding Deficit/ Differences Hypothesis (LCDH)?

According to the hypothesis, one's capacity to learn an L2/FL is closely related to the individual's L1 learning skills, and L2/FL learning difficulties stem in part from native language difficulties (Sparks, 1995; Sparks and Ganschow, 1991, 1999, 2001; Sparks et al., 1995, 1998). The central cognitive factor the theory focused on is 'linguistic coding', which refers to L1 literacy skills such as phonological /orthographic processing and word recognition or decoding (i.e., single-word reading). The LCDH proposes that these abilities serve as the foundation for learning an L2/FL, and an insufficient level of development in linguistic coding skills has a profound impact on L2/FL learning ability, resulting in a serious handicap. Thus, linguistic coding ability can be seen as the primary factor to consider while dealing with SLA and personal variables.

To recapitulate, native language skills are the foundation for successful foreign language learning. Therefore, poor performance in language classes is often caused by poor native language skills, which in turn can cause anxiety. Their LCDH claims that it is necessary to include a third variable in the discussion, namely, cognitive linguistic skills, which interact with foreign learning and anxiety (Sparks & Ganschow, 1991; Sparks, Ganschow, & Javorsky, 2000).

This view has been strongly contested by Horwitz (2000) and MacIntyre (1995a, 1995b), the latter has argued that the main problem with Sparks and Ganschow's LCDH is that it focuses exclusively on cognitive ability factors, in terms of the coding of linguistic stimuli, and thus ignores the context in which language learning occurs (i.e., it does not consider the socio-cultural factors involved in language learning) and ignores the potential for social context to influence cognitive processes. He has also criticized Sparks and Ganschow's (1995) claim that "anxiety about FL learning is likely to be related to anxiety about native language learning" (p. 240) by noting that studies have found that language

anxiety correlates significantly with foreign language tasks but not with those same tasks performed in the native language.

Horwitz (2001) pointed out that the number of people who experience foreign language anxiety is far greater than the percentage of decoding disabilities in the general population, and that many successful language learners including some language instructors also experience language anxiety. She concluded that “the LCDH is ultimately based on an overly simplified view of language learning” (p. 118).

In a more recent paper, Sparks and Ganschow (2007) examined the role of anxiety with regards to native language and foreign language proficiency over an extended period of time. They stated that their findings “suggest that students with the highest levels of anxiety about foreign language learning may also have the lowest levels of native language skills, especially in reading and spelling” (p. 277) and, therefore, “foreign language anxiety is likely to be related to a student’s native language learning skills” (p. 279). They concluded that “language learning skills play a confounding role in theories that suggest that anxiety plays a primary role in foreign language proficiency and achievement” (p.279).

MacIntyre & Gardner (19991a) in a survey of anxiety studies in relation to ways of evaluating language proficiency, with different populations and from various theoretical viewpoints, posited that “it has been shown that anxiety negatively affects performance in the second language” (p. 102), but later in the same article, they asserted that “the most satisfactory solution to the problem of cause and effect is Levitt’s (1980) model of reciprocal causation. They further explained causation between language anxiety and achievement in the following way: “After several language experiences with the second language context, the student forms attitudes that are specific to the situation, that is, emotions and attitudes about learning a new language. If these experiences are negative, foreign language anxiety may begin to develop. As negative experiences persist, foreign

language anxiety may become a regular occurrence and the student begins to expect to be nervous and to perform poorly. This foreign language anxiety is based on negative expectations that lead to worry and emotionality. This leads to cognitive interference from self-derogatory cognition that produces performance deficits. Poor performance and negative emotional reactions reinforce the expectations of anxiety and failure, further anxiety being a reaction to this perceived threat”. (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a, p. 110).

Several researchers have embraced MacIntyre and Gardner’s viewpoint listed in the above paragraph, maintaining the existence of a vicious circle relationship or influences between language anxiety and achievement in the second/foreign language. Saito and Samimy (1996) found that highly anxious students tended to overstudy, although, this extra time spent studying did not pay dividends as regards performance, resulting in “a downward spiral of ever more effort for diminishing results” (p. 246) . However, the actual amount of impact language anxiety exerts also depends on individual variables. MacIntyre et al. (1997), in a study about language learners’ self-perceptions of achievement, submitted that more highly-anxious students are prone to underestimate their linguistic abilities, and that as these students fail to see that they are making progress in language learning, and they are more reluctant to speak, thus, damaging their potential performance through lack of practice, and starting a vicious circle of deficits in which language anxiety and poorer competence seem to fuel each other. Gregersen and Horwitz (2002), for example, established a link between language anxiety and perfectionism. Whereas, Dewaele (2002) posited that high anxiety, especially when linked with high introversion, can lead to breakdowns in automatic processing and therefore can seriously hinder L2 fluency. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) also argued that the effect of anxiety varies according to the social milieu that would enhance the correlates of language anxiety, self-perceptions of L2 proficiency, and motivational components. The vast majority of

theoretical findings based on FL teachers' and learners' experiences acknowledge the negative impact of language anxiety on behaviors. Consequently, a great deal of effort has been made in literature to develop methods to reduce anxiety. A relaxed, anxiety-free environment is found to motivate learning as well as fostering the learners' capacity to process tension and classroom stress in a facilitating manner.

Generally speaking, the individual variable 'language anxiety' is undoubtedly an important learner characteristics in L2/FL learning and use, and its impact is consistently demonstrated by many researchers. However, a considerable variation in the literature has been noticed in the way anxiety factor has been integrated into research paradigms: It is sometimes used as a separate independent variable and some other times as a constituent of a larger construct. This fact, as seen, reflects the ambiguity also found in the psychological literature concerning the exact position of the construct with other individual variables.

Within all this confusion, ambiguity and sometimes uncertainty, the current study is an attempt to understand the construct of language anxiety (within the Algerian context) and to what extent it may hinder the process of learning, furthermore, relationships that may exist between language anxiety and other individual and situational variables are going to be investigated within the educational frame as well as proposing ways to reduce it.

### **1.3 Foreign Language Anxiety & Foreign Language Learning**

Eighty percent of the learning difficulties are related to stress. Remove the stress and remove the difficulties (Stokes & Whiteside, 1984).

Nowadays, learning English language is paramount throughout the world. Every country is preparing its students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century where "Standing Still is Falling Behind", where there are unprecedented social changes and high technological innovations.

Accordingly, the Algerian university has always supported the idea of teaching English to our students. Within this context of teaching/learning increased attention is being given to language learners and their perspectives, motivations, beliefs about language learning, learning styles, learning strategies and instruction environment. Regardless of method, we know that learners need to adopt attitudes and strategies that pay off in terms of low anxiety, high motivation and ultimately in the ability to convey information and communicate ideas and feelings. One of the current challenges in foreign language teaching is to provide students with a learner-centred, low-anxiety classroom environment.

Research (Aida, 1994; Bailey, 1983; Ely, 1986; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Horwitz & Young, 1991) has consistently revealed that anxiety can impede foreign language production and achievement. Indeed, Campell & Ortiz (1991) report perhaps one-half of all language students experience a startling level of anxiety. Language anxiety is experienced by learners of both foreign and second language; research related to language anxiety stated that anxiety posed the potential problems for language learners “because it can interfere with the acquisition, retention and production of the new language” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b, p.86).

Krashen (1985) maintained that anxiety inhibits the learner’s ability to process incoming language and short-circuit the process of acquisition. An interaction is often found among anxiety, task difficulty, and ability, which interferes at the input, processing, retrieval, and the output level. If anxiety impairs cognitive function, students who are anxious may learn less and also may not be able to demonstrate what they have learned. Therefore, they may experience even more failure, which in turn escalates their anxiety. Furthermore, Oxford (1991a) reported that serious language anxiety may cause other related problems with self-esteem, self-confidence, and risk-taking ability, and ultimately

hampers proficiency in the second language and automatically affects academic achievement.

Many learners express their inability and sometimes even acknowledge their failure in learning a second or a foreign language. These learners may be good at learning other skills and sciences but, when it comes to learning another language, they claim to have a ‘mental block’ against it (Horwitz et al, 1986). What, then, hinders or stops them to succeed in learning a second/ foreign language? In many cases, students’ feeling of stress, anxiety or nervousness may impede their language learning and performance abilities. Theorists and second language acquisition (SLA) researchers (Gardner, 1985; Horwitz, et al., 1986) have frequently demonstrated that these feelings of anxiety are specifically associated with learning a second/ foreign language, which distinguishes L2/FL learning from learning other skills or subjects. Recently, both teachers and students are aware and generally feel strongly that anxiety is a major hurdle to be overcome when learning to use another language. Learning a language itself is “profoundly unsettling psychological proposition” because it directly threatens an individual’s ‘self-concept’ and world-view (Guiora, 1983, cited in Horwitz et al., 1986, p.28). A basic question regarding language anxiety needs to be addressed in the very beginning, which may otherwise cause some confusion in the minds of the readers. How is second or foreign language anxiety different from the language anxiety experienced in the first language?

#### **1.4 Difference between L1 Anxiety & L2/FL Anxiety**

Anxiety and speech communication appear to have a strong bond with each other. Speaking either in L1 or L2/FL in different situations, particularly the situations that demand public speech tend to be anxiety-provoking. However, the anxiety experienced

when speaking in a second/ foreign language seems to be more debilitating than the anxiety experienced when speaking in the first language. Anxiety while communicating in other than L1 goes a step further with the addition of the difficulties associated with learning and speaking a foreign language. In a foreign language, a speaker has to look for suitable lexis, has to construct an appropriate syntactic structure and needs to use a comprehensible accent, plus the demanding tasks of thinking and organizing ideas and expressing them at the same time. Daly ( 1991) while discussing the reactions to second language learning from the perspective of first language communication apprehension expresses that the anxiety experienced by many people while communicating in their first language seem to have many logical ties to second language anxiety.

## **2. Approaches to the Study of Anxiety in Second/ Foreign Language Learning**

There have been essentially two basic approaches to the study of anxiety in second/ foreign language learning settings. These are labelled (a) The anxiety transfer, and (b) The unique anxiety (Horwitz & Young, 1991). The assumption behind the first approach is that the anxiety experienced in an L2/FL context is simply the transfer of other forms of anxiety into the L2/FL domain. This means that individuals who are generally anxious or experience anxiety in certain situations are presumed to have a predisposition to also experience anxiety when learning or using a foreign language. Early studies conducted on anxiety and language learning used the “anxiety transfer” approach and found ambiguous and contradictory results, they have been unable to draw a clear picture of how anxiety affects language learning and performance. Some researchers reported a negative relationship between language anxiety and achievement, e.g. the higher the anxiety, the lower the performance (Swain and Burnaby, 1976). Others reported a positive relationship (Kleinman, 1977), whereas, Chastain (1975) in an attempt to assess the anxiety levels of

college beginning learners of French, German and Spanish, he found positive, negative, and near zero correlations between anxiety and second language learning in the three languages. Reviews of the early research on language anxiety indicate that anxiety facilitates performance, that anxiety hampers performance, and that there is no relationship between anxiety and performance. Studies using this approach showed confusing results, both within and across studies (Scovel, 1978; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989) for two reasons. First, The anxiety measures used for these early studies were borrowed from psychology, and thus were not language anxiety scales; second , most studies did not clearly define the construct of anxiety, researchers had “ neither adequately defined foreign language anxiety nor described its specific effects on foreign language learning” ( Horwitz et al, 1986. p. 28).

In contrast, the second approach to identifying language anxiety proposes that language learning produces a unique type of anxiety. MacIntyre (1999) stated: “From this perspective, we can define language anxiety as the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language” (p. 27). He concluded that since the mid-1980s, research has supported Gardner’s (1985) hypothesis that “a construct of anxiety which is not general but instead is specific to the language acquisition context is related to second language achievement” (1985, p. 34). With their seminal article “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety”, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) provided a definition of the anxiety specifically associated with the language learning context. That is, foreign language anxiety is not simply the transfer of anxiety from one domain to another, but rather “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128).

Of the two contrasting perspectives outlined above, the unique anxiety approach turned out to be the more fruitful one. Although, results in recent studies on anxiety do not

seem to agree on the role anxiety plays in the learning process. Today, the notion of language anxiety should be reconceptualized as something more individualistic, closely related to individual differences (DeKeyser & Larson-Hall, 2005), needs, and personal language experiences, and to the concept of self-efficacy as suggested by Mills et al. (2006). Furthermore, new studies should consider L1 as well as foreign language skills to examine their relationship with language anxiety as suggested by Sparks and Ganschow (2007).

### **3. Nature of Anxiety**

Anxiety is a feeling of uneasiness and apprehension, usually about a situation with uncertain outcomes (Spielberger, 1983). It has been studied by psychologists and educators from many perspectives; resulting in a voluminous body of literature documenting its influence on cognitive, affective and behavioural functioning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a). Thus, it has been proven to be one of the most highly examined variables in all of psychology and education (Horwitz, 2001). Janassen and Grabowski (1993) conceptualized anxiety as two elements, worry and emotionality. Worry is associated with the cognitive component and emotionality with disagreeable sensations that one usually experiences for short duration.

Besides understanding the meaning of anxiety, a description between anxious language learners and non anxious learners is needed. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) characterize an anxious student as “an individual who perceives the second language as an uncomfortable experience, who withdraws from voluntary participation, who feels social pressures not to make mistakes, and who is less willing to try uncertain or novel linguistic forms”. On the other hand, a non anxious student is usually a person who feels relaxed and comfortable in the language learning class.

#### **4. Types of Anxiety**

According to MacIntyre (1999), “Even if one views language anxiety as being a unique form of anxiety, specific to second language contexts, it is still instructive to explore the links between it and the rest of the anxiety literature” (p.28). Thus, three main types of anxiety can be distinguished: trait anxiety, situation-specific anxiety, and state anxiety.

##### **4.1 Trait Anxiety**

It refers to a stable predisposition to become nervous in a wide range of situations (Spielberger, 1983). People with high level of trait anxiety are generally nervous people; they lack emotional stability (Goldberg, 1993). On the contrary, people with low trait anxiety are emotionally stable and tend to be calm and relax. Spielberger further defined trait anxiety as a probability of becoming anxious in any situation.

##### **4.2 Situation- specific Anxiety**

It refers to the persistent and multi-faceted nature of some anxieties (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a). It is aroused by a specific type of situation or event such as public speaking, test-taking, or class participation (Ellis, 1994). Each situation is different, therefore, a person may be nervous in one situation but not in others.

### 4.3 State Anxiety

It refers to the moment-to-moment experience of anxiety. This anxiety is the transient emotional state of feeling nervous that can fluctuate over time and vary in intensity. It has an effect on learner's emotion, cognition, and behaviour. Its effect on emotion results in amplified levels of arousal and more sensitive autonomous nervous system; people possessing state anxiety feel energized or agitated but anything above a minimal level of anxiety is regarded as obnoxious arousal. In terms of cognition, when people experience state anxiety, they are more sensitive to what other people are thinking of them (Carver & Scheier, 1986). In view of its effect on behaviour, people having state anxiety tend to evaluate the way they behave, assess the real and imaginary failures and constantly attempt to contrive ways to escape from the embarrassing situation.

## 5. Second or Foreign Language Anxiety

Second/ foreign language anxiety is a form of situation- specific anxiety from a theoretical perspective. MacIntyre (1999 p. 27) defines language anxiety as “the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language”. Another definition of language anxiety is stated by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994, p. 284) as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning”. Another definition of language anxiety with respect to foreign language anxiety was given by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986, p.128) as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning”. From the three definitions on language anxiety, the construct is considered to be unique to the language learning process. Language anxiety can start as transitory episodes of fear in a situation in which students have to perform in a language. At this stage, anxiety is simply a passing state (Oxford, 1999a). Ideally,

language anxiety diminishes over time, as shown in studies of learning French (Desrochers & Gardner, 1981). Nevertheless, language anxiety does not decrease over time for all students. If repeated, occurrences of anxiety cause students to associate it with language performance, anxiety becomes a trait rather than a state (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). Also, once language anxiety has evolved into a lasting trait, it can have pervasive effects on language learning and language performance (Oxford, 1999a). Hence, when this happens, an individual learner expects to be anxious in foreign language contexts.

It is crucial to understand the role of anxiety in language learning because it ranks high among factors that can influence language learning, regardless of whether the setting is formal or informal. Since anxiety may assist or hamper students' learning, MacIntyre (1995a) argued that anxiety plays different roles in language learning processes. The benefits of moderate levels of anxiety should not be ignored as it can provide an impetus to performing a task or achieving an objective. So, anxiety can be in two forms: debilitating or facilitating.

### **5.1 Forms of Language anxiety: Facilitating versus Debilitating**

Scovel (1978) suggested that language anxiety facilitates students' learning and it also keeps students on alert. However, Horwitz (1990) found that anxiety is only helpful for simple learning tasks, not for more complicated learning such as language learning. A few researchers asserted that a positive mode of anxiety exists, but most studies revealed a negative relationship between anxiety and performance. Debilitating anxiety hampers learners' performance in various ways, both indirectly through worry and self-doubt and directly by reducing participation and creating overt avoidance of the language (Oxford, 1999a). The concept of debilitating anxiety has been supported by a considerable number

of researchers because all their studies indicated the negative correlation of anxiety especially once associated with performance in speaking and writing tasks ( Young, 1986), with grades in language courses (Aida, 1994), and with proficiency test performance (Ganschow, Sparks, Anderson, Javorshy, Skinner & Patton, 1994). Consequently, even if some research has found in a few cases that high anxiety is associated with positive outcomes mainly high tests scores (e.g., Brown, Robson, and Rosenkjar, 2001) the predominance of the evidence supports the debilitating effect, especially for speaking activities, for that reason, Williams (2008) has even questioned the validity of the initial research by Yerkes and Dobson, done in 1908, upon which the assumptions of facilitative anxiety are based.

## **5.2 Components of Foreign Language Anxiety and Related Causal Factors**

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) argue that foreign language anxiety can be related to three different components of anxieties which are related to academic and social evaluation situations: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. The description of these components shed light on the concept of second/ foreign language anxiety and provide an insight to the sources or causes it can originate from.

### **5.2.1 Communication Apprehension (CA)**

One of the most studied topics in the field of speech communication is the tendency on the part of some people to avoid, and even fear communicating orally (Daly, 1991). Horwitz et al. (1986) define communication apprehension as “a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people”. Most of the research in this area is based on McCrosky’s definition of CA as “an individual’s level of fear or

anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (McCrosky, 1977).

Communication apprehension may be specific to only a few settings (e.g., public speaking) or may exist in most everyday communication situations, or may even be part of a general anxiety trait that arises in many facets of an individual’s life (Freidman, 1980). Much research has dealt with CA in terms of personality trait, but more recently the ideal of CA has expanded to include both trait and situation views ( McCrosky,1977). General personality traits such as quietness, shyness, and reticence frequently precipitate CA. According to Friedman (1980) when the ability and desire to participate in discussion are present, but the process of verbalizing is inhibited, shyness or reticence is occurring. The degree of shyness, or range of situations that it affects, varies greatly from individual to individual, and from situation to situation. Seven factors which could result in a quiet child (this could be equally give explanation to adult CA) have been identified (McCrosky, 1984; Bond, 1984):

1) Low intellectual skills, 2) Speech skill deficiencies. 3) Voluntary social introversion, 4) Social alienation, 5) Communication anxiety, 6) Low social self-esteem, 7) Ethnic/cultural divergence in communication norms. While communication apprehension is but one of these factors, the others can lead to communication apprehension.

Daly (1991) presents some explanations in the development of CA which can offer an insight into the issue of understanding what causes language anxiety for ESL/EFL learners. In the first place, he explains CA in terms of ‘genetic disposition’ indicating that one’s genetic legacy may be a potential contributor to one’s anxiety, it means that children seem to be born with certain personality predispositions towards CA. Secondly, he explains CA in terms of reinforcement and punishment related to the act of communication. He asserts that individuals who, from early childhood, are greeted with negative reactions from

others in response to their attempt to communicate develop a sense that staying quiet is more highly rewarded than talking. This can suggest that the negative reactions to learners' participation by language instructors can reinforce their fear of making mistakes and future attempts to communicate. Another explanation Daly (1991) focuses on is the adequacy of people's early communication skills acquisition. Children who receive a rich early experience of talking are more likely to be less apprehensive than those who receive less opportunities of communication. The last perspective he emphasizes is that the children who have been exposed to appropriate social-interactive models of communication are generally less apprehensive than those who have been exposed to inadequate or less interactive models. All these explanations suggest that development of CA in individuals' results from nature or their environment. In case of situational CA, Buss (1980) lists novelty, formality, subordinate status, conspicuousness, unfamiliarity, dissimilarity, and degree of attention as the major sources of situational CA.

Communication apprehension obviously plays a large role in second/ foreign language anxiety. People who are apprehensive speaking in dyads or groups are likely to be even in more trouble when doing so in second/ foreign language class, where "in addition to feeling less in control of the communication situation, they also may feel that their attempts at oral work are constantly being monitored" ( Horwitz, et al., 1986, p. 27). This apprehension is explained in relation to the learner's negative self-perceptions caused by inability to understand others and make himself understood (MacIntyre& Gardner, 1989). The emphasis on group work and oral presentation in the modern communicative classroom can be particularly exacerbating for students who have communication apprehension (Shams, 2006).

### **5.2.2 Test Anxiety**

Test anxiety refers to a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure in a test (Brown, 1994). It generally occurs when students have poor performance in the previous tests. They develop a negative stereotype about tests and have irrational perceptions in evaluative situations. These students might have an unpleasant test experience from either language class or other subjects, and they transplanted the unhappy image to the present English class unconsciously (Chan and Wu, 2004). According to Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), test anxious students have false beliefs in language learning. These students habitually put impractical demands on themselves and feel that anything less than perfect test performance is a failure. Young (1991) claims that test anxiety would affect foreign language learners with low levels of oral proficiency more than those with high levels of proficiency. On the other hand, learners experience more language anxiety in highly evaluative situations. Consistent evaluations by the instructor in the foreign language classrooms are rather commonplace and even the brightest and more prepared students often make errors (Horwitz et al, 1986). So, test anxious learners will doubtlessly suffer from stress and anxiety frequently. It is important to note that oral testing has the potential to provoke both test and oral communication anxiety simultaneously in susceptible students. Generally, test anxiety is a type of performance anxiety deriving from a fear of failure and evaluative situations, and if it is high it results in failure in exams.

### **5.2.3 Fear of Negative Evaluation**

Fear of negative evaluation is avoidance of evaluative situations and expectation that others will evaluate them negatively. Learners may be sensitive to evaluation of their peers. Chan and Wu (2004) explained fear of negative evaluation as apprehension about others evaluation, distress over their negative evaluations, and expectations that others would evaluate one self regularly. Although, it is similar to test anxiety, fear of negative

evaluation is broader in scope because it is not restricted to test taking situations (Spolsky, 1989). In addition to situations of tests, it may take place in any social, evaluative situations such as interviewing for a job or speaking in foreign language class. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) propose that fear of negative evaluation is closely related to communication apprehension. When students are unsure of what they are saying, fear of negative evaluation occurs and they may doubt about their ability to make a proper impression (Chan and Wu, 2004).

In a foreign language context, fear of negative evaluation derives mainly from both teachers and the students peers because foreign languages require continual evaluation by the teacher and anxious students may also be intensely susceptible to the evaluation of their peers (Von Worde, 2003). Students with fear of negative evaluation might adopt the reaction of avoidance (Chan and Wu, 2004; Spolsky, 1989 ; Casado and Dereshiwsky, 2001). In Aida's (1994) opinion, students with fear of negative evaluation might sit passively in the classroom, withdrawing from classroom activities that could otherwise enhance their improvement of the language skills. In extreme cases to avoid anxiety situations, causing them to be left behind (Wilson, 2006).

Horwitz et al (1986, pp. 127-128) believe that, although communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation provide useful conceptual building blocks for a description of second/foreign language anxiety, it is more than just the conglomeration of these three components: “ We conceive foreign language anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”. What makes language learning a distinct and unique process is its interaction with the concept of ‘self’.

To conclude, the conceptual basis of language anxiety with relation to its three components has been established. All the three components are strongly linked with learners' sense of 'self', as it is learners' 'self' which is at risk of failure or being negatively evaluated in any test-like situation, or a situation which requires communication in front of others. This risk to one's sense of 'self' frequently occurs in second/foreign language classroom.

## **6. Correlates of Foreign Language Anxiety**

The correlates of foreign language learning anxiety have been a major focus of research. One area of research has examined learner variables such as self-esteem, beliefs, gender, learning styles, motivation, and personality factors among others (e.g., Bailey, Daley, and Onwuegbuzie, 1999; Brown, Robson, and Rosenkjar, 1996; Campbell, 1999; Dewaele, 2002; Ehrman and Oxford, 1995; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1992; Gardner, Smythe, and Brunet, 1977; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002; Oxford, 1999b). Another area of research has investigated situational variables, for example, course activities, course level, course organization, instruction environment, and instructor behavior (Jackson, 2002; Oh, 1992; Oxford, 1999a; Powell, 1991; Samimy, 1989; Spielmann and Radnofsky, 2001; Young, 1991).

### **6.1 Correlates Associated with Learners' Variables**

Learners variables associated to FL anxiety include self-perceptions, learners' beliefs about language learning, language proficiency, motivation, learning strategies, personality trait, social anxiety and gender.

### 6.1.1 Self Perceptions

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), perhaps no other field of study poses as much of threat to self-concept as language study does. They advance that any performance in L2 is likely to challenge an individual's self-concept as a competent communicator, which may lead to embarrassment. Self-concept is "the totality of individual's thoughts, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and values having reference to himself as object" (Laine, 1987, p. 15). This self-concept forms the basis of the distinction, made by Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 128), between language anxiety and other forms of academic anxieties. They posited, "the importance of the disparity between the 'true' or 'actual' self as known to the language learner and the more limited self as can be presented at any given moment in the foreign language would seem to distinguish foreign language anxiety from other academic anxieties such as those associated with mathematics or science".

The term 'self-esteem' has been used in much the same meaning as 'self-concept' and has been found to be strongly linked with language anxiety. Krashen (1980, p. 15, cited in Young, 1991, p. 427) suggests, "the more I think about self-esteem, the more impressed I am about its impact. This is what causes anxiety in a lot of people. People with low self-esteem worry about what their peers think; they are concerned with pleasing others. And that I think has to do a great degree with anxiety". Individuals who have high levels of self-esteem are less likely to be anxious than are those with low self-esteem (Horwitz et al, 1986, p. 129).

To recap, self-esteem is probably considered as the most pervasive aspect of any human behavior. It could easily be claimed that no successful cognitive or affective activity could be carried out without some degree of self-esteem, self-confidence, knowledge of oneself, and belief in one's own capabilities for that activity (Brown, 2000).

### 6.1.2 Learners' Beliefs about Language Learning

As language learning poses a threat to learners' self-concept, in response learners may generate some particular beliefs about language learning and its use. Research on 'language anxiety' suggests that certain beliefs about language learning also contribute to the student's tension and frustration in the class (Horwitz et al, 1986, p. 127). For example, the following is such reported beliefs: "I just know I have some kind of disability: I can't learn a foreign language no matter how hard I try".

Such beliefs have been found to cast a considerable influence upon the ultimate achievement and performance in the target language. The researchers use terms such as "erroneous" or "irrational" to indicate certain widely held "beliefs about language learning which can be a source of anxiety" (Gynan, 1989, cited in Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999, p. 220). According to Horwitz (1999), it is likely that language learner beliefs have the potential to affect their learning experiences as well as actions. Some beliefs are likely influenced by learners' previous experiences which could be positive or negative. A negative learning experience might lead learners to embrace irrational and unrealistic conceptions about language learning. Some of these conceptions are noted by Horwitz (1988, cited in Ohata, 2005, p. 138) such as: 1) Some students believe that accuracy must be sought before saying anything in the foreign language, 2) some attach great importance to speaking with excellent native L1-like accent, 3) others believe that it is not ok to guess an unfamiliar second/ foreign language word, 4) Some hold that language learning is basically an act of translating from English or any second/foreign language, 5) some view that two years are sufficient in order to gain fluency in the target language, 6) some believe that language learning is a special gift not possessed by all. Similarly, Gynan (1989, cited in Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999) reported that learners believe that pronunciation is the most important aspect of language learning.

These unrealistic perceptions or beliefs on language learning and achievement can lead to frustration or anger towards learners' own poor performance in a second/ foreign language. According to Young (1991), erroneous beliefs about language learning can contribute greatly to creating language anxiety in students. Similarly, Ohata (2005) explained that unrealistic beliefs can lead to greater anxiety and frustration, especially when the beliefs and reality clash. He argues that if the learners start learning an L2/ FL with the belief that pronunciation is the single most important aspect of language learning, they will naturally feel frustrated to find the reality of their poor speech pronunciation even after learning and practicing for a long time. These beliefs are most likely to originate from learners' perfectionist nature. The perfectionist learners are convinced they must speak fluently, with no grammar or pronunciation errors, and as easily as an L1 speaker, these high or ideal standards create an ideal situation for the development of language anxiety (Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002).

### **6.1.3 Language Proficiency**

Several studies have discovered the link between anxiety and proficiency (Aida, 1994; Gardner, 1985; Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997). There are significant differences between high proficiency and low proficiency students in language anxiety; low proficiency students may have more anxiety than high proficiency students (Young, 1991). FL anxiety negatively correlates with performance in oral tests (Phillips, 1992), reading comprehension (Saito, Horwitz & Garza, 1999), the production of vocabulary (Gardner, Moorcroft & MacIntyre, 1987), listening comprehension and short-term memory (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a), and writing proficiency (Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert, 1999). According to Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), learning language can cause a threat to self-esteem because students have to communicate and express their ideas by an unfamiliar way which is quite different with the way they usually

use. Therefore, to the low proficiency learners, their self-esteem may be more vulnerable because they have more problems and frustrations in using foreign language. The recent review by Sparks and Ganschow (2007) showed that FL anxiety is closely linked to learners' native language skills. According to their Linguistic Coding Deficit/ Differences Hypothesis (LCDH). "Students with the highest levels of anxiety about foreign language learning may also have the lowest levels of native language skills, especially in reading and spelling" (p. 277).

#### **6.1.4 Motivation**

Motivation "is the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out" (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998, p. 65). Gardner was one of the pioneering researchers in second language acquisition (SLA) to focus on motivation. He chose to define motivation by specifying four aspects: 1) a goal. 2) Effortful behavior to reach the goal. 3) A desire to attain the goal. 4) Positive attitudes toward the goal (Gardner, 1985, p. 50). A goal, however, was not necessarily a measurable component of motivation. Instead, a goal was a stimulus that gave rise to motivation. Gardner focused on classifying reasons for second language study, which he then identified as orientations (1985, p. 54). He found two main orientations through his research: 1) integrative: a favorable attitude toward the target language community; possibly a wish to integrate and adapt to a new target culture through use of the language. 2) Instrumental: a more functional reason for learning the target language, such as job promotion, or a language requirement. Gardner's socio-educational model of motivation focused on the integrative motive. Motivation was the central concept of the model, but there were also some factors which affected this, such as integrativeness and attitudes. These were other factors that

influenced individual differences, and were seen as complex variables. Among these variables, language anxiety, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) suggest that motivation to learn a language is likely to lessen due to high levels of anxiety since experience is found to be painful, while high levels of motivation result in low levels of anxiety since the student perceives the experience of motivation positively and tends to be successful – both of which decrease anxiety- Motivated students are believed to be more interested in courses, enjoyed learning, less anxious, and pay attention to every detail to gather an important potential of input.

### **6.1.5 Learning Strategies**

Learning strategies are “actions chosen by students that are intended to facilitate learning” (Bailey et al., 1999, p.65). Learners with good learning strategies may be more motivated and less anxious in learning foreign language (Warr & Downing, 2000). Mueller (1981) examined the interaction between learning strategies and anxiety, and summarized in his findings that high-anxious learners may lack of strategies in language learning; they encode information less well, attend to less environmental cues, process material less effectively, experience more cognitive interference, and lose working memory more easily. In contrast, low-anxious learners may use more learning strategies, especially cognitive strategies (e.g., rehearsal, organization, elaboration). Mueller suggested that the specific role of anxiety in relation to the use of learning strategies should be further examined.

### **6.1.6 Personality Trait**

Some studies showed that FL anxiety is partly related to an individual’s personality (Dewaele, 2007; Dörnyei, 2005; Young, 1991). According to Gregersen and Horwitz’s (2002) study, high-anxiety learners and perfectionists share some similar characteristics which include higher standards for their English performance, a greater tendency towards

procrastination, more worry over the opinions of others, and a higher level of concern over their errors. These characteristics may evoke learners' negative feelings and low sense of success in FL learning. Chu (2008) confirmed that shyness has a positive correlation with anxiety in FL classroom. He stated that FL anxiety, willingness to communicate, and shyness interact with one another and create an impact on Taiwanese students in their English study. Although a number of studies have already been undertaken examining the relationships between personality and anxiety, it is still not clear whether there is a relationship between them (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999).

### **6.1.7 Social Anxiety**

Social anxiety is the apprehension aroused by social situations and the interaction with other people that can automatically bring on feelings of self-esteem, judgment evaluation, and scrutiny (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Social anxiety consists of speech anxiety, shyness, stage fright, embarrassment, social-evaluative anxiety, and communication apprehension (Leary, 1983). People who suffer from communication apprehension are more reluctant to talk and participate in conversations, and more likely to avoid or withdraw from social situations (Aida, 1994).

Although it is axiomatic that language learning cannot be without errors, errors can be a source of social anxiety in some individuals because they draw attention to the difficulty of making positive social impressions when speaking a new language MacIntyre & Gardner (1989, cited in Horwitz & Gregersen, 2002). Errors in social settings are mostly overlooked if they do not interfere with meaning because people consider it impolite to interrupt and correct somebody who is trying to have a conversation with them. Interlocutors only react to an error if they are unable to understand the speech and try to adjust their speech with the speaker in their effort to negotiate for meaning (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). It is only in the classroom environment that feedback on

errors is provided frequently; this leads many learners to frustration and embarrassment by making them conscious about their deficiencies and difficulties.

### **6.1.8 Gender**

Possible differences between female and male learners as regards anxiety levels and achievement have been examined in some language anxiety studies. Some research investigations of (Elkhafaifi, 2005) have suggested female students often have higher levels of anxiety than males in academic settings. In the field of language learning, Von Worde (2003) reported that female students were more likely to be much apprehensive than male learners. Cheng (2002), who investigated English writing anxiety in Taiwanese learners, discovered that females were significantly more anxious than males.

In another research, according to Aida (1994), however, no statistically associations between language anxiety in learning Japanese and gender were observed. Similarly Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999), who also looked into possible relationships between anxiety and gender in their participants, found no statistically significant correlations. Elkhafaifi found that females and males exhibited different levels of anxiety depending on the kind of anxiety experienced: female students presented significantly higher levels of general Arabic language anxiety levels than males, but not statistically significant differences were seen between the sexes in Arabic listening anxiety. However, in a study conducted in Chinese high schools, males were found to be more anxious in English classes than females (Zhao, 2007).

## **6.2 Correlates Associated with Situational Variables (Instruction)**

Instructional factors related to FL anxiety include instructors' beliefs about language teaching, classroom procedure, competitive environment, and the test-taking situation.

### **6.2.1 Instructors' Beliefs about Language Teaching**

As far as instructors' beliefs about language teaching are concerned, some instructor's beliefs about language teaching have also been found to be a source of anxiety, Young (1991) states that anxiety may be evoked if instructors believe that an authoritarian manner is conducive to students' performance, if they consider that all students' mistakes should be corrected, and if they think their role is more like a drill sergeant's than a facilitator. The researchers also reported that students realize that some error corrections are necessary but they consistently report anxiety over responding incorrectly and looking or sounding 'stupid' (Koch and Terrel, Horwitz, 1986, 1988, and Young, 1990, cited in Young, 1991, p. 429) realizing this phenomenon, stated that the problem for the students is "not necessary error correction but the manner of error correction: when, how often, and most importantly, how errors are corrected". In addition to error correction, some instructors have been reported not to promote pair or group work in fear that the class may get out of control, and think that a teacher should be doing most of the talking and teaching; these beliefs have been found to contribute to learner's language anxiety as mentioned above. Recognition or awareness of these beliefs by both the learners and the teacher is essential for effective alleviation of language anxiety in learners.

### **6.2.2 Classroom Procedure**

Different activities in the classroom procedure, particularly, those that demand students to speak in the foreign language in front of the whole class have been found to be the most anxiety provoking. For instance, Koch and Terrel (1991) found that more than half of their subjects in their Natural Approach classes expressed that giving a presentation in the class, oral skits and discussion in large groups are the most anxiety-producing activities. They also found that students get more anxious when called upon to respond individually, rather than if they are given choice to respond voluntary. In addition, students were found

to be more relaxed speaking the target language when paired with a classmate or put into small groups of three to six than into large groups of seven to fifteen students. Young (1991) found that more than sixty-eight percent of her subjects reported feeling more comfortable when they did not have to get in front of the class to speak. Price (1991) provided further support; she interviewed 10 highly anxious American university students who learned French. She also attempted to examine the questions of foreign language anxiety from the perspective of the anxious learners; the results indicated that all of the learners felt speaking the language in class is the greatest cause of anxiety. They feared of a) being laughed at, b) making a fool of themselves, and c) being ridiculed. Moreover, Haskin et al (2003) did investigations on decreasing anxiety and frustration in a Spanish language classroom. Students' interventions included a study skill guide, partner and group presentations, skits and activities, and group oral reading. Teacher interventions included the use of total physical response, authentic correction, and creation of a non-threatening classroom environment. The results in their study indicated that activities such as oral communication, writing, and reading in class caused students' foreign language anxiety. In addition, students were able to identify their own feeling of anxiety and frustration and gained self-confidence as they took risks in revealing themselves by speaking Spanish in the presence of their peers and the teacher.

### **6.2.3 Competitive Environment**

Using diary studies of language learners, Baily (1983, cited in Oxford, 1999a) asserted that competitiveness can lead to language anxiety. This happens when language learners compare themselves to others or to an idealized self-image, which they can rarely attain. If they think that they are less capable and more anxious than others, they are bound to remain anxious, which may have a negative effect on their performance. According to Bailey, anxiety is particularly important because of the related trait of competitiveness

which is often the driving force for worry. As Brown (1994), puts it, facilitative anxiety, which is one of the keys to success is closely related to competitiveness. The degree of anxiety aroused by competitiveness is also related to the learning style preferences of the learner, the precise nature of the competition, and the demands and rewards of the environment (Oxford, 1992).

#### **6.2.4 Test-taking Situation**

Most researchers believe that the specific situations which cause the most anxiety for students are test-taking situations (Aida, 1994; David, 2008). Students in foreign language class may experience test anxiety because tests and quizzes are frequent and difficult, and even the brightest and most prepared students may make errors (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). Students with test anxiety frequently experience cognitive interference and attention deficit in the task at hand (Aida, 1994). Oral tests may provoke both test anxiety and oral communication anxiety simultaneously in susceptible students. From Haskin, Smith and Racine's (2003) study, in a FL Spanish class, 53 % of the seventh grade students reported that they experienced anxiety when they were taking a test or quiz, and 80 % of the students regarded tests and quizzes as anxiety producers. They reported that tests or quizzes caused them anxiety and frustration.

Additionally, it has been assumed that the factors that influence students' reactions to language tests are perceptions of test validity, time limit, test technique, test format, length, testing environment and clarity of test instructions (Young, 1999). The researches show that test validity is one of significant factors that produce test anxiety. For instance, Young (1991) found that students experience anxiety if the test involves content that was not taught in class. Similarly, Horwitz and Young (1991) noted that tests in the lack of face validity led to higher anxiety and negative attitude towards instruction. Another factor that increases test anxiety and decreases performance is time limit. For instance, in a study

conducted by Ohata (2005), learners sometimes felt pressured to think that they had to organize their ideas in a short period of time. Inappropriate test technique is also one of the factors that provoke test anxiety as Young (1991) reported that students felt anxious when they had studied hours for a test and then they found that question types with which they had no experience; they generally experienced anxiety with a particular test format. In addition to the anxiety producing ones mentioned above, learners' capacity, task difficulty, the fear of getting bad grades and lack of preparation for a test are the other factors that make learners worried. Furthermore, learners with high levels of anxiety have less control of attention (Sarason, 1980). According to Chastain (1975), low test anxiety was highly related to greater success.

Last of all, in Ohata (2005), most of the participants said that they feared taking tests, because test-taking situations would make them fearful about the negative consequences of getting a bad grade and that tests with oral performance produce the highest levels of foreign language anxiety.

## **Conclusion**

Second/foreign language learning can sometimes be a traumatic experience for many learners. The number of students who report that they are anxious language learners is astonishing. According to Von Worde (1998, cited in Von Worde, 2003), one third to one half of students examined reported experiencing debilitating levels of language anxiety. Although the concept of anxiety is encountered frequently throughout language learning literature, it has not been accurately described either as being a central construct or an add-on negligible element.

The chapter had reviewed the past research on the construct of language anxiety, which has been asserted as inconclusive and unresolved by the researchers as aforementioned. MacIntyre (1999) suggests, until rather recently, the literature on anxiety was scattered and difficult to interpret, often presenting questions than answers. Because the results were not consistent, perhaps due to the complex nature of language learning process or the inconsistency of measuring instruments. Within all this uncertainty; firstly, complex definitions of anxiety, problems with the concept, difference between anxiety experienced in L1 and L2/FL have been discussed. Secondly, the main approaches to the study of this construct, its nature, types, and forms have namely been introduced, then theoretical contentions of language anxiety with relation to three performance related anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation have properly been presented. These three components have been further expanded with the help of relevant literature in order to highlight some anxiety exasperating factors related to them.

The chapter has also pointed out correlates of language anxiety from two perspectives: correlates associated with learners' variables and correlates associated with situational variables. Correlates associated with learners' variables are those variables dealing with the emotional state of the learner such as self-esteem, motivation, beliefs, learning strategies and so on, because it is always intriguing, yet difficult, to determine how these affective variables are interrelated and how they impact on one another. The second perspective is devoted to instructors' beliefs, classroom activities, teaching methods and plans, the instructional setting and test-taking situation, all these variables are investigated to gain a whole sight on the factors that may contribute to the increasing or reducing of foreign language anxiety levels. To sum up, an accurate understanding of language anxiety threshold will help learners and teachers to avoid harmful feelings of anxiety and adapt strategies whenever necessary to maximize learning.

## CHAPTER TWO

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## Introduction

It is a fact that communication in L2/FL requires second/foreign language learning (MacIntyre et al., 2003). However, the complexities or difficulties involved in the process of learning a second/foreign language may also cause language anxiety for ESL/EFL learners. From a linguistic perspective, 'students' anxiety about L2/FL learning is likely to be a consequence of their language learning difficulties (Sparks, Ganschow, & Javorsky, 2000). Appropriate use of 'linguistic knowledge' is required to create an oral message (in case of speaking skills) that will be meaningful for the intended audience (Chastain, 1988). In the learner's attempt to create and convey this oral message, an insufficient command of linguistic knowledge enhances the possibilities of making mistakes, which leads to negative evaluation and hence anxiety. In other words, "in the consciousness of the learner, the negative evaluation of the learner may come from the linguistics mistakes he/she makes" (Jones & Frydenberg, 2004).

The present chapter deals with psycholinguistic factors that contribute to anxiety by creating difficulties in the process of learning a foreign language in its three stages: Input, process and output. Krashen (1982) noted that learners with a low affective filter seek and obtain more input, interact with confidence, and are more receptive to the input they receive. Anxious learners, on the other hand, have a high affective filter that prevents acquisition. Consequently, the learner's emotional state is assumed to directly affect the four main study skills which are: listening, speaking, reading and writing in addition to vocabulary acquisition and grammar. Furthermore, the potential of anxiety to interfere with learning and performance is one of the most accepted phenomena in psychology and education (Abu-Rabia, 2004; MacIntyre, 1995a). Obviously, language anxiety is not hard to detect, it is manifested and associated with a large number of negative outcomes that can be classified as physical, psychological, or social (e.g., Bailey, Daley, Onwuegbuzie, 1999;

Oxford 1999a). Physical symptoms can include, for example, rapid heartbeat, muscle tension, dry mouth, and excessive perspiration. Psychological symptoms can include embarrassment, feelings of helplessness, fear, going blank, and poor memory recall and retention among others. Negative social behavior may be manifested in such ways as inappropriate silence, unwillingness to participate, absenteeism, and withdrawal from the course. These effects can lead to poor performance and low achievement. Finally, research on language anxiety suggests a variety of techniques to reduce or successfully cope with language anxiety. To reach such a goal, students are invited to learn and adopt some strategies and behaviors and teachers have to create a friendly and supportive learning environment and introduce any technological device or approach that can facilitate their teaching task.

### **1. Language Anxiety and Language Learning Process**

Due to the inadequacy in experimental research at early stage, the studies on FL anxiety revealed ambiguous results. “For a time it was believed that anxiety might have both a facilitating and debilitating effect on L2 acquisition; subsequent research has indicated, however, that any effects that are obtained tend to be debilitating” (Gardner, 2008, p. 37). Empirical studies have found that anxiety has potential negative effects on second language acquisition. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) found that the language grades that the students expected in their first class and that they received in their actual final exams negatively correlated with FL anxiety. The findings of MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) also showed that there was significant negative correlation between language anxiety and performance on a vocabulary learning task. Saito and Samimy’s (1996) study confirmed that anxiety might negatively relate to the achievement of language learners at three levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced). In one study by

(MacIntyre, Noels, and Clement ,1997), the relationship between anxiety and student's self-rating of their language proficiency was found to be negative. Anxiety tend to be associated with “deficits in listening comprehension, impaired vocabulary learning, reduced word production, low scores on standardized tests, low grades in language courses or a combination of these factors” (Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997, p. 345). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a, 1991b, 1994) used a series of laboratory studies to verify Tobias' (1986) model of the effects of anxiety on learning. According to Tobias' model, anxiety could interfere with learning at three stages: input, processing and output.

### **1.1 Input**

Input is the first stage of language learning. It activates ‘Language Acquisition Device’ (LAD) - an innate language-specific module in the brain (Chomsky, cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2006), which carries out the further process of language learning. Anxiety at the input stage (input anxiety) refers to the anxiety experienced by the learners when they encounter a new word, phrase or sentence in the foreign language.

Krashen (1985, p.3), considering input as a basic stage of language learning, asserted in his ‘Input hypothesis’ that “speech cannot be taught directly but emerges on its own as a result of building competence via comprehensible input”. What generally causes this incomprehensibility is learners' affective filter, i.e. anxiety and lack of confidence; these variables prevent the comprehensible input to be fully exploited.

The level of anxiety at this stage is a function of the learners' ability to receive, to concentrate on, and to encode external stimuli. Anxiety produced at this stage may reduce the efficacy of input. This may occur when the anxious learner's ability to attend to material presented by the instructor diminishes, and nominal stimuli become ineffective

due to an inability to represent input internally (Tobias, 1977, cited in Krashen 1985). Students with high levels of input anxiety typically attend more to task-irrelevant information and material, reducing the capacity to receive input (Onwuegbuzie & Daley, 1996). According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), students with high levels of anxiety at the input stage may ask for their foreign language instructors to repeat sentences more often than do their low-anxious peers, or they may have reread material in the foreign language on several occasions to compensate for missing or inadequate input. Input anxiety is more likely to cause miscomprehension of the message sent by the interlocutors, which may lead to the loss of successful communication and an increased level of anxiety.

## 1.2 Processing

Anxiety at the processing stage, called processing anxiety, refers to the “apprehension students experience when performing cognitive operations on new information” (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000, p. 476). Cognitivists believe that learners have to process information and to ‘pay attention’ to produce any linguistic aspect by using cognitive sources. However, they suggest that there is a limit to how much information a learner can pay attention to or in other words, there is a limit to the amount of focused mental activity a learner can engage in at one time. Speaking, particularly in the target language, requires more than one mental activity at one time like: choosing words, pronouncing them, and stringing them together with the appropriate grammatical markers, etc... (Segalowitz, 2003, cited in Lightbown and Spada, 2006). In order to perform these operations while communicating “complex and non spontaneous mental operations are required” and failure to do so may “lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, and even panic (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.28). Similarly, concerning the listening skill, Chen (2002)

reported that students face difficulties in recognizing and matching the pronunciation of the spoken words due to the slow mental processing abilities of some students.

Where limited processing mental capacity may cause anxiety, conversely, anxiety may restrict this operational capacity of the mind, and both together may cause impaired performance or altered behaviour. Researchers have found a recursive relationship among anxiety, cognition and behaviour (Leary, 1990; Levitt, 1980, cited in MacIntyre, 1995a). MacIntyre explains this inter-relationship as follows: *For example, a demand to answer a question in a second language class may cause a student to become anxious; anxiety leads to worry and rumination. Cognition performance is diminished because of the divided attention and therefore performance suffers, leading to negative self-evaluation and more self deprecating cognition which further impairs performance, and so on.* (p. 92).

The Cognitive Processing Model can also explain the difficulty learners feel in remembering and retrieving vocabulary items while communicating in the target language; this could be seen as another important source of language anxiety for the ESL/EFL learners. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) found a significant negative correlation between language anxiety and ability to repeat a short string of numbers and recall vocabulary items. This shows that anxiety can limit the use of both short and long term memory. Similarly, Tobias (1977) found that anxiety at this stage can debilitate learning by interfering with the processes that transform the input information and generate a solution to the problem. That is, anxiety may reduce the efficiency with which memory processes are utilized to solve the task. In particular, high levels of processing anxiety may reduce a student's ability to understand messages or to learn new vocabulary items in the foreign language (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994).

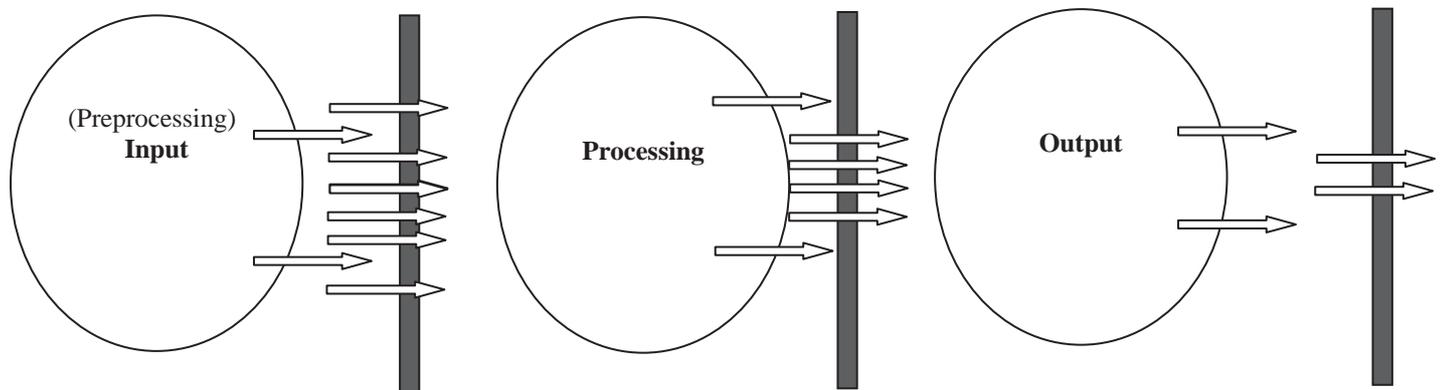
### 1.3 Output

Anxiety while communicating in the target language is more likely to appear at the output stage, which entirely depends upon the successful completion of the previous stages: input and processing. Anxiety at the output stage refers to learners' nervousness or fear experienced when required to demonstrate their ability to use previously learned material (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000). According to Tobias (1977) output anxiety involves interference, which is manifested after the completion of the processing stage but before its effective reproduction as output. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), high levels of anxiety at this stage might hinder students' ability to speak or to write in the foreign language.

All the three stages of anxiety have been found to be somewhat interdependent; each stage depends on the successful completion of the previous one, which may define language-learning process as follows: *Language learning is a cognitive activity that relies on encoding, storage, and retrieval processes, and anxiety can interfere with each of these creating a divided attention scenario for anxious students. Anxious students are focused on both the task at hand and their reactions to it. For example, when responding to a question in a class, the anxious student is focused on answering the teacher's question and evaluating the social implications of the answer while giving it* (MacIntyre, 1995a, p. 96).

Generally speaking, "acquisition of deviant linguistic forms", as Krashen believes and "slow and non-spontaneous mental processes" (Horwitz, 2001) can explain the difficulties involved in the process of L2/FL learning. This further shows the sources or causes of anxiety experienced by these learners at the output stage particularly while speaking in the target language. The description of this process can suggest many implications for language teachers who ask for quick answers or expect learners to speak

fluently. Teachers' or learners' own beliefs to speak fluently if associated with the slow process in the mind result in apprehension and reticence in the learner.



**Figure 1.** Tobias' model of the effects of anxiety on learning from instruction. Adapted from —Language Anxiety: A Review of the Research for Language Teachers! by MacIntyre, P. D. In Young D. J. (Ed.), *Affect in foreign language and second language learning: A practical guide to creating a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere* (p. 35). New York: McGraw-Hill. Copyright 1999 by McGraw-Hill.

## 2. The Effect of FL Anxiety on the Four Skills, Vocabulary and Grammar

Among the objectives of any language curriculum is how to learn the four language skills and how to help learners acquiring a considerable amount of vocabulary and accurate grammar. Research has proved as seen previously that language anxiety is likely to affect learners during the process of learning, thereby, interfere within and during the acquisition of the four skills. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) defined L2 anxiety as, "...the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning." (p.284). Spolsky (1989) determined that anxious learners write, speak, and participate less than relaxed learners in language classes.

## 2.1 FL Anxiety in the Listening Skill

Quite a lot of attention has been paid to the anxiety suffered by many learners when listening to the second/foreign language. Krashen (1982) assumed that listening or the extracting message from messages in L2 was the primary process in the development of a second language, and postulated that anxiety formed an 'affective filter' (Krashen, 1980, cited in Young, 1991) that interfered with an individual's capacity to receive and process oral messages successfully. Indeed, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) in their definition of language anxiety, they involve listening and not only speaking "Language anxiety can be defined as the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning" (p.284).

In their study, Horwitz et al. (1986) reported that many students were anxious when listening to the L2, and had "difficulties in discriminating the sounds and structures of a target language message". One student said that he heard "only a loud buzz" when his instructor was speaking, and anxious students also told of problems with comprehending the content of L2 messages and with understanding their teachers in the "extended target language utterances" (p. 126). In the same study, fewer students claimed to be anxious about listening than about speaking, but even so, the proportion was considerable. Over one third of the participants expressed their fear of not being able to "understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language", and over a quarter said they were nervous when they did not "understand every word" uttered by the teacher (Horwitz et al., 1986, pp. 129-130).

In students' comments given freely in on a questionnaire, Vogely (1998) attempted to investigate the potential sources of arousal of listening comprehension anxiety in students within classroom activities. As far as features of input were concerned, the speed of delivery was the most frequently reported cause of listening comprehension anxiety,

followed by bad diction, variety of accents, and teachers who spoke too quietly. As to level of difficulty, exercises that were too complex, unknown vocabulary, difficult syntax and unfamiliar topics make students feel anxious. They may also experience apprehension if they did not know what was required of them in the listening activity or why. Some students claimed that they needed the help of some visual aid to manage with the listening task. Students reported feeling anxious if they could only listen to texts once or twice before having to respond.

In another study, Kim (2000) found that learners were “sensitive to both the type of listening passages and kinds of tasks (p. 151). Anxiety was aroused by listening to authentic texts such as a news bulletin, and by such related features as background noise, hesitation, turn-taking, false starts, or irregular pauses which occur in natural speech, the author pretended that this was because participants were not exposed to authentic listening passages until they reached higher levels. Dictation and identifying details of listening tasks also caused tension. Most participants reported that “sheer delivery speed” (p.152) made them feel nervous, and believed that they should look for opportunities to listen themselves and that teachers should orientate them to the appropriate way- if there is any- to learn the listening skills.

## **2.2 FL Anxiety in the Speaking Skill**

The literature suggests that the speaking skill is extremely anxiety-provoking in many language students and it is generally seen to arouse more anxiety than the other skills. Indeed, Daly (1991, cited in Von Worde, 2003) reported that in some individuals “fear of giving a speech in public exceeded such phobias as fear of snakes, elevators, and heights” (p. 3). Anxiety reactions suffered by many students when speaking or when being asked to

speak by the teacher in the foreign language classroom include “distortion of sounds, inability to reproduce the intonation and rhythm of the language, ‘freezing up’ when called on to perform, and forgetting words or phrases just learned or simply refusing to speak and remaining silent” (Young, 1991, p. 430). The same author cited a student’s perception of his oral performance in the foreign language in the classroom: “I dread going to Spanish class. My teacher is kind, but I hate it when the teacher calls on me to speak. I freeze up and can’t think of what to say or how to say it, and my pronunciation is terrible. Sometimes I think people don’t even understand what I’m saying” (young, 1990, p. 539).

Horwitz et al. (1986) pointed out that students said that they had most problems in the listening and speaking skills, with “difficulty in speaking in class being probably the most frequently cited concern of anxious foreign language students”( p. 126). Learners said they did not feel too apprehensive during drills or about speaking if they had time to plan their spoken interventions, but would ‘freeze’ if they had to speak spontaneously.

Classroom activities and the learning/teaching environment seem to have a direct impact on students’ anxiety and on their performance in speaking. The majority of Young’s (1990) learners of Spanish indicated that they felt less uncomfortable in speaking activities when they came to class prepared, and when they were not the only person answering a question. Most would prefer to offer responses orally themselves instead of being called on to give an answer. The majority of students said that they would be less nervous about oral exams if they had more practice speaking in class, and most expressed a wish to have their errors corrected. Koch and Terrell (1991) found that Natural Approach activities (which paradoxically are designed to minimize stress), such as role-plays and charades, aroused a great deal of anxiety in their students.

In addition, anxiety has been reported to influence not only grammatical precision but also interpretive ability. In Steinberg and Horwitz (1986) investigation, reported in

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) learners were asked to describe pictures. Half of the participants were welcomed sympathetically by the interviewer in a comfortable environment in an attempt to put them at ease, while the other half were received coldly in an uncomfortable setting with a video camera filming them in an attempt to arouse nervousness and apprehension. The researchers measured the amounts of ‘denotive content’ and ‘interpretive content’ in participants’ descriptions and found that those in the anxiety-provoking atmosphere employed significantly less interpretive language than did the participants in a relaxed setting. MacIntyre and Gardner considered that these findings “suggest reluctance on the part of anxious students to express personally relevant information in a foreign language conversation” (p.107).

Horwitz et al. (1986) noted that students who are apprehensive about making mistakes in front of others “seem to feel constantly tested and they perceive every correction as a failure” (p.130). The same researchers explained how anxious language students frequently forget what they know in a test or in a speaking activity. Indeed, speaking tests seem to be particularly anxiety-provoking, they probably arouse the three constituents of language anxiety: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety, all at the same time. As MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) pointed out: “foreign language tests, given orally, likely evoke test anxiety as well as communication apprehension” (p.105).

### **2.3 FL Anxiety in the Reading Skill**

Some researchers have looked into the question of whether anxiety in the reading skill is a separate kind of anxiety from more general language anxiety, and have been interested in exploring anxiety in reading in a variety of languages.

In a study, Saito et al. (1999) investigated anxiety in the reading skill, participants were students enrolled in courses of three different foreign languages: French, Russian and Japanese, their mother tongue is presumably English. Researchers found that students who had higher levels of foreign language anxiety were also more reading-anxious. They noticed that general foreign language anxiety was not associated with the language being studied, whereas reading anxiety was related to the target language. Learners of Japanese (a non cognate language) were the most anxious readers, followed by learners of French (a cognate language), then learners of Russian (a semi cognate language). The authors speculated as to why Russian did not provoke such high levels of anxiety as French: one reason may be that the system of Cyrillic symbol is “phonetically dependable” (p. 213). The authors reported that many anxious-students felt overwhelmed when confronted with a FL text when they could not comprehend every word of a reading text and were very concerned about reading about cultural aspects which were unknown to them. Such students tended to translate every word when approaching a text and many felt anxious when they came across unknown grammatical structures. Reading anxiety seemed to be connected to the target language and associated with the different writing systems: French (cognate), Russian (semi cognate), and Japanese (non cognate). According to the aforementioned researchers, it is difficult to say whether foreign language reading anxiety is the cause or effect of students’ reading problems, but stated that in this investigation, anxiety seemed to stem from reading and not vice versa. Anxiety seemed to be “a mediating variable that intervenes at some point between the decoding of a text and the actual processing of textual meaning” (Saito et al., 1999, p. 215). The authors suggested that making students aware in advance about anxiety may help relieve it.

Another study (Sellers, 2000) pointed out that students suffering from greater anxiety would retrieve fewer essential details from a reading text, and that during the

reading task, they suffered more cognitive interference than less anxious readers, and were more preoccupied by irrelevant thoughts and less able to centre their attention on the task, which led to inferior understanding of the text.

#### **2.4 FL Anxiety in the Writing Skill**

Some researchers have undertaken the task of looking for links between language anxiety and the writing skill. According to Cheng (2002), anxiety in L2 writing appeared to be quite strongly correlated to L2 speaking anxiety, but not statistically significant correlation was found between foreign language writing anxiety and native language writing anxiety. There appeared to be a much stronger relationship between anxieties experienced in different modes of communication in one language than across different languages. Language anxiety in writing in the first language did not seem to be linked to anxiety in writing in the second language; Cheng posited that the “non significant”, low correlation between L1 and L2 writing anxiety suggested that these two anxiety constructs are different from each other.

#### **2.5 FL Anxiety and Vocabulary Learning**

MacIntyre and Gardner (1994b) conducted an investigation on vocabulary learning. They attempted to examine the effects of anxiety on the three stages of learning (input stage, processing stage, and output stage) as proposed by Tobias (1986) and tested the hypothesis that language anxiety would hinder the learning and production of vocabulary. Participants were university students of first-year French, whose mother-tongue was English. They were divided into four groups at random. All groups carried out the same tasks. One group was not video-recorded at any stage of the experiment. The other

three groups were filmed either as from the beginning of the input stage, or as from the beginning of the processing stage, or as from the beginning of the output stage, with the intention of evoking anxiety. These three groups were called “input group”, “processing group”, and “output group,” respectively. For each group, once filming began, the recorder was not switched off until all tasks were over.

Materials were a Learning Program, which was a computer task consisting of three stages in which students learned “paired associates” of words. At the Input stage students were shown 19 French nouns for 1.5 seconds each in random order; students were then shown 38 nouns, including the 19 shown previously, and were required to recognise the ones seen at the beginning. The number of correct answers gave the Input score, and recognition time was measured.

At the processing stage, the same 19 French words were seen on screen, this time with English translations, that is, “paired associates”, in random order for 2.5 seconds each; again participants were required to identify the original 19 pairs from 38 pairs subsequently shown. The number of correct answers gave the Processing score, and the time taken to recognise each pair was measured.

At the Output stage students were subjected to four trials, in each of which they typed in the French equivalents prompted by the 19 nouns in English, shown for 10 seconds each on the screen. No time limit was set for writing answers. The number of correct answers given in the four trials made up the Output score. Intervening Performance Tasks were given between the three learning stages, “in order to introduce a delay between the vocabulary learning program and later use of the new vocabulary” (p.6). They were Digit Span, i.e., remembering lists of numbers in their correct order in L1 and L2, considered by the authors as suitable for the input stage as the numbers were not given meaning in the experiment; Thing Category test, in which students were required to give vocabulary items

pertaining to a certain category, considered suitable for the output stage; Self-Description in which students described themselves for one minute in English and in French, and were judged in terms of accent, fluency, sentence complexity and depth; Vocabulary Recall test, in which previously learned vocabulary items were elicited by questions in French which appeared on the computer screen. Students were given 20 seconds in which to respond orally; responses were audio-recorded.

Results revealed that in all four groups (the first, input, processing, and output), responding in French aroused more anxiety than carrying out other learning tasks. Anxiety levels also rose immediately after the video was switched on in the input, processing, and output groups. In the first group (who were not videoed at all), no statistically significant variations in mean anxiety levels were observed in the learning tasks, although they did rise in the Vocabulary Recall task. The first group did better than the other groups on this task.

At the Input stage, the group who was exposed to anxiety inducement ( the input group) through video-recording was expected to exhibit and did exhibit lower learning scores than the groups who were not being videoed ( the first, the processing, and the output groups). At the processing stage, the two groups who were subjected to video-recording ( input and processing groups) obtained lower learning scores than the two groups who were not ( the first and output groups), as expected. Similarly, at the output stage, when all three experimental groups were exposed to anxiety arousal, learning scores were poorer in all but the first group. At all stages, the recognition of pairs of words was seen to be the most hindered in the group in which the video had most recently been switched on and therefore in which anxiety had been most recently evoked. The four groups were observed to take a similar time to do the learning tasks.

Tasks in English (L1) were seen to evoke less anxiety than those in French (L2), and anxiety increased starting from Thing Category, to Digit Span and to Self-Description.

Subjects appeared “eventually to be able to cope with the state anxiety aroused by the camera” (p.15). The first group, not exposed to anxiety arousal, exhibited best learning performance on all tasks. Tasks involving communication tasks provoked more nervousness than those involving learning. Anxiety arousal was also detrimental to Vocabulary Recall in those groups who were exposed to video recording. This study was particularly noteworthy because it showed clearly how anxiety levels increased coinciding with anxiety inducement in the three experimental groups, and how more anxiety was observed during output tasks especially communication tasks.

## **2.6 FL Anxiety and Grammar Learning**

Van Patten and Glass (1999) have investigated the effects of anxiety on students who take grammar courses and resulted that some students feel a certain amount of anxiety in grammar courses due to various factors. For instance, some students have a fear of not sounding as good as the other students in the class. Their level of anxiety increases as their instructors criticize their answers. Some students, on the other hand, feel threatened by the amount of materials presented in a given time. If too much grammatical information is presented in a short time, the students may feel apprehensive. Another factor that causes anxiety is the fear of evaluation. The teacher’s way of evaluation may be another anxiety-provoking factor. Some teachers generally use the communicative approach in the classroom and put the emphasis on discussion, vocabulary development or listening comprehension. However, they adopt a totally traditional approach in the exams and most of their questions generally focus on grammatical features. The students who experience such an inconsistency generally feel that the lessons do not serve their purpose which is learning the grammatical features. Additionally, some students come to the foreign

language courses with an expectation of learning the grammatical features of the language and feel frustrated when the lesson is based on a communicative approach.

### **3. Manifestation of Foreign Language Anxiety**

SLA researchers and foreign language teachers have decoded a number of symptoms and behaviours manifested in anxious learners. Negative consequences of language anxiety manifest in the form of changed behaviour, such as responding less effectively to language errors (Gregersen, 2003, cited in Gregersen , 2007); engaging in negative self-talk and ruminating over poor performance, which affects information processing abilities (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994); exhibiting avoidance behaviour by sitting at the back of the classroom in an attempt not to be called on by the teacher or simply by missing class, having unrealistic high performance standards (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002); freezing up in role play activities and participating infrequently. Students with a high level of debilitating anxiety attempt different type of grammatical constructions; are less interpretive of more concrete messages; know a certain grammar point but forget it during a test or an oral performance; complain of difficulties discriminating the sounds and structures of a foreign language message; confess they know the correct answer on a test but put down the wrong one due to nervousness; over-study without any improvement in grades (Horwitz, et al., 1986); and ultimately receiving low course grades (Gardner, 1985, cited in Gregersen, 2007). In addition, Harrigan et al. (2004, cited in Grgersen, 2007) posited that anxiety can be accurately decoded both through prosodic (stress and intonation pattern), paralinguistic (non verbal) features of vocal communication and through visual non-verbal cues. Gregersen (2007) in her study on nonverbal behaviour of anxious and non-anxious language learners found that anxious learners manifested limited facial activity, including brow behaviour and smiling,

maintained less eye contact with the teacher, and were more rigid and closed with their posture.

#### **4. Ways of Creating a Low- anxiety Classroom**

Various ways have been used by classroom practitioners and suggested by researchers to reduce anxiety are discussed briefly in this part of the literature. Creating a low-stress language learning environment is believed to facilitate learning a second/foreign language by allowing students to concentrate on communication rather than being distracted by worry and fear of negative evaluation (Young, 1991). Accordingly, these views and suggestions to cope with anxiety or almost reduce it are grouped into three categories: students' strategies for coping with anxiety, creating a friendly and supportive learning environment and computer-mediated approach.

##### **4.1 Students' strategies for Coping with Anxiety**

With the recognition that many students will have a heightened level of anxiety; educators have two options when dealing with anxious students: 1) they can help them learn to cope with the existing anxiety; and/ or 2) they can make the learning context less stressful (Horwitz et al., 1986). The concern at this point is helping students learn to cope with their anxiety, and accordingly; the teacher must first help students recognise their anxiety and then teach students specific methods to reduce the anxiety level.

Students must first be able to recognise and acknowledge their feelings of anxiety in the classroom and need to remind themselves that it is normal to experience anxiety. This is an opportunity for teachers to create an open discussion with students and to educate students about what anxiety is, and how anxiety can affect the students both academically

and socially. Foss and Reitzel (1988) suggest that discussing fears about learning a new language may indicate to students that they are not alone in their anxiety, that the teacher understands their discomfort, and that the discussion itself “encourages learners to relax” (cited in Phillips, 1991, p. 5).

Research has been done on how to help students cope with their anxiety in academic settings of which the focus has been on cognitive, affective, and behavioural approaches (Hembree, 1988); The cognitive approach assumes that thinking disturbances that occur in the classroom setting are the main sources of anxiety and possible interventions include helping students realize that their fears are unfounded. For example, students will not be “making a fool of themselves” by speaking in class. The affective approach attempts to disrupt the negative association between the classroom and anxiety. The behavioural approach believes that anxiety occurs because of poor academic skills and therefore helping students increase their academic skills will reduce the anxiety (Kondo & Yong, 2004).

Kondo and Yong identified 70 basic tactics that students used to reduce their anxiety. These 70 tactics were clustered into five strategy types: preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking, and resignation. The first category, preparation, is an attempt to control anxiety by improving learning and study strategies such as studying hard, asking questions, asking for help, reading more carefully, and creating quality summaries of notes. These strategies would likely increase the students’ confidence of the academic material, thereby reducing the anxiety associated with class. Relaxation involves strategies to reduce the physical symptoms of anxiety which would include taking deep breaths, a mental focus on relaxing, and pretending to be calm. The third category, positive thinking, is distinguished by its calming function of decreasing the problematic mental processes that cause the students’ anxiety. Such examples include trying to be confident, thinking positively, imagining giving a great performance, and downplaying the importance

of the task at hand. Peer seeking is characterized by the students' willingness to seek out classmates who may have the same problems of understanding the class or appear to have problems controlling their anxiety also. This strategy aids the student by realizing that others are having the same problems and may help reduce the anxiety produced by comparisons. The final category is resignation, in which students reduce their anxiety by "giving up". Such students may stop paying attention, sleep in class, and demonstrate other typical avoidance behaviours. For further techniques that could be used by students to cope with language anxiety (see Appendix G).

In addition to the previous general techniques, students must be instructed in techniques or strategies of learning a FL, such as devices for memorization, silent rehearsal, and paraphrasing (Nugent, 2000). According to Chamot and Kupper (1989, cited in Oxford, 1994), some learning strategies are relevant to particular language skills; for example, listening comprehension relies on the strategies of elaboration, inferencing, selective attention, and self-monitoring; speaking requires strategies like risk-taking, paraphrasing, circumlocution, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation; reading comprehension bases on the strategies such as reading aloud, guessing, deduction, and summarizing; writing benefits from the strategies of planning, self-monitoring, deduction, and substitution. Teachers should provide this wide range of learning strategies for students.

Lessard-Clouston (1997) pointed out that aiming at training students in using language learning strategies; teachers should be familiar with students' interests, motivations, learning styles, and what strategies they use in language learning. Teachers can receive this information through observing students' behavior in class, or using questionnaire at the beginning of a course; furthermore, teachers should study their own teaching method, overall classroom style, and analyze their lesson plans; when teaching the course, teachers should provide learners more training in learning strategy implicitly,

explicitly, or both. Teachers should encourage students to use the positive and good strategies mentioned above in order to create a greater opportunity for learning language.

#### **4.2 Creating a Friendly and Supportive Learning Environment**

Arguably the most important tool for the teacher is to create and maintain a friendly and supportive learning environment (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; young, 1991). Because a low-stress language learning environment is thought to facilitate language learning by allowing students to focus more on learning rather than being distracted by fear of teacher and peer evaluation, encouraging a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom is a crucial step in diminishing and alleviating student anxiety (Phillips, 1992). Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) also suggest that “presenting themselves as helpful instructors concerned primarily with promoting student learning, rather than as authority figures concerned primarily with evaluating student performance” will help to foster a more friendly and supportive learning environment (p.569).

The use of humor in the classroom has been suggested to help create a more relaxed learning environment (Schacht & Stewart, 1990). According to (Mogavero, 1979, cited in Schacht & Stewart, 1990) research showed that students thought humor helped with maintaining attention, relieved boredom, and reduced anxiety. The aforementioned authors suggest that appropriately used humor in the classroom can have an “inherent tension-reducing function” (p.54). However, if humor is to be used in the classroom, it should relate to the topic at hand and should not mock or make fun of anyone in the classroom. However, aggressive or sexually explicit humor can increase student anxiety levels (Powell & Anderson, 1985).

While students are learning a new language, it is critical that educators be understanding and patient with students' errors. Students can become increasingly apprehensive and anxious about speaking in class (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Young, 1991; Kim, 2005) and it has been recommended that error correction by educators be kept to a minimum to reduce the anxiety of oral performance in class. Young (1991) suggests that "instructors can reduce anxiety by adopting an attitude that mistakes are part of the language learning process and that mistakes will be made by everybody" (p.432). Teachers can correct errors within the context of the conversation to minimize the anxiety and embarrassment that students may feel while speaking in class (Horwitz, et al., 1986; Phillips, 1991; Young, 1991). For example, when correction is necessary, modeling can be employed by the teacher by rephrasing the students' comments in the appropriate form (Phillips, 1991). This method is less direct for correcting errors and therefore more beneficial for the students as they will learn that an error in their speaking has occurred, but no direct mention of this has been made by the instructor. Assumingly, this will decrease the students' inhibitions of speaking in front of their peers and an instructor.

As far as the atmosphere of competition is concerned, to relieve students' pressure from competition and comparison, students of similar levels can be grouped together and offer them appropriate materials for their level of language competence (Yan & Horwitz, 2008). The activities and practice for overcoming anxiety and improving presentation skills include the followings: informally questioning students concerning curricular topics about which they are knowledgeable, reading speech transcripts and listening to master (native) speakers, playing charades, and presenting speeches without eye contact such as role play (Holbrook, 1987). Kitano (2001) suggested that teachers should structure their classroom practices that students will not be forced to be competitive and that individual differences in performance will not be too noticeable. For example, before

individual work, teachers can let students completely comprehend the work and practice it enough in groups. Yan and Horwitz (2008) emphasized that class activities should be designed to encourage cooperation instead of competition, and adequate time for pair or group discussion could be allowed before oral responses are required. A study of Oxford (1994) found that cooperative learning can not only lower anxiety in the language classroom, but also increase learners' motivation.

### **4.3 Computer-mediated Communication Approach**

Research has shown that Computer-mediated communication motivates learners to engage in meaningful communication in the target language and leads to effective language learning (Brown, 1994; Hanson-Smith, 2001; Meskill & Ranglova, 2000). It shifts learning from a teacher-centered toward a learner-centered approach, allowing learners to take control of learning content and learning process (Fotos & Browne, 2004). Studies indicate that a well-designed CMC activity can encourage students to notice and modify output content and structure, enhance motivation, reduce anxiety, foster learner autonomy, and promote cooperative learning (Beauvois, 1998; Godwin-Jones, 2003; González-Bueno, 1998; Kern, 1995). Furthermore, by reducing social-context clues such as gender, race, and status, and nonverbal cues such as facial expressions and body language, CMC provides a safer and more relaxed environment for language learners, especially for the shy or less confident ones (Hanson-Smith, 2001; Sproull & Kiesler, 1991). CMC also enables individuals to express their thoughts at their own pace and in their own space so that, in contrast to traditional classroom settings, CMC learners do not have to compete with their classmates for the instructor's attention (Sproull & Kiesler, 1991).

In addition, a study of Meunier (1998) finds that 87% of learners reported to experience low FL anxiety in online discussions, one of the computer-mediated communication (CMC) methods. Furthermore, both the studies of Beauvois (1998) and Warschauer (1996) reveal that students who participated less in the oral classroom could become active contributors in the electronic setting. Teachers can implement asynchronous CMC (e.g., email exchanges) as well as synchronous CMC (e.g., chat, instant messengers) to build an anxiety-free setting, which enables learners to express themselves more openly at their own pace (Arnold, 2007). In recent years, studies (Beauvois, 1998; Dubreil, 2006; Freiermuth, 1998; Kern, 1995; Warschauer, 1996; Wright, 2003) have indicated that CMC may decrease FL communication apprehension because it can create a social and communicative space where FL learners feel less inhibited and thereby decrease tension and apprehension.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter has looked at the three stages of language learning: input, processing, and output, in order to explain the difficulties ESL/EFL learners may face in learning a second/foreign language. It has been found that lack of sufficient input for learning L2/FL in the environment where the target language is not the first language, and lack of opportunities to frequently process the limited- sometimes filled with errors- input, can cause language anxiety at the output (speaking) stage for ESL/EFL learners. “Language learning is a cognitive activity that relies on encoding, storage, and retrieval processes, and anxiety can interfere with each of these by creating a divided attention scenario for anxious students” (MacIntyre, 1995, p. 96). The effect of such a problem is noticeable throughout the learning of study skills basically; listening comprehension, speaking, vocabulary acquisition, and ultimately low achievement (Gardner et al., 1997). Generally speaking, no

matter the research results might be, language anxiety does affect L2/FL acquisition, and the negative side seems more frequently to appear. The chapter has also shed light on cues and signs that teachers may decode to recognise anxious students and how to create a low-anxiety classroom by adopting specific techniques and behaviors.

To put it in nutshell, language anxiety has been theorized to occur at all the three stages of language learning: input, processing and output. The description of these three stages with relation to anxiety will point out why students make mistakes and the reasons of linguistic difficulties they may face in learning and using the target language. This can offer an insight to help understand anxiety experienced while learning study skills, vocabulary and the grammatical features of the target language.

To conclude, research has established that foreign language anxiety exists. Furthermore, it has shown that foreign language anxiety not only represents an uncomfortable experience for students, but can also have negative effects on the learning process and language acquisition. If we can help students reduce or overcome that anxiety, it will lead to more engagement in the classroom. Educational settings have to strive to make foreign language learning a more pleasant experience, which in turn will increase students' interest and make it a more successful endeavour as well.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **Research Design and Data Collection**

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## Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used to investigate the anxiety of EFL students at 20 Aout 1955 University of Skikda, Algeria. First, the research context is presented. Then the participants selected for this study are described. Third, the research design and the measures used in this study to assess each variable are described and discussed. Finally, the data collection procedures are addressed.

### 1. Research Context

The Algerian government has begun, in recent years, a global reform of higher education system to meet new system requirements imposed by the new socio-economical changes. The choice fell on the “LMD: Licence= Bachelor-Master-Doctorate” system. In a systemic approach, the LMD is a set of elements that interact, forming an integrated whole, working for a common goal. It is divided into three elements : *the Licence* with 6 semesters (three years of study and the equivalence of the Bachelor Degree), *a Master* degree of two years (4 semesters) is the second phase whereas the last period is *the Doctorate* studies of three years of research (6semesters). In every semester, students are expected to attend 400 hours in a 16 week period (i.e. 25 hours per week).

Currently, in Algeria, the system is in the use phase since most of Algerian universities have adopted the LMD. For this, it is useful to note that the government has already injected through educational, scientific, human, material and structural colossal means to meet all requirements defined by new data and global trends. The LMD is designed so that all system components, including teachers and students have become involved in training and are no more spectators as in the “classic” system: the teacher has the opportunity to offer training courses tailored to the available resources and skills based

on a pedagogical team and the student has the opportunity to choose the path that suits him. The student participates actively in his training; a number of hours are therefore restricted to the training outside the university. In addition, students are better supported through a tutoring system in which the accompaniment is more active. Although, the LMD system carries many controversies, and was not welcome by the whole pedagogical bodies, it has been implemented at several Algerian universities in 2004-2005 and many academic and professional LMD training offers were proposed to newly enrolled students. Like other universities and faculties, the department of English language and Literature at Skikda's University opted for the LMD system in its first year of creation in 2006.

In the current study, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Licence phase students are the target population, they are mainly chosen because they have already accomplished two semesters of their formation, a period long enough to alleviate their anxiety related to novelty and unfamiliarity with the university environment.

## **2. Participants**

A total of 53 subjects representing the whole students of 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English department at 20 Aout 1955 University of Skikda participated in the investigation (actually, only 51 subjects participated, there are two students who did not bring back their copies) . The general information about these participants is summarized in Table 1. In order to protect participants' privacy, their responses to the questionnaires were collected anonymously.

**Table1:** General information about survey respondents

Items	Years of learning English before university					Gender		Baccalaureate stream		Region	
	4	5	6	7	>7	Male	Female	Scientific	Literary	Urban	Rural
<b>Number</b>	2	3	8	32	6	8	43	11	40	38	13
<b>%</b>	4	6	16	62	12	16	84	22	78	75	25

### 3. Research Design

Research is the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting data in order to understand a phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The research process is systematic in that defining the objective, managing the data, and communicating the findings occur within established frameworks and in accordance with existing guidelines. The frameworks and guidelines provide researchers with an indication of what to include in the research, how to perform the research, and what types of inferences are probable based on the data collected.

The three common approaches to conducting research are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Investigations of second/foreign language anxiety have been, for the most part, quantitative studies; primarily correlational studies (Price, 1991). Quantitative research can be used in response to relational questions of variables within the research. “Quantitative researchers seek explanations and predictions that will generate to other persons and places. “The intent is to establish, confirm, or validate relationships to develop generalizations that contribute to theory” (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001, p. 102). Quantitative research begins with a problem statement and involves the formation of a hypothesis, a literature review, and a quantitative data analysis. Creswell (2003) states, quantitative

research “employ strategies of inquiry such as experimental and surveys, and collect data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data” (p.18).The findings from quantitative research can be predictive, explanatory, and confirming.

There are three broad classifications of quantitative research: descriptive, experimental and causal comparative (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). Given the nature of the current study, the causal comparative approach has been opted for. In the causal comparative research, the researcher examines how the independent variables are re affected by the dependent variables and involves cause and effect relationships between the variables. The factorial design focuses on two or more categories with the independent variables as compared to the dependent variable (Vogt, 1999). The causal comparative research design provides the researcher the opportunity to examine the interaction between independent variables and their influence on dependent variables.

Several research methods exist to conduct quantitative research; in this study a correlational research method is used. As far as this method is concerned, the research examines the differences between the two characteristics of the study group; it is crucial to observe the extent to which a researcher discovers statistical correlation between two characteristics depending on some degree of how well those characteristics have been calculated. Hence, validity and reliability are important components that affect correlation coefficients. Bold (2001) noted that the purpose of a correlation study is to establish whether two or more variables are related. Creswell (2002) defined correlation as a statistical test to establish patterns for two variables. The statistical analysis of the research question can be conducted through a progression or sequence of analyses using a standard test for correlation that produces a result called “r”. The “r” coefficient is reported with a decimal numeral in a process known as the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (Cooper and Schindler, 2001).

To sum up, the study will use descriptive statistics, causal comparative research approach (t test and ANOVA), and correlation research approach (Pearson correlation) as the research design.

#### **4. Instruments of Research**

Six instruments were used in the present study: (1) Background Questionnaire, (2) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), (3) Self-perceived Proficiency Scale, (4) Motivation Scale, (5) Foreign Language Anxiety towards In-Class Activity Questionnaire (ATIAQ), and (6) Anxiety towards Test Types Evaluation.

##### **4.1 Background Questionnaire (see Appendix A).**

The Background Questionnaire was designed to acquire the subjects' background information and English learning experience. The information intended to gain students' gender, baccalaureate stream, region, length of time studying English formally, time spent in studying English weekly out of classroom, achievement, communicative competence and types of personality.

##### **4.2 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)**

###### **4.2.1 Measurement of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety**

Scovel (1978) has considered anxiety "not a simple, unitary, construct, but as a cluster of affective states, influenced by factors which are intrinsic and extrinsic to the foreign language learner" (p.134). The first study to propose an anxiety construct that was specific to the situation of language learning was Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986). These authors called this construct Foreign Language Anxiety, which they submitted was

“responsible for students’ negative emotional reactions to language learning” (Horwitz, 2001, p.114). As ways of measuring anxiety experienced in the language classroom were sparse at that time, Horwitz and her associates designed an instrument for their study, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), as a means of evaluating this particular kind of anxiety, creating in the process a scale that would be used by a multitude of researchers from then on.

#### 4.2.2 Description

The FLCAS was created by Horwitz “to assess the specific anxiety experienced by students in the foreign language classroom. It is a self-report measure that assesses the degree of anxiety, as evidenced by negative performance expectancies and social comparisons, psycho-physiological symptoms, and avoidance behaviors” (Horwitz, 1986, p.559).

The FLCAS is a 5-point likert scale. It consists of 33 items, of which 8 items were for *communication apprehension* (1,9,14,18,24,27,29,32); 9 items for *fear of negative evaluation* (3,7,13,15,20,23,25,31 and 33); 5 items for *test anxiety* (2,8,10,19,21). As for the remaining 11 items (4, 5,6,11,12,16,17,22,26,28 and 30), they were put in a group which was named *anxiety of English classes*. For each item respondents were required to respond with an answer like strongly agree (5pts), agree (4pts), undecided (3pts), disagree (2pts) and strongly disagree (1pt). However, items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14,18,22,28 and 32 were to be score reversed. The theoretical score range of this scale was from 33 to 165. The higher the total anxiety scores were, the more anxious the student was. It has been shown that this instrument is highly reliable, since the FLCAS has demonstrated the internal reliability achieving an alpha coefficient 0.93 and test-retest reliability yielding an  $r=0.83$  ( $P < 0.001$ ). The authors claimed that from the results of their study, conducted with 75 university students of Spanish (beginner level), “students with debilitating anxiety in the foreign

language classroom setting can be identified and that they share a number of characteristics in common” (p.129). Results arising from the administration of the FLCAS indicated that almost half the students were anxious about speaking, and over a third were worried when they could not understand everything the teacher said. Almost two-fifths were sure that other students were more proficient language learners than they were, and well over half were concerned that they could not keep up with the pace of the language lesson. Over two-thirds of students indicated that they felt uneasy about making mistakes, and a tenth of the participants feared being ridiculed by other students when they spoke in the target language.

Since the construct of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety was identified and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale established by Horwitz and her associates (1986), the FLCAS has been constantly employed by investigators in numerous studies. Horwitz et al’s original study involved Anglophone learners of Spanish in their first year at university. In other studies, language anxiety and its relationships to performance have been explored at different levels of instruction: beginner, intermediate, and advanced (Saito and Samimy, 1996), with learners who exhibited different degrees of anxiety: low-, average-, and high-anxious students (Ganschow, Sparks, Anderson, Javorshy, Skinner, & Patton, 1994), and in the investigation of the stability of language anxiety in learners who were studying two languages simultaneously (Rodriguez & Abreu, 2003). Much research into anxiety and the four skills has used the FLCAS: in listening (Kim, 2000; Elkhafaifi, 2005), in speaking (Philips, 1992), in reading in the foreign language (Saito, Horwitz & Garza, 1999) and in reading in Spanish (sellers, 2000), in writing (Cheng, 2002), and in distinguishing elements of anxiety in the speaking and the writing skills (Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999). Some researchers have used this scale in investigating cognitive and affective variables associated with anxiety (Onwuegbuzie,

Bailey, & Daley, 1999, 2000). Others have explored anxiety in connection with students' language learning style (Bailey, Daley, & Onwuegbuzie, 1999), with perfectionism (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002), and with language errors (Gregersen, 2003).

Many authors have used the FLCAS in its original form for students of a variety of target languages (Aida, 1994; Bailey et al., 1999; Elkhafaiji, 2005; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2000; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000; Saito et al., 1999; Sellers, 2000), translated into participants' mother tongue (Cheng, 2002; Cheng et al., 1999; Rodriguez & Abreu, 2003), and adapted to suit different needs (Pappamihiel, 2001). In this research, The FLCAS is used in its original form.

#### **4.3 The AMBT (Attitude/Motivation Test Battery) adapted as (the Motivation Scale) (see Appendix C)**

The Attitude /Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was developed by (Gardner, 1985), in order to gauge the individual difference variables. The AMBT is by far the only published and standardized test of second language motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). The AMTB was originally developed for the Canadian context where the social psychology dominated L2 motivation research (Dörnyei, 2003). In Canada, there are Anglo-Canadian learning French and French Canadian learning English as a second language. Therefore, adaptation of the AMBT items to fit a specific learning context or socio-cultural milieu is legitimate and factors like the cultural context, the language setting and the language program, should be taken into account (Gardner, 1985, 2001). In total, the AMBT contains 19 measures and 133 items that are related to individual variables in language learning.

In this study an adapted form of AMBT is used; it is the Motivation scale established by Chen (2006). The latter measures language learners' motivation around three dimensions:

motivation intensity, desire to learn the target language, and attitudes towards learning the target language. The scale with 11 items is abridged and adjusted some items of AMBT in order to fit specific learning contexts and different socio-cultural perspectives. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the motivation scale was 0.91. To prevent respondents from choosing only one side of the rating scale, five out of the 11 items were negatively worded.

#### **4.4 Anxiety Towards In-Class Activity Questionnaire (ATIAQ) (see Appendix D)**

This study utilized ATIAQ (The Anxiety Toward In-Class Activity Questionnaire) to discuss what in-class activities and instructors' personalities and attitudes might provoke and reduce EFL learners' foreign language anxiety in 20 Aout 1955 Skikda's University. ATIAQ was originally designed by Young in 1990. Young conducted 135 university-level beginning Spanish students to examine the relationship between anxiety and speaking Spanish from the students' perspective. The original questionnaire contained three sections: the first section included twenty-four items about language anxiety for participants to express agreement or disagreement; the second section used items related to certain in-class activities for students to choose the most suitable description of students' level of anxiety; the third part asked students to list out what kinds of instructors lessen and extend learners' anxiety.

This study adopted the second and third section to explore the answers of the research questions three and four. In section two of the original questionnaire, participants needed to read through the items and identify their anxiety levels. These items used a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "Very Relaxed" (one point), "Relaxed" (two points), "Neither Relaxed nor Anxious" (undecided) (three points), "Anxious" (four points), to "Extremely Anxious" (five points). The higher scores signified that students suffered higher levels of anxiety. After a few years, Chen (2002) adapted Young's (1990) ATIAQ in

his research. After modification, Chen extracted 20 items and put it into his revised ATIAQ, and these 20 items could be categorized into four parts: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The third section of the original questionnaire that was, Young's (1990) questionnaire, included two open questions: (a) what, if anything, does your instructor do to decrease any anxiety you may have in your foreign language class? (b) What characteristics does your instructor have which tend to reduce your anxiety about speaking in class? The students had to choose these two questions from the twenty-two items offered.

In 2002, Chen would like to revise these two questions because Chen thought that instructors' characteristics not only could help students reduce anxiety but also could provoke learners' anxiety; therefore, in Chen's (2002) research, Young's (1990) two questions were revised into: (a) What behaviors and characteristics does your instructor have which tend to increase your anxiety in foreign language class? (b) What behaviors and characteristics does your instructor have which tend to reduce your anxiety in foreign language class? Though Chen (2002) revised the two questions, the list of 22 items remained the same as Young's (1990) original questionnaire. In this study, Chen's revised questions and Young's 22 items were utilized to explore research question three.

#### **4.5 Self-perceived Proficiency Scale (see Appendix E).**

The Self-perceived Proficiency Scale (Chen, 2006) concerns learners' perception of their English proficiency. Four items of the Self-perceived Proficiency Scale relates to learners' speaking, listening, reading, and writing competence and one was about their overall FL proficiency. It's a 5-point Likert scale. From Chen's (2006) research, the pilot study showed that the Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was 0.89.

#### **4.6 Anxiety towards Test Types Evaluation (see Appendix F).**

The evaluation developed by the researcher concerns learner' anxiety level around the various types that they take. Using a 4-point Likert scale, participants rated their anxiety levels towards the following test types: listening comprehension test, reading comprehension test (time limited), reading comprehension test (no time limited), writing test (time limited), writing test (no time limited), oral test (in which the instructor scores), oral test (by tape recorder or computer), and grammar test.

### **5. Procedures**

The data for this study were collected at 20 Aout 1955 Skikda's university, during the beginning of the second semester in 2010. The questionnaires were issued to the 53 subjects- representing the whole 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English language department- during the regularly scheduled classes. While the subjects were filling in the questionnaires, their English teachers were invited to stay in the classroom with the researcher in order to win the cooperation of the subjects. The researcher selected that period of time for avoiding certain effects by other variables which might affect subjects' anxiety level, such as the pressure of facing upcoming final exams, the unfamiliarity with new English teachers, and the frustration mood arose by the failures in first-term exams.

Before handing out the questionnaires, the researcher explained the purpose and the importance of this study and the ways to fill in the questionnaires to all the subjects. Given the nature of questionnaires and their length, they have been administered on four successive days (every day during 30 minutes, before the beginning of first course). During this period; a kind of friendship has been installed between participants and the researcher, they were enthusiastic to correctly understand every question so that they could answer properly and honestly. Most of students revealed that they suffer from this phenomenon,

but they were unaware of its existence, every one has his own interpretation and story about these negative feelings towards learning a foreign language although, studying English language was for a great number of them a personal choice. All the 53 subjects satisfactorily completed the questionnaires except for two subjects, their copies were not returned back, so the study has been actually done on 51 subjects. At the very beginning, students were told that their responses would not affect their grades in English classes by their English teachers so that the confidentiality in this study was completely assured. When the subjects all finished answering the questionnaires, the researcher collected the paper, brought the questionnaires back and computed all the data.

## **6. Data Analysis Method**

To analyse the data gathered through questionnaires, SPSS 17.0 was employed. As far as the first part of our investigation- mainly focused on personal variables- was concerned. Firstly, descriptive analysis was used to compute the means and standard deviations for categories of anxiety to see the general situation of 2<sup>nd</sup> year university students' anxiety level in English classrooms at 20 Aout 1955 Skikda's University, Then, t- test was employed to see if there were any significant differences in English learning anxiety between students due to gender, baccalaureate stream and the regions they came from. After that, the researcher divided each of the following variables: achievement, motivation, time spent learning English out of classroom, personality and communicative competence to three levels (low, moderate and high), e.g. low motivated students, average motivated students and high motivated students. To prove that the difference between levels is not due to chance a One-way ANOVA was performed to determine the F-value. Finally, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to analyze the

correlation between English learning classroom anxiety and personal variables mentioned above.

## **Conclusion**

Anxiety is one of the most negatively influential affective variables, which prevents learners from successfully learning a foreign language. It makes language learners nervous and afraid, which may contribute to poor achievement. As a teacher and administrator at Skikda's University, we have always been in permanent contact with English language students. Almost all the time, they complain about some negative feelings and worry experienced in an intensive manner especially during their language courses. These emotions were not totally subjective as various studies comparing students' levels of anxiety in their foreign language class to their other classes (e.g. economy, math, physics...) indicate that students experience considerably more anxiety in their foreign language classes (Horwitz et al. 1986). To determine the phenomenon magnitude and its pervasive effects on students' learning, a research study has been carried out.

Participants in this study are 2<sup>nd</sup> year English department students at the aforementioned university. They follow the LMD educational system and their number is small (53 students, actually, 51 students participated). They were mainly chosen because they have already accomplished two semesters of their formation, a period long enough to alleviate their anxiety related to novelty and unfamiliarity with teachers and university environment.

The study aimed to investigate correlates of foreign language anxiety associated with some learners' and situational variables. Because of complex relationships among the previous factors, the study has used descriptive statistics, causal comparative research

approach (t test and ANOVA), and correlation research approach (Pearson correlation) as a research design.

To gain an overview about language anxiety and its relationship to other affective and instructional variables, six instruments were used: (1) Background Questionnaire, (2) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), (3) Self-perceived Proficiency Scale, (4) Motivation Scale, (5) Foreign Language Anxiety towards In-Class Activity Questionnaire (ATIAQ), and (6) Anxiety towards Test Types Evaluation. In measuring language anxiety, FLCAS is recognized in academic research circles as a consistent and reliable instrument.

Concerning data collection, it has been handled carefully, avoiding stress periods (e.g. exams, or facing final exams) and putting students in comfortable situations. During questionnaires administration the teachers were invited to stay in class, furthermore, they help to gain students' trust. During four days, thirty minutes each day, before filling the questionnaires, participants asked while necessary to remove any ambiguity. To protect their privacy and stimulate their honesty, all data were collected anonymously.

As far as data analysis method was concerned, SPSS 17.0 was used. It has mainly been designed for descriptive analysis processing, namely, to calculate, mean, standard deviation, t-tests for independent variables, ANOVA and correlations.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Interpretation of Results and Implications**

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## **Introduction**

Foreign language anxiety as a whole is a complex issue not just an isolated part of language learning. Using a combination of complete data sources for the results and discussions helps to assemble a more comprehensive and complete picture of the topic. Therefore, in order to address the specific objectives stated in the research proposal, the data collected from all the subjects of the study were analyzed by making use of mean and standard deviation; t-tests and correlation coefficients. Therefore, in each part discussion follows the presentation of the results of the data. This chapter is concerned by four parts: firstly, analysis of the results of FLCAS, analysis of anxiety among students at different personal factors, and analysis of the relationship between anxiety and instructional factors. Secondly, answers to research questions and hypothesis will be addressed, then, from results, some pedagogical implications will be recommended. Finally, limitations of the current study will be specified and expectations from future research will be formulated.

## **1. Major Study Results and Findings**

### **1.1 Analysis of the FLCAS Results**

The FLCAS questionnaire is considered as the most important questionnaire in the current study. It is mainly used to reveal the general state of language classroom anxiety among 2<sup>nd</sup> year English students at 20 Aout 1955 university of Skikda. First of all, the researcher used descriptive statistics through SPSS 17.0 programme to compute minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation scores and compare it with previous studies done for the same purpose. The present study showed that the mean of anxiety scores for the entire group of 51 subjects was 100.37 and the standard deviation was 20.03. The scores ranged from 56 to 150. Compared with the previous studies, the subjects' mean score of

this study was slightly higher than the results of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope’s (1986) (M=94.5, SD=21.41) and Aida’s (1994) (M=96.7, SD=22.10).

**1.1.1 Descriptive Statistics of FLCAS Scores**

From data, we can say that we are in front of a normal distribution; normal distribution is a specific type of distribution that have by bell-shaped, symmetric density curves. It can be completely described by its mean and standard deviation. For all distributions, 68% of the data will fall within one standard deviation of the mean, 95% will fall within two standard deviations of the mean, and 99.7% will fall within three standard deviations of the mean. This is called the 68-95-99.7 rule.

M: stands for mean

SD: stands for Standard Deviation

**Table 2:** A summary of the FLCAS scores of the present study.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	S. D
The present study	51	56	150	100,37	20,03

To separate different levels of language anxiety, Oxford (1990) subdivided three frequency scales of the FLCAS scores: high (mean score 3.5-4.4), medium (mean score 2.5-3.4) and low (mean score 1.0-2.4). Based on Oxford’s frequency scales, the subjects were divided into three anxiety groups: high anxiety level, medium anxiety level, and low anxiety level (see Table 3).

**Table 3:** English anxiety level of subjects

Levels of anxiety	N	Percentage	Total scores
High anxiety level	14	27%	114 - 150
Medium anxiety level	30	59%	81 - 113
Low anxiety level	07	14%	56 - 78

Table 3 indicated that 27% of students felt highly anxious with the score ranging from 114 to 150; 59% of the students had anxious feelings at a medium level with the score ranging from 81 to 113; and 14% of students belonged to low anxiety level group with the score ranging from 56 to 78.

### 1.1.2 Four FL Anxiety Categories of FLCAS.

From literature mentioned in the first chapter, language anxiety has been divided into three main categories: communication apprehension, that ranks the first followed by Fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. negative attitudes towards the English class is a section added to FLCAS questionnaire, in order to get a general view on anxiety combining personal and situational factors.

From Table 4, it can be noted that the mean score of the items for communication apprehension was 3.64(SD=0.96), for test anxiety, 3.11(SD=1.05), for fear of negative evaluation 3.09 (SD=1.05), and for negative attitudes towards the English class was 2.53 (SD=0.96). Clearly, among these four categories, communication apprehension was reported in the highest level, Test anxiety was the second one with a slight rise comparing with Fear of negative evaluation whereas, negative attitudes towards the English class was relatively lower than the former three. This finding indicated that communication apprehension provoked the highest anxiety level for the subjects. Communication requires

the speakers to master not only language skills concerning vocabulary, pronunciation, accent, and grammatical rules, but also a background knowledge about the target language and personal communicative skills including expressive skills, listening skills, and nonverbal skills (i.e., body language). Therefore, compared with other dimensions of language anxiety, communication apprehension takes the first place. In previous studies (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Aida, 1994), fear of negative evaluation ranked second which is not the case in the current study, it is test anxiety that takes the second place, this ranking put several question marks on tests validity, ways and situations of administration at 20 Aout 1955 Skikda University, perhaps accurate future investigations in that particular area might bring answers to this pertinent finding.

**Table 4:** Different categories of anxiety on FLCAS questionnaire

Rank	Types	FLCAS Scores of each item	
		M	SD
1	Communication apprehension	3.64	0.96
2	Test anxiety	3.11	1.05
3	Fear of negative evaluation	3.09	1.05
4	Negative attitudes towards the English class	2.53	0.96

### 1.1.3 Analysis of FLCAS Items.

After analyzing the frequency of the students' responses of each item, this researcher found that more than 40% of students reported agreeing and strongly agreeing in eleven FLCAS items (9,29, 1, 24,15,27,10,20, 3,8 and 33), and disagreeing and strongly

disagreeing in the four reverse FLCAS items (2, 14, 18, and 32). The analysis of this result indicated that students suffered from a much higher level of anxiety on the following items (9, 29, 1, 24, 15, 27, 10, 20, 3, 8, 33, 2, 14, 18, and 32).

Table 5 demonstrates the fifteen items, which began with the one having the highest frequency. According to the fifteen items, this study can categorize four factors which may most easily provoke students' FL anxiety. The factors include the followings: (1) oral work and communication in English class (items 9, 29, 1, 27, 20, 14, 20, 3), (2) lack of self-confidence (items 18, 32, 24, 15), (3) test anxiety (item 10), (4) fear of negative evaluation (items 2, 8, 33).

**Table 5:** Percentage of fifteen items on which students agree and strongly agree

Items	Percentage
<b>Item 9.</b> I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	80.4%
<b>Item 32.</b> I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English. (Reverse)	80.4%
<b>Item 18.</b> I feel confident when I speak in English class. (Reverse).	78.4%
<b>Item 29.</b> I get nervous when I don't understand every word of the English teacher says.	76.5%
<b>Item 14.</b> I would not be nervous speaking in the foreign language with native speakers. (Reverse).	66.6%
<b>Item 1.</b> I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.	58.8%
<b>Item 24.</b> I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students	58.8%
<b>Item 15.</b> I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	57%
<b>Item 27.</b> I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.	57%
<b>Item 10.</b> I worry about the consequences of failing my English classes.	53%
<b>Item 20.</b> I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be asked to speak in English class.	53%
<b>Item 2.</b> I don't worry about making mistakes in English class. (Reverse).	47%
<b>Item 3.</b> I tremble when I know That I'm going To be called on to speak in English class.	45.1%
<b>Item 8.</b> I am usually at ease during tests in my English class.	45%
<b>Item 33.</b> I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	43.2%

## 1.2 Analysis of Anxiety at Different Personal Factors

### 1.2.1 Gender, Baccaalaureate Stream, and Region.

From Background Questionnaire, the following personal factors are to be analysed: gender, baccaalaureate stream, region, number of hours spent in studying English language outside of class per week, English achievement, interpersonal communicative competence, motivation, self-perceived proficiency in English and finally personality trait.

From the first three items of Background Questionnaire, namely, gender, baccaalaureate stream and region, the researcher tried to investigate the possible relationships between the aforementioned personal factors and language anxiety. To fulfil that purpose a t-test has been performed.

SPSS offered us a clear comparison of the mean scores and standard deviations of the overall FLCAS in terms of gender, baccaalaureate stream and regions. The results in Table 6 indicated that there was no significant difference in the anxiety level in terms of gender, baccaalaureate stream and region ( $t=1.03, 1.67, 2.10, P>0.05$ ). Although no clearly distinction in FL anxiety was found between males and females, literary and scientific streams, rural and urban backgrounds, we can see that the FLCAS scores of male, literary stream and rural students were relatively higher than those of female, scientific stream and urban students. Since the research was somewhat limited in the sense that it restricted its participants to only one university, and moreover the sample was in a certain number, it is necessary to have a further exploration on the relationship between language anxiety and gender, baccaalaureate stream and region in the future.

**Table 6:** t-test of FL anxiety level for gender, baccalaureate stream, and region

Variables		N	FLACS Scores		t	Sig
			M	SD		
Gender	Male	8	3.36	0.97	1.03	0.16
	Female	43	2.98	0.90		
Baccalaureate Stream	Literary	40	3.14	0.93	1.67	0.23
	Scientific	11	2.67	0.84		
Region	Rural	14	3.47	0.96	2.10	0.28
	Urban	37	2.88	0.89		

**1.2.2 Time Spent in Studying English.**

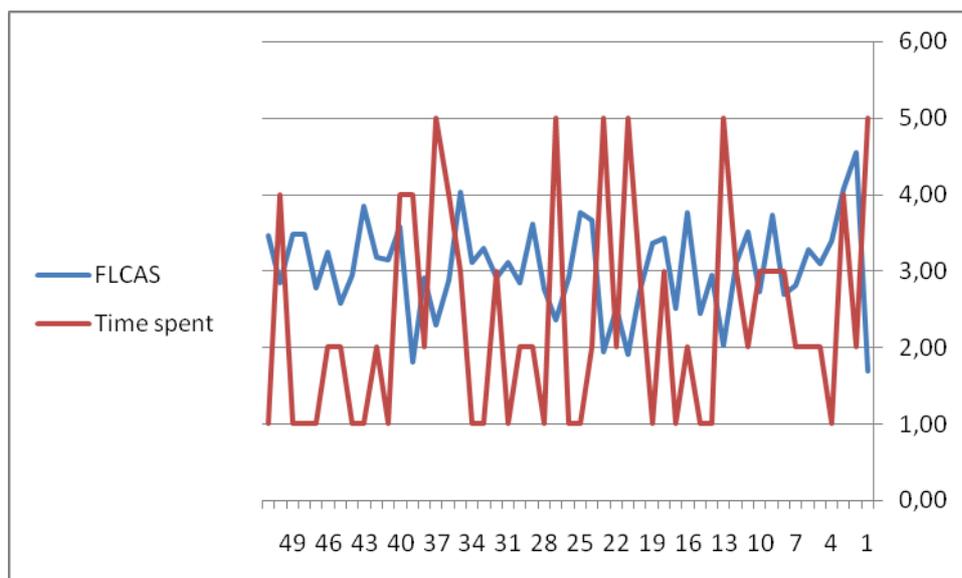
In the background questionnaire, the subjects were requested to report how much time they spent in learning English after class each week. Table 7 showed their responds that 32 students (63%) spend 0-2 hours, 8 students (16 %) 2 to 3 hours, and 11 students (21%) more than 3 hours in studying English after class a week. On the whole, the students in this study did not take much time to study English weekly after class. The results in Table 7 imply some differences among students with long studying time and short studying time in English, as far as their English anxiety levels were concerned. One-way ANOVA helped distinguish the differences in FLCAS among the three groups with different learning hours (0-2 hours, 2-3 hours and more than 3 hours) ( see table 8). The result indicated that the students who spent more time studying English were usually less anxious than the students who spent little time in studying English (see figure 2). FL anxiety might be lightened by increasing learning time in English.

**Table 7:** FL anxiety level among three groups of different time spent in studying English

Time spent in learning English after classroom Per week	N	FLCAS Scores of each item	
		M	SD
Between (0 – 2 hours)	32	105.53	15.10
Between (2– 3 hours)	8	104.63	16.74
>3 hours	11	82.27	25.36

**Table 8:** ANOVA of time spent learning English among three anxiety groups level

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	4600.91	2	2300.45	7.14	.000
Within Groups	15467.02	48	322.23		
Total	20067.93	50			



**Figure 2:** correlation between foreign language anxiety and time spent learning English out of class per week.

**1.2.3 English Achievement.**

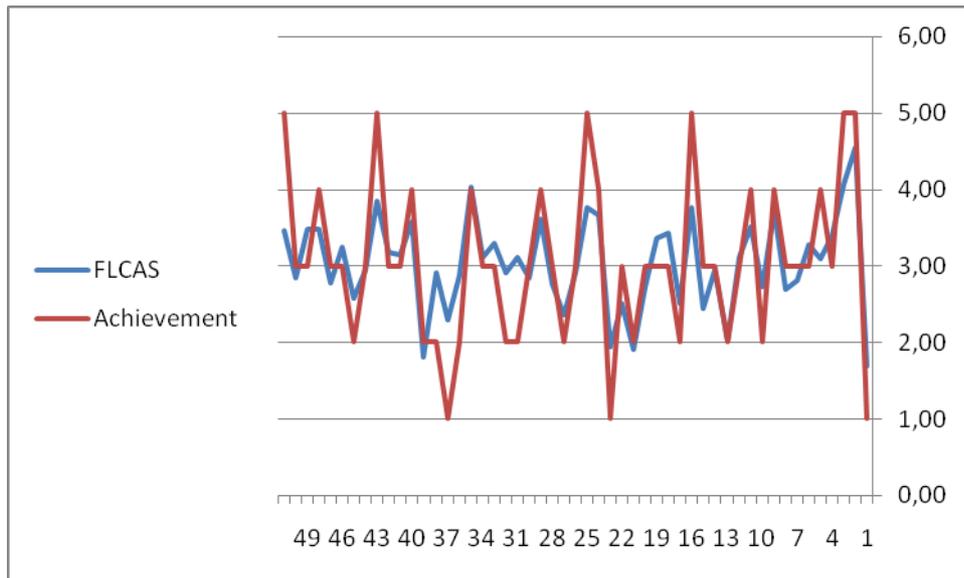
Of all the 51 respondents, high level of English achievement accounted for 23% (12 students), average level, 44% (22 students), and low level, 33% (17 students). Table 9 listed the FLCAS scores of the three levels. As illustrated in the table, the top achievement learners had the lowest FLCAS scores ( $M= 78.08$   $SD=16.35$ ), and the average achievement learners had the moderate FLCAS scores ( $M= 99.18$ ,  $SD=11.40$ ), while the low achievement learners had the highest FLCAS scores ( $M= 117.65$ ,  $SD=14.42$ ). One-way ANOVA showed that there was significant difference among the anxiety of the three levels (See Table 10). There was a negative relationship between FL anxiety and English achievement (see figure 3). That is to say, highly anxious students were more likely to receive lower grades than students having a low level of anxiety.

**Table 9:** FL anxiety level for different English achievement

English Achievement	N	Percentage	FLCAS Scores	
			M	SD
Low	17	33%	117.65	14.42
Average	22	44%	99.18	11.40
High	12	23%	78.08	16.35

**Table 10:** ANOVA of FL anxiety level for different English achievement

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	11069.45	2	5534.72	29.52	000
Within Groups	8998.48	48	187.46		
Total	20067.93	50			



**Figure 3:** correlation between foreign language anxiety and achievement.

### 1.2.4 Communicative Competence.

In order to identify whether communicative competence has significant effect on the students' FL anxiety, a background questionnaire (see Appendix A) was included on the basis of previous studies by MacIntyre and Gardner (1989). The results in Table 11 demonstrated that there was a significant difference among the three groups: good communicative group, average communicative group and poor communicative group, as far as their English anxiety levels were concerned. The mean score (FLCAS) of subjects with good communicative competence ( $M= 81.67, SD=14.38$ ) was much lower than that of subjects with average and poor communicative competence ( $M= 100.72, 121.80; SD=16.59, 11.95$ ). One-way ANOVA revealed that significant differences existed among good, average, and poor communicative competence groups (see Table 12). The result further indicated that communicative competence is one of the main factors that influence the FL anxiety level (see figure 4). Students with few interpersonal abilities or

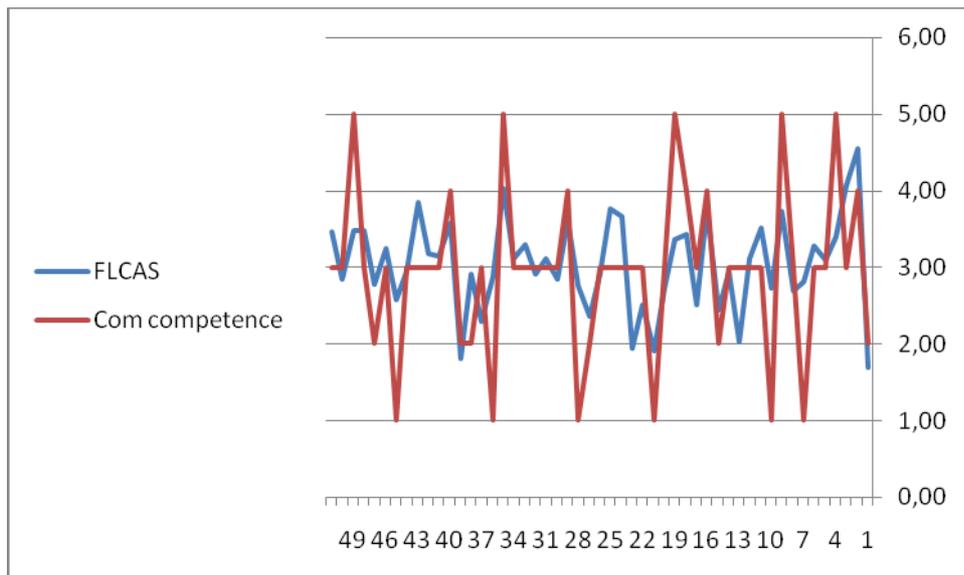
communicative skills may have social anxiety, and thus easily become anxious when they communicate with others.

**Table 11:** FL anxiety level for different communicative competence

Communicative Competence	N	Percentage	FLCAS Scores	
			M	SD
Good	12	23%	81.67	14.38
Average	29	57%	100.72	16.59
Poor	10	20%	121.80	11.95

**Table 12:** ANOVA of anxiety level for communicative competence

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	8792.27	2	4396.13	18.71	0.000
Within Groups	11275.66	48	1243.90		
Total	20067.93	50			



**Figure 4:** correlation between foreign language anxiety and communicative competence.

### 1.2.5 Personality Trait

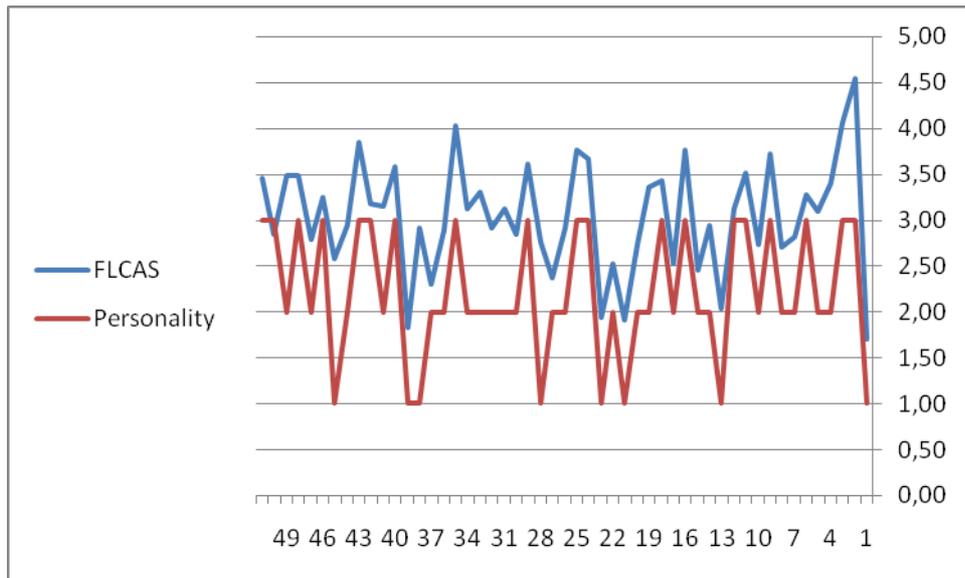
Based on Krashen’s (1981) belief that an outgoing personality may contribute to foreign language learning, this study investigated the subjects’ personality by the background questionnaire. In the questionnaire, 08 (15%) students considered themselves to be extroverts or lean towards extroverts, 24 (47%) took themselves as ones between introvert and extrovert, and 19 (38%) believed themselves to be introverts or lean towards introverts (see Table 13). One-way ANOVA (see Table 14) revealed that significant differences existed among the three groups. The results in Table 13 indicated significant difference between extroverted and introverted students. To be concrete, the mean FLCAS scores of the introverted were higher than those of the extroverted. That may imply that personality does interconnect with language anxiety. Introverts are more anxious in learning English than extroverts (see figure 5).

**Table 13:** FL anxiety level for different personality

Personality	N	Percentage	FLCAS Scores	
			M	SD
Extrovert or lean towards extrovert	8	15%	72.75	15.45
Between extroversive and introversive	24	47%	95.37	10.71
Introvert or lean towards introvert	19	38%	118.32	12.77

**Table 14:** ANOVA of FL anxiety level for different personality

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	12824.75	2	6412.37	42.49	0.000
Within Groups	7243.18	48	150.89		
Total	20067.93	50			



**Figure 5:** correlation between foreign language anxiety and personality trait.

Once personal factors that occurred in Background Questionnaire have fully been analysed, we moved to investigate self-perceived proficiency and motivation questionnaires.

**1.2.6 Self-perceived Proficiency.**

According to the students’ self-evaluation on their own English proficiency, subjects with high anxiety seemed to believe that they themselves had a low proficiency and were not satisfied with their English performance. They got the lowest scores on the Self-perceived Proficiency Scale (M=9.36; SD=1.01) (See Table 15). While those with low anxiety seemed to have high self-efficacy beliefs towards English learning and they got the highest scores on the Self-perceived Proficiency Scale (M=20.00; SD=0.81), students suffering from a moderate level of anxiety perceived their proficiency as average (M= 11.90; SD= 1.77). The result of one-way ANOVA showed that there were clear differences in self-perceived proficiency scores among the three groups (i.e., low-anxiety, moderate-anxiety, and high-anxiety groups) (see Table 16 & figure 6). This finding indicated that learners with high self-perceived proficiency may deal with their anxiety

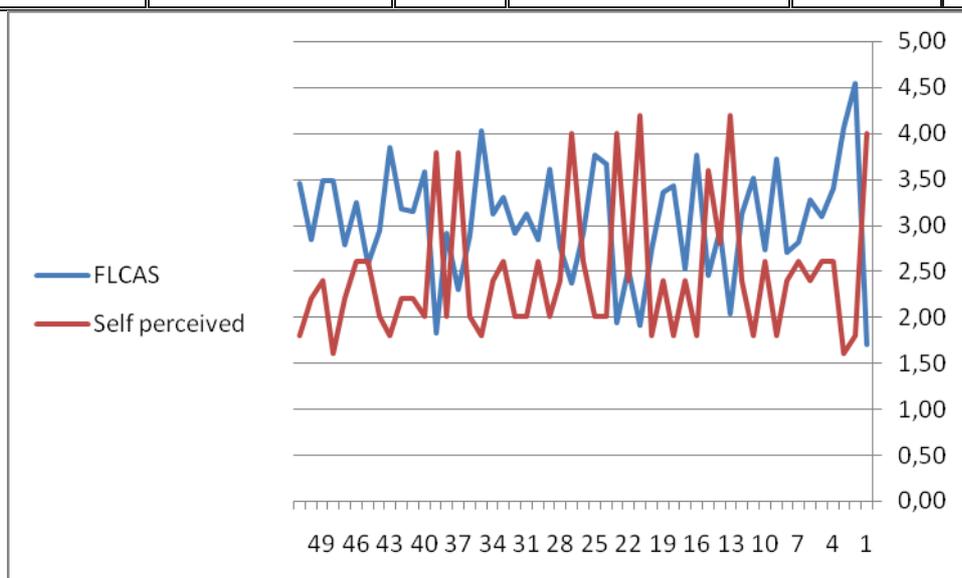
better than learners with low self-perceived proficiency. Low self-perceived proficiency can easily produce FL anxiety because students doubt their abilities to complete the learning task and fear of failure. This result is consistent with other research about relationship between self-perceived proficiency and foreign language anxiety (Aida, 1994; Kitano, 2001).

**Table 15:** Self-perceived proficiency level among three anxiety groups.

Anxiety Groups	N	Self-perceived Proficiency	
		M	SD
Low	7	20.00	0.81
Moderate	30	11.90	1.77
High	14	9.36	1.01
Total	51	12.31	3.60

**Table 16:** ANOVA of self-perceived proficiency level among three anxiety groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	540.82	2	270.41	7.92	0.000
Within Groups	1637.77	48	34.12		
Total	2178.59	50			



**Figure 6:** correlation between foreign language anxiety and self-perceived proficiency.

### 1.2.7 Motivation

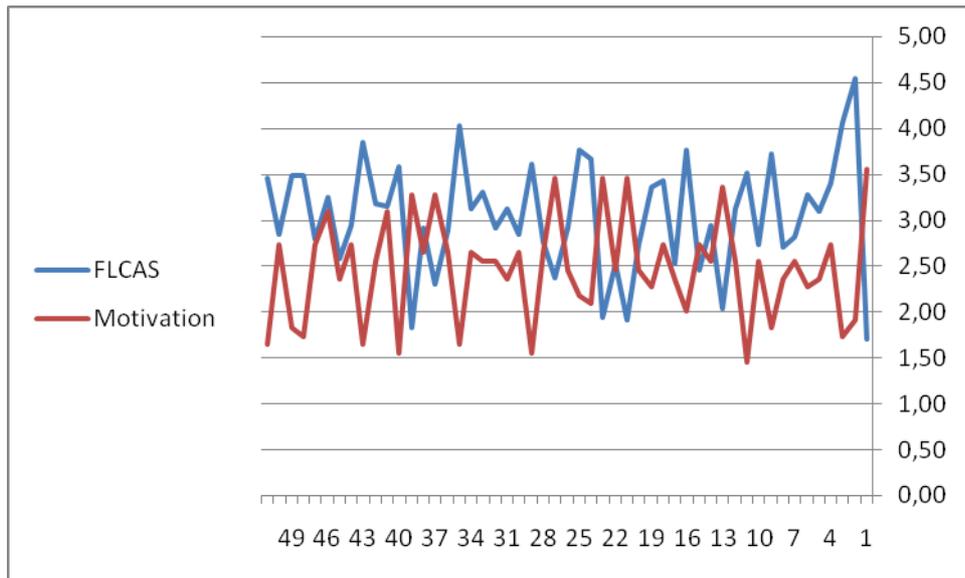
An analysis of the data from the motivation scale revealed that the participants responded with a medium degree of overall motivation in English learning. The result in Table 17 indicated that among the three anxiety groups, the low-anxiety group had the highest mean of motivation scores ( $M=37.43$ ,  $SD=1.13$ ), while the high-anxiety group had the lowest mean of motivation scores ( $M=19.43$ ,  $SD=2.37$ ), which was lower than the medium range ( $M=28.33$ ,  $SD=2.18$ ). The results in Table 18 showed that there was a significant difference in motivational level between the high-anxiety group and the low-anxiety group. The high-anxiety learners had less interest and lower motivation for English learning than the low-anxiety learners. Higher motivation was associated with lower anxiety (see figure 7). There was a bidirectional relationship between foreign language anxiety and motivation.

**Table 17:** Motivation level among three anxiety groups

Anxiety Groups	N	Motivation Scores	
		M	SD
Low	7	37.43	1.13
Moderate	30	28.33	2.18
High	14	19.43	2.37
Total	51	27.14	6.06

**Table 18:** ANOVA of motivation level among three anxiety groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	1615.88	2	807.94	13.63	000
Within Groups	2843.92	48	59.24		
Total	4459.8	50			



*Figure 7: correlation between foreign language anxiety and motivation.*

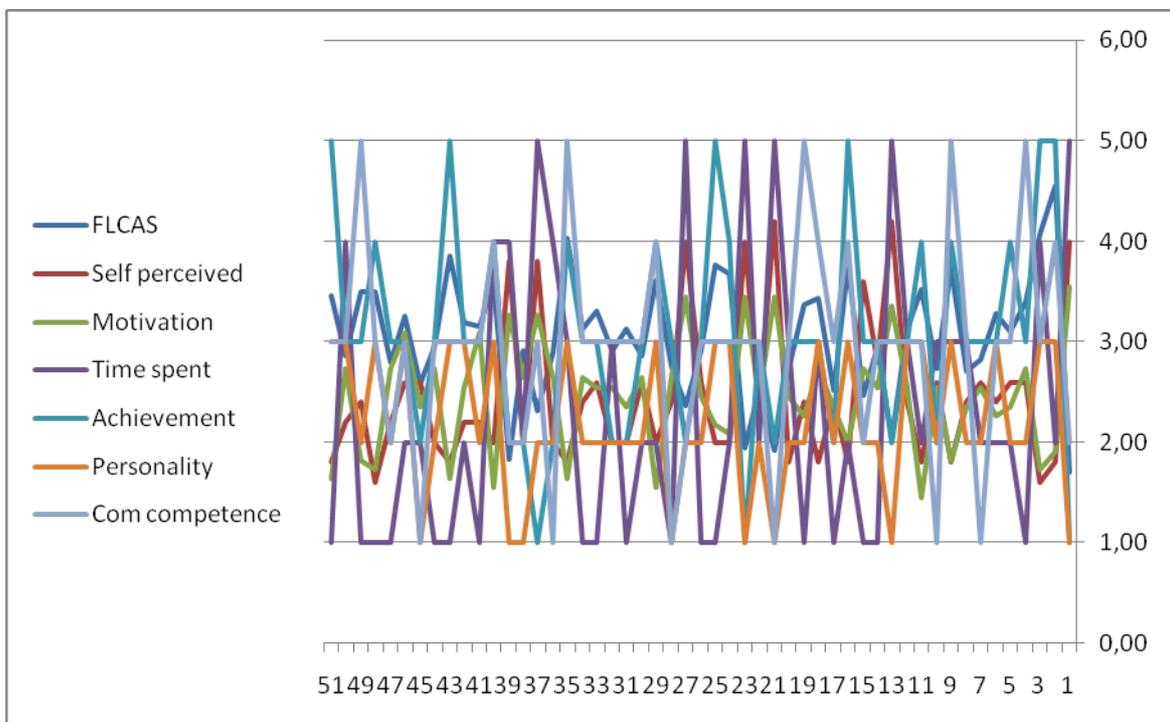
### 1.2.8 Pearson’s Correlation between Anxiety and Personal Factors.

In order to explore the relationship between FL anxiety and personal factors, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was performed. The result of the correlation analysis revealed that there were correlations, both negative and positive, between FL anxiety and the six variables (i.e., English achievement, personality, communicative competence, self-perceived proficiency, motivation, and time spent in studying English ) (see Table 19). As shown in Table 19, six significant correlations were found in this study, which were good predictors of the foreign language anxiety. First, self-perceived proficiency, motivation, and time spent in studying English were found to have obvious negative correlations with FL anxiety ( $r = - 0.812; - 0.811, - 0.459$ ). Second, communicative competence, achievement and personality were found to have positive significant correlation with FL anxiety ( $r = 0.587; 0.842; 0.799, p = .000$ ). The finding implies that students tend to do better in dealing with the FL anxiety and have lower level of FL anxiety if they have good English achievement, high self-perceived proficiency, strong

learning motivation, good communicative competence, extroverted personality, or more time spent in studying English.

**Table 19:** Pearson’s correlation of FL anxiety & personal factors

Variables	r	Sig
Self-perceived proficiency&_FLCAS scores(overall anxiety)	- 0.812	0.000
Motivation & FLCAS scores(overall anxiety)	- 0.811	0.000
Time spent in studying English & FLCAS scores(overall anxiety)	- 0.459	0.000
Communicative competence & FLCAS scores(overall anxiety)	0.587	0.000
English achievement & FLCAS scores (overall anxiety)	0.842	0.000
Personality & FLCAS scores(overall anxiety)	0.799	0.000



**Figure 8:** correlation between foreign langue anxiety and self-perceived proficiency, motivation, time spent in studying English language out of classroom per week, achievement, personality, and communicative competence.

### 1.3 Analysis of the Relationship between Anxiety and Instructional Factors

#### 1.3.1 Anxiety towards In-class Activity.

In order to explore the kind of activities that influence the level of FL anxiety, this study used the Anxiety towards In-Class Activity Questionnaire (ATIAQ) to investigate subjects' perspective on the 20 in-class activities (see Appendix E). Table 20 showed us the 20 in-class activities arranged by a descending order based on the anxiety level that the learners responded to. According to the scoring rules, the higher scores represent the higher levels of anxiety. It can be seen that there were five activities within the highest level of anxiety ( $M > 3.7$ ). They were as follows: Make an oral presentation in front of the class ( $M = 3.96$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ). Be called on to give an answer ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ). Take dictation test on vocabulary or text ( $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ). Introduce yourself in English in front of the class ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ). Watch the movies and then turn in your project about the movies ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ). Among the five high-anxiety activities, three of them were speaking-oriented activities, and involve a risk of exposure, which implied that learners may feel nervous or fearful when they are exposed to others to speak English.

The bottom of Table 20 displayed that there were six activities within the lowest level of anxiety ( $M < 2.5$ ). They were as follows: Learn to sing English songs as a class after the instructor ( $M = 1.63$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ). Repeat as a class after the instructor ( $M = 1.80$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ). Read silently in class ( $M = 1.98$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ). Work in groups of 2 or 3 and prepare a skit ( $M = 2.16$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ). Compete in class games by teams ( $M = 2.29$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ). Learn English in groups of 3 or 4 in class ( $M = 2.45$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ). It is obvious that five of these six activities are group-oriented activities. This finding indicated that cooperative activities and group learning are considered the effective and efficient learning ways to reduce students' fear of self-exposure since students can express themselves in the name of the whole group instead of individuals.

**Table 20:** Activities arranged by anxiety level

Activities	Anxiety level	
	M	SD
<b>Item 6.</b> Make an oral presentation in front of the class.	3.96	0.93
<b>Item 18.</b> Be called on to give an answer.	3.90	1.06
<b>Item 13.</b> Take dictation test on vocabulary or text.	3.80	0.74
<b>Item 19.</b> Introduce yourself in English in front of the class.	3.78	1.10
<b>Item 14.</b> Watch the movies and then turn in your project about the movies.	3.76	1.06
<b>Item 16.</b> Write your work on the board.	3.49	0.94
<b>Item 9.</b> Practice conversation individually with instructor in class.	3.39	0.94
<b>Item 1.</b> Read orally alone in class.	3.31	1.14
<b>Item 10.</b> Interview each other in pairs in class.	3.18	0.84
<b>Item 20.</b> Translate Arabic/French into English in class.	3.00	0.80
<b>Item 17.</b> Translate into English Arabic/French in class.	2.88	0.65
<b>Item 8.</b> Repeat individually after the instructor.	2.86	1.07
<b>Item 2.</b> Write a composition in class.	2.76	0.90
<b>Item 4.</b> Do exercises in the book in class.	2.45	0.94
<b>Item 5.</b> Learn English in groups of 3 or 4 in class.	2.45	1.02
<b>Item 7.</b> Compete in class games by teams.	2.29	0.57
<b>Item 11.</b> Work in groups of 2 or 3 and prepare a skit.	2.16	0.83
<b>Item 12.</b> Read silently in class.	1.98	0.83
<b>Item 15.</b> Repeat as a class after the instructor.	1.80	0.77
<b>Item 3.</b> Learn to sing English songs as a class after the instructor.	1.63	0.48

### 1.3.2 Instructors' Behaviors and Characteristics

For exploring how the instructors' behaviors and characteristics influence the students' FL anxiety, this study also employed two questions (see Appendix E) in the last section of ATIAQ to examine a list of 22 teachers' behaviors and characteristics that probably relate to anxiety. Subjects' responses to these activities were collected and ranged by computing their frequencies and percentages in a descending order. As seen in Table 22, 51 students regarded 14 instructors' behaviors and characteristics related to anxiety reduction.

Table 21 displayed the instructors' behaviors and characteristics that might increase the students' foreign language anxiety. The students reported 8 instructors' behaviors and characteristics that were related to an increase in anxiety. Judging from the subjects' responses to the 22 instructors' behaviors and characteristics, a successful English teacher should be the one who is patient and friendly, have a sense of humor, understand students, always compliment and encourage students, and make students feel comfortable and relaxed. While a typical anxiety-provoking English teacher might have the following characteristics: scolds, grim, threatening students by giving test, poor communicator, and unpredictable (see table 21). The results revealed that teacher play an important role in influencing students' FL anxiety in class. Teachers should pay attention to their own classroom behavior and be acutely aware of the behaviors which may cause students' classroom anxiety.

**Table 21:** Instructors' behaviors and characteristics related to an increase in anxiety

Items	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Item 13.</b> Instructor scolds students.	47	92.15%
<b>Item 9.</b> Instructor says that he will fail you if you do not study hard.	44	86.27%
<b>Item 4.</b> Instructor tries to fail us by using difficult tests.	42	82.35%
<b>Item 3.</b> Instructor corrects your errors in front of the class.	41	80.39%
<b>Item 11.</b> Instructor is rigid and never smiles in class.	38	74.51%
<b>Item 8.</b> Instructor does not provide any make up test when you fail in the exam.	31	60.78%
<b>Item 17.</b> Instructor often gives students a quiz without notice.	29	56.86%
<b>Item 19.</b> Instructor says that you will have no future if you don't have good English.	26	50.98%

**Table 22:** Instructors’ behaviors and characteristics related to anxiety reduction

Items	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Item 16.</b> Instructor manner is relaxed	49	96.07%
<b>Item 6.</b> Instructor says that he is not going to fail the students.	48	94.11%
<b>Item 14.</b> Instructor is very friendly.	47	92.15%
<b>Item 22.</b> Instructor understands students.	45	88.23%
<b>Item 12.</b> Instructor has a good sense of humour.	43	84.31%
<b>Item 7.</b> Instructor is patient.	42	82.35%
<b>Item 18.</b> Instructor does not make you feel stupid when you make a mistake.	38	74.51%
<b>Item 1.</b> Instructor compliments students.	37	72.54%
<b>Item 5.</b> Instructor makes students feel comfortable.	35	68.62%
<b>Item 15.</b> Instructor has attitude that mistakes are no big deal when learning English.	32	62.74%
<b>Item 21.</b> Instructor has attitude that mistakes are made by everyone when learning English.	31	60.78%
<b>Item 2.</b> Students can volunteer answers and are not called on to provide responses.	28	54.90%
<b>Item 10.</b> Instructor’s manner of correction is not harsh.	29	49.02%
<b>Item 20.</b> Instructor encourages students to speak English.	24	47.05%

### 1.3.3 Analysis of Relationship between Anxiety and Test Types

To ascertain what types of tests will provoke learners' FL anxiety; the researcher designed a 4-point Likert scale (see Appendix F) to investigate learners' affective responses to the eight test types. The results were displayed in Table 23. For all subjects, oral test in which assessors scores ranks the first ( $M = 3.35$ ), and then was listening comprehension test ( $M = 3.04$ ), writing test with time limit ( $M = 2.88$ ), reading test with time limit ( $M = 2.69$ ), oral test by tape recorder or computer ( $M = 2.37$ ), reading test (no time limited) ( $M = 2.08$ ), writing test no time limited ( $M = 2.04$ ), and grammar test ( $M = 1.69$ ).

The result showed that the participants had significantly strong anxiety in oral test. Oral test involves communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety and therefore it proved to be the most anxiety-provoking activity. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) pointed out that students may feel "very self-conscious, fear, or even panic when they are asked to engage in oral activities that expose their inadequacies" (p. 128). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) explained that oral test was more complicated in a foreign language context because it likely provoked test anxiety and communication apprehension. However, from the present finding, it was found that oral test by tape recorder or computer could cause less FL anxiety than oral test with assessors' direct grading. That may imply that students may be more apprehensive when they are required to engage in speaking activities in a situation where assessors directly observe and evaluate their performance. To reduce FL anxiety, oral test can adopt a relatively low-anxious way (e.g., tape recorder, or computer) to evaluate students' achievement. Surprisingly, listening comprehension test ranks second among different types of tests that evoke students' anxiety. Years ago, the listening skill was given less importance compared with other study skills; recently, many studies have been devoted to investigate that skill and its direct effect on the speaking skill since the latter is considered as the most anxiety-provoking skill.

**Table 23:** Anxiety towards test types.

Items	M	SD
<b>Item 6.</b> Oral test (in which the assessor scores)	3.35	0.48
<b>Item 1.</b> Listening comprehension test	3.04	0.72
<b>Item 4.</b> Writing test (time limited)	2.88	0.76
<b>Item 2.</b> Reading test (time limited)	2.69	0.73
<b>Item 7.</b> Oral test (by tape recorder or computer)	2.37	0.59
<b>Item 3.</b> Reading test (no time limited)	2.08	0.77
<b>Item 5.</b> Writing test (no time limited)	2.04	0.59
<b>Item 8.</b> Grammar test	1.69	0.76

The other finding in the investigation was that the time constraint was one major source of writing and reading apprehension. Limitation of time might increase students' test anxiety because less time is available for them to consider their answers. It is a challenge for students to respond efficiently and successfully in such extremely limited time. As Zuriff (1999) stated, the time constraint might be the most anxiety-provoking factor for test-anxious examinees. The timing condition may increase examinees' symptoms of test anxiety, and make them unable to work. In addition, students who feel anxious in different test types might be attributed to their deficient language proficiency. Culler and Holahan (1980) pointed out that test anxiety may be caused by deficits in students' learning or study skills. Some students experience anxiety during a test situation because they do not know how to process or organize the course material and information. Moreover, due to lacking the knowledge of language, students are not sure of their ability to complete the test, which

impair their confidence and self-efficacy, and consequently heighten their fears of negative evaluation about their performance of the tests.

## 2. Answering Research Questions and Hypothesis

The main objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between English learning classroom anxiety and some affective and situational factors among 2<sup>nd</sup> year English language department students with particular reference to 20 Aout 1955 University of Skikda. So, as to address the above major objective, the following basic research questions were raised.

1. What is the general level of foreign language anxiety among 2<sup>nd</sup> year English language students at 20 August 1955 Skikda's University?
2. What personal factors are related to foreign language anxiety?
3. What instructional factors are related to foreign language anxiety?
4. What strategies could teachers and students use to reduce foreign language anxiety?

Because of the pervasive effect of language anxiety on learning and its relationship to other affective and situational factors, it has been hypothesized that if the amount of language anxiety is alleviated within the classroom setting, then students' performance and academic achievement will be better.

As to answer the first research question, the study indicated the existence of different levels of FL anxiety among 2<sup>nd</sup> year English department students at 20 Aout 1955 Skikda's University, 27% of students suffer from a high level of anxiety, 59% are medium anxious students, whereas 14% scored a low level of anxiety ( see table 3) . Among the four categories of FLCAS, what the subjects felt most anxious was communication apprehension. Test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation were the second and the third

respectively. Negative attitude towards English class was what the students worried the least (see table 4). After analyzing the items of FLCAS, we categorized five factors which may most easily provoke students' FL anxiety. The factors include, (1) oral work in English class (2) test anxiety, (3) lack of self-confidence, (4) fear of negative evaluation, and (5) lack of learning interests.

Concerning the possible internal or personal sources of English language anxiety, which included gender, baccalaureate stream, region, personality, communicative competence, English achievement, motivation, self-perceived proficiency in English, and the amount of time spent in studying English after class. The study showed that English anxiety scores measured by FLCAS have no statistically significant differences between male and female subjects, literary and scientific baccalaureate streams, rural and urban subject (see table 6), but due to the small sample size, the conclusion was not final. It is necessary to have a further exploration on the issues in the future. However, the other six possible sources (i.e., personality, communicative competence, English achievement, motivation, self-perceived proficiency in English, and the amount of time spent in studying English after class) were found to be important factors affecting students' English anxiety levels. The results of the Pearson correlation research showed significant correlations between anxiety and each one of the six factors (see table 19 & figure 8).

Third, the instructional sources of English language anxiety were probed. The results revealed that classroom activities, teachers' behaviors and characteristics, and the types of tests were the main sources arousing students' English language anxiety in EFL classroom. Speaking-oriented activities were judged by students as the most anxiety-producing activities because they have one particularly feature in common 'a high student exposure requirement'. Cooperative activities and group learning were considered less anxious because they construct a safe and relaxed environment in which learners can

express and exchange their ideas without the threat of failure or appraisals (Sandberg, 1995). Instructors' behaviors and characteristics that greatly lighten students' foreign language anxiety were the followings: being patient and friendly, having sense of humor, understanding students, complimenting and encouraging students and making students feel comfortable and relaxed (see table 22). Instructors' behaviors and characteristics that most irritate students' anxiety were the followings: scolds, grim, threatening students by giving test, poor communicator, and unpredictable (see table 21). As far as the test types were concerned, oral tests with assessors grading were regarded as the most anxiety-producing evaluation form. In addition, listening comprehension test, time-constrained writing test and time-constrained reading test could cause students high anxiety. Therefore and in conformity with literature, this study believes that oral-orientation and limitation of time might be the important factors to increasing students' test anxiety (see table 23).

### **3. Pedagogical Implications**

Based on the above discussion, we can obtain some implications that foreign language teachers may employ in their teaching to reduce learners' anxiety.

#### **3.1 Helping Students Build a Healthy Self-perceived Proficiency in English.**

A healthy self-perceived FL proficiency is crucial for students. Beliefs of self-efficacy or self-perceived proficiency may influence "individuals' pursued courses of action, effort expended in given endeavors, persistence in the confrontation of obstacles, and resilience to adversity" (Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2007, p. 419). Teachers should develop students' self-beliefs by fostering their successful learning experiences, giving

them positive deserving feedback, and offering opportunities for them to share their peers' successes (Bandura, 1997). In addition, teachers' instruction of effective language learning strategies, such as effective self-regulatory practices, can lead to stronger self-efficacy and increased FL achievement (Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2007).

### **3.2 Use a Wider Range of Measurements in Evaluating Students.**

The present findings show that students feel highly anxious about language tests, especially oral tests. Students' test anxiety may deal with their proficiency and learning skills, so teachers need to raise questions from easy to difficult, drop the degree of difficulty of tasks, loosen the time of requirements for task completion, and offer enough instructions on FL learning skills (Culler & Holahan, 1980). Cameron (2001) confirmed that although traditional tests are important, they should not be the dominant way to evaluate students' FL proficiency. Traditional tests usually function as a one-time measure, time-constrained response, and only one correct answer per question. This kind of tests little considers students' thinking processes used to arrive at their answers. FL teachers should use a wider range of measurements (alternative or formative assessments) in measuring students. Beyond the use of traditional tests, many other effective assessing methods (e.g., role-plays, self-reflections, observations, video productions, or portfolios) can be used to evaluate student proficiency in the FL classroom (Needham, 2002).

### **3.3 Arousing Students' Motivation in English Learning.**

The study results revealed that motivation correlated negatively with anxiety; in other words, the higher motivation, the lower anxiety. Therefore, creating a motivational classroom is crucial to English learning. Dönyei (2001) pointed out that the main approaches of creating initial student motivation include enhancing students' attitudes and

values concerning the target language, increasing students' expectancy of success, developing students' goal-orientedness, making the teaching materials suitable for the learners, and creating realistic learner beliefs. Dönyei suggested that in order to maintain and protect students' motivation, teachers should adopt the following strategies: setting particular learning aims, presenting tasks in a motivating way, protecting learners' self-esteem and developing their self-confidence, cultivating their learning autonomy, and encouraging self-motivating learning strategies.

### **3.4 Creating a Low-anxious Classroom.**

A relaxed classroom atmosphere or environment is significant in reducing anxiety. The following strategies are believed to be useful to reduce FL anxiety: (1) Making use of purposeful group work or collaborative activities. Teachers can provide students with group or pair activities which can increase the amount of students' participation in the classroom and lower the anxiety for students. (2) Using non-threatening ways to correct students' errors. Teachers can use questionnaires at the beginning of the class to learn about students' attitudes towards correction and feedback. Based on the students' attitudes and preferences, teachers can then adopt appropriate correcting strategies to deal with students' errors (McKeating, 1981). Phillips (1991) suggested that teachers should correct students' errors by modeling rather than overt correction. Nunan and Lamb (1996) argued that "teachers should make use of correction methods which encourage purposeful learners' involvement by allowing opportunities to self-correct or analyze the errors facilitate learning" (p. 76). Self-correction, peer-to-peer correction, and group correction may be an effective and non-threaten way to handle students' mistakes. (3) Providing learners interesting and moderate tasks and materials. Tasks and materials set by teachers should cater for students' interest and need, and the difficulty should match their appropriate zone of proximal

development (ZPD). ZPD refers to “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined by problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” ( Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). According to the theory of ZPD, teachers should set tasks at the potential level that learners can solve a problem with the help of teachers or peers.

(4) Paying attention to the individual difference.

Factors such as self-efficacy, personality trait, motivation, communicative competence, proficiency, and learning habits are thought to influence students’ FL anxiety, so teachers should involve these factors into their instruction. When teaching in the classroom, they should pay attention to the students who tend to be more anxious or more sensitive to others’ evaluation. In the face of these students, teachers should be friendly and patient, give them more positive feedback and encouragement, and let them feel relaxed and be confident to express themselves.

### **3.5 Changing Teachers’ Role and Beliefs.**

Many teachers in Algeria believe that the role of a teacher is to give students lectures, to assign them tasks, and to evaluate their performance. This traditional teacher-student relationship is actually an unequal teacher-centered relationship, which may hinder the development of students’ language proficiency. The results of this study have shown that the teacher is far from a lecturer, commander, and evaluator, and that these beliefs must disappear to adopt new beliefs and roles.

Here are some listed suggestions for teachers to follow in order to alleviate students’ anxiety:

- English teachers should acknowledge anxiety feelings as legitimate and attempt to lessen students' feelings of inadequacy, confusion and failure by providing positive experiences and feedback to counteract anxiety.
- Teachers should build student confidence and self- esteem in their English language ability via encouragement, re-assurance, positive reinforcement and empathy.
- Teachers should correct students' errors made in English classrooms as wisely as possible since unwise correction of teachers makes learners anxious and frightened.
- To reduce students' classroom anxiety problems, teachers should remind students not to feel worry about their mistakes because it is through making errors that one can improve his/her language proficiency.
- Teachers should openly discuss foreign language classroom anxiety with students and encourage them to seek help when they need.
- Teachers should also remember to avoid assuming that students who have high levels of achievement are not experiencing anxieties in English classes
- Students should also be given information about how to direct their attention away from self- centered worries when they are reading, listening, speaking and taking tests in English language.
- Teachers should create positive environment in the classroom and exam halls not to disturb sensitive students.
- Teachers should try to provide a friendly atmosphere in the class.
- Teachers should avoid negative evaluation of students in classroom and comment on students' behaviors with more encouragement.

- English teachers, together with the university, should take some measures to relax students' attention on exams, such as eliminating the ranking students by their test scores.

Recommendations on the basis of the finding of this study are not exhaustive and every language teacher can offer different ways of reducing language anxiety based upon his/her personal observation of the phenomenon. This study offers a number of strategies to cope with the potentially pervasive and detrimental effect of language anxiety. It is posited that an apt utilization of these strategies by language teachers can help reduce second/foreign language anxiety and can potentially increase students' confidence to learn and particularly to speak the target language. (For further recommendations, (see Horwitz and Young, 1991 and Young, 1999). Thus, during this process, the role of language teachers is deemed highly crucial and their particular beliefs, perceptions and attitudes towards language learning and teaching process have the potential of both causing and reducing language anxiety in the learners.

#### **4. Limitations of the Study and Future Perspectives**

The study has been carried out at 20 August 1955 Skikda's university and has been restricted to only 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English language. In view of the limitations of the study, several suggestions for future research are recommended. First, future investigations need a larger sample size and different universities than that used in this study. This will provide a more detailed elaboration of anxiety on the EFL subjects. Second, in order to further expand our understanding of FL anxiety in education, it is necessary to deeply explore the effects of anxiety on the four specific language skills: reading, speaking, writing, and listening.

Although a remarkable achievement has been gained in the research on FL anxiety, limited progress has been made in developing measuring instruments of FL anxiety. Therefore, further study should focus on improving and standardizing the existing FL anxiety scales, and develop new instruments to measure different kinds of skill-specific FL anxiety. Considering the constraints like limited time period, it was considered most appropriate and beneficial to carry-out semi-structured and focus-group interviews in order to reach the core of the matter rather than administrating questionnaires. Furthermore, written questions are somewhat rigid in nature and the complete lack of personal contact prohibits verifications of views and reactions. In addition, during the learning process, the role of language teachers is deemed highly crucial and their particular beliefs, perceptions and attitudes towards language learning and teaching have the potential of both causing and reducing language anxiety in the learners. Future researchers should attempt to explore teachers' beliefs and perceptions about language learning and teaching, in addition to those of learners, as a mean to effectively address the multi-dimensional construct of language anxiety. Finally, language anxiety is a complex issue which needs to be studied further through a longitudinal and latitudinal observation. So experiment can be employed to make a long-time observation of language anxiety and explore more efficient approaches to conquer it.

## **Conclusion**

It has been posited that anxiety is one of the most negatively influential affective variables, which prevents learners from successfully learning a foreign language. It makes language learners nervous and afraid, which automatically contribute to poor academic achievement. Hence, to gain a holistic understanding of the phenomenon, a combination of different instruments has been used to explore as much facets as possible. Each instrument

has been used for a specific purpose. So, in order to attain the objectives formulated in the research proposal, collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistics by making use of mean, standard deviations, t-tests for independent samples and correlation coefficients. Results of the data were presented in tables/and figures followed by discussion. The chapter has mainly discussed four issues. First of all, analysis of results drawn from FLCAS were presented comprising language anxiety levels among the subjects, different categories of language anxiety and FLCAS items that gained subjects' agreement. Secondly, answers to research questions were given as the hypothesis was confirmed. Then, some pedagogical implications and recommendations were yielded to alleviate the pervasive effect of language anxiety on our learners. Finally, limitations of the present study such as small sample size in addition to what we expect from future research were discussed. Generally speaking, research findings in the current study confirm previous research results and the multi-dimensional nature of language anxiety construct as well.

## General Conclusion

Some people come across with many difficulties when learning a second/foreign language. It is believed that there are some emotional factors in foreign language learning which affect our learning abilities. These are mainly thought to be intelligence, motivation, attitudes and anxiety. Among these, anxiety stands out as one of the most influential factors for effective language learning and achievement.

Although the existing research has provided a valuable insight into language anxiety from both statistical and descriptive aspects, the phenomenon, because of its complicated and multi-faceted nature, requires further exploration from a variety of perspectives and approaches. This study was an attempt to apprehend the true nature of the phenomenon from a different perspective associating personal and instructional variables at the same time.

Anxiety, simply speaking, is a kind of troubled feeling in the mind. It has been defined as “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (Speilberger, 1983; p.15). It has also been called as an emotional response to “a threat to some value that the individual holds essential to his existence as a personality” (May, 1977. p.205). Usually anxiety is classified into trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety. Trait anxiety, as Scovel (1978) noted, refers to “a more permanent predisposition to be anxious” while state and situation-specific anxiety are usually experienced in relation to some particular event or situation (Brown, 2001). Language anxiety, the research target of this dissertation, belongs to the last category, which refers to the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient ( Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). To study anxiety in L2/FL domain, there have been mainly two approaches: the *anxiety transfer* and the *unique anxiety*, which are reflective of

different and even ambiguous conceptualizations of L2/FL related anxiety. Horwitz et al.(1986) draw parallels between L2/FL- related anxiety and three related performance anxieties: (1) communication apprehension, (2) test anxiety, and (3) fear of negative evaluation, and suggest a three-part model, with these components as conceptual “building blocks” of the anxiety construct they called foreign language anxiety.

With the shifting of research focus from teachers to learners in SLA, affective factors were thought to account a lot for language learning outcomes. In an educational setting, anxiety is a prominent factor that plays a decisive role in the learning process accuracy. Regarding the complex and multi-faceted nature of the construct, thereby, it can not be fully studied in isolation from other learners’ affective and situational variables. Consequently, correlates associated with learners’ variables such as self-esteem, beliefs, language proficiency, language strategies, social anxiety, motivation, personality and gender were presented in the first place, and then correlates associated with situational factors as instructors’ beliefs about teaching, classroom procedure including in-class activities, teaching methods, in addition to competitive environment and test-taking situation were introduced in the second place.

Learning a L2/FL is a complex process and the cognitive effect of anxiety is evaluated in three stages: input, processing and output. The role of anxiety at the input stage is like the role of a filter, which prevents the information from getting into the cognitive processing system. The effect of anxiety in the processing stage is that it distracts’ students’ attention and consequently influences both the speed and accuracy of learning. During the output stage, anxiety can influence the quality of speaking and writing in the target language. Although, the latter two skills impair could be easily detected since they are outcomes, other skills such as listening and reading in addition to vocabulary

acquisition and grammar deficiencies are difficult to identify even though, it has been proved that all learning skills could be severely affected by language anxiety.

The pervasive effects of language anxiety on learning and achievement have widely been acknowledged; consequently, how it is manifested in learners on the- psychological, physical and social levels in addition to the clues to detect it- are considered as paramount for teachers to find adequate techniques to reduce or at least successfully cope with anxiety. To fulfil such a goal, students must learn some strategies to alleviate their internal anxiety and teachers must create a supportive and healthy learning environment by introducing any new technological devices or approach that can facilitate teaching and alley anxiety at the same time.

To conduct the research, six instruments were used including: Background Questionnaire, The Questionnaire of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), Self-perceived Proficiency Scale, Motivation Scale, Anxiety towards In-Class Activity Questionnaire, and Anxiety towards Test Types Evaluation questionnaire. Since our investigation is about language anxiety, The FLCAS has been chosen as a tool because it is considered to be a standard instrument for testing an individual's response to the specific stimulus of language learning (Horwitz and Young, 1991). The FLCAS is a self-report measure which assesses the student's degree of anxiety as measured by negative performance expectancies and social comparisons, psycho-physiological symptoms and avoidance behaviors. The items in the FLCAS were developed from student self-reports, clinical experience and a review of related instruments and are reflective of communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. The FLCAS identifies students who experience debilitating anxiety in the language classroom so that appropriate classroom and individual interventions may be offered. Research results suggest that

foreign language anxiety can be reliably and validly measured by means of the FLCAS (Horwitz and Young, 1991).

To analyse data, multiple research methods were used such as descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, independent-samples t-test analysis, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Statistical analysis of the data has yielded the following findings: First, the results revealed that there existed different levels of FL anxiety among 2<sup>nd</sup> year English language students at 20 August 1955 Skikda's University, Algeria. Twenty-seven percent of the subjects showed high-level FL anxiety; 59% showed medium-level FL anxiety; and 14% showed low-level FL anxiety. Among the four categories of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, the most anxiety that the subjects experienced was communication apprehension followed by test anxiety. What seems to distinguish speaking is the public nature of the skill; this poses a threat to people's self-concept, self-identity and ego, which they have formed in their first language as reasonable and intelligent individuals (Horwitz et al, 1986). Every factor or situation that creates possibilities or enhances the chances of exposing their deficiencies and language imperfections in front of others like open class forum, group participation, or presenting a work orally is likely to cause language anxiety for the learners. Second, six personal sources (i.e., personality type, communicative competence, English achievement, motivation, self-perceived proficiency in English, and the amount of time spent in studying English after class) were found statistically to have significant correlation with students' FL anxiety levels, but three variables (i.e., gender, baccalaureate stream, and residential region) showed no significant correlation with FL anxiety. Third, this study indicated that classroom activities, teachers' behaviors and characteristics, and the types of tests were the main sources arousing students' FL anxiety. Speaking-oriented activities provoked most FL anxiety, whereas cooperative activities caused less FL anxiety.

What makes a foreign language classroom a highly anxiety-provoking place is its evaluative nature: evaluation by the teacher, peers, and by learners' own 'self', accompanied by high expectations and beliefs about language learning. It was found that the feelings of anxiety become more threatening when the language instructors' manner of error correction is rigid and humiliating and when they consider that it is up to the teacher to make them succeed or fail. Meanwhile, instructors' behaviors and characteristics that greatly lighten students' foreign language anxiety were the followings: being patient and friendly, having a sense of humor, understanding students, complimenting and encouraging students.

As far as tests and exams are concerned, oral test with assessors grading was viewed as the most anxiety-producing evaluation. Although, listening activities are generally considered not to be anxiety-provoking, listening comprehension test ranks second, whereas, time constraints might be one of the sources arousing students' test anxiety. Finally, several pedagogical strategies were offered to cope with language anxiety according to the findings in this study: (1) helping students build a healthy self-perceived proficiency in English, (2) using a wider range of measurements in evaluating students, (3) arousing students' motivation in English learning, (4) creating a low-anxious classroom, and (5) changing teachers' role and beliefs.

To conclude, the results obtained from the study indicated that foreign language anxiety can be considered as a prominent factor that affect the achievement levels of language learners. Language teachers should be aware of this fact and try to diminish the level of debilitating anxiety by using different techniques offered by the researchers.

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# Appendix A

## Background Questionnaire

**Skikda University**  
**Faculty of Letters and Languages**  
**Department of English Language**

### Questionnaires to be completed by Students

Dear Student,

Currently, I am conducting a postgraduate (magistère) research in TEFL under the title: 'The Impact of Foreign language Anxiety on Academic Achievement.' The objective of these questionnaires is to gather information and to examine the degree of English learning classroom Anxiety you may experience.

Please read each statement of each appendix below very carefully and indicate your true feelings in English classroom. Since the success of the study highly depends on your honesty in rating these items, you are kindly requested to respond accordingly.

Your co-operation will be greatly appreciated!

Thank you in advance

**Instruction:** Choose the appropriate information

**1. Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Male      2) Female

**2. Baccalaureate stream:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Literary Stream      2) Scientific Stream

**3. Where are you from?** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Urban area      2) Rural area

**4. How many years have you learned English?** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Four years      2) Five years      3) Six years      4) Seven years      5) More than seven years

**5. How many hours do you study English outside of class per week? \_\_\_\_\_**

- 1) None or less than 1 hour.      2) 1-2 hours.      3) 2-3 hours.      4) 3-4 hours.  
5) More than 4 hours.

**6. Your English achievement is \_\_\_\_\_**

- 1) Excellent      2) Good      3) Average      4) Unsatisfactory      5) Poor

**7. What do you think of your interpersonal communicative competence? (Your interaction with peers) \_\_\_\_\_**

- 1) Excellent      2) Good      3) Average      4) Unsatisfactory      5) Poor

**8. Your personality type is \_\_\_\_\_**

1) extrovert or lean towards extrovert. (Extraverts tend to be more naturally active, expressive, social, and interested in many things).

2) between introversive and extroversive.

3) introvert or lean towards introvert. (Introverts tend to be more reserved, private, cautious, and interested in fewer interactions, but with greater depth and focus).

## Appendix B

### Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

#### Instruction:

The following items are helpful to indicate the anxiety level students have in the English class. Select and circle the item that best describes your reaction.

N.B. To answer each item use the following ranking key.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
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2. I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
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3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on to speak in English class.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
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4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the English language.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
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5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English classes.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

6. During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the lesson.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-----------	-------	----------------

8. I am usually at ease during tests in my English class.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

10. I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over English classes.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

12. In English class, I can get so nervous when I forget things I know.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

14. I would not be nervous speaking in the foreign language with native speakers.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

16. Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

17. I often feel like not going to my English class.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

18. I feel confident when I speak in English class.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

19. I am afraid that my English teacher will correct every mistake I make.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be asked to speak in English class.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

21. The more I study for an English test, the more confused I get.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

23. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

25. English class moves so quickly that I worry about getting left behind.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

26. I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

28. When I'm on my way to English class, I feel confident and relaxed.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree

33. I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Undecided      Agree      Strongly agree



## APPENDIX C

### Motivation Scale

**Instruction:**

The following items are helpful to indicate how motivated students are to learn English language.

Select and circle the item that best describes your reaction.

N.B. To answer each item use the following ranking key

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. I won't reflect (think deeply) what I have learnt in English course.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

2. Besides learning in the class, I study English on my own.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

3. I grasp every opportunity to acquire English, no matter in or out of class.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

4. I am not enthusiastic in learning English.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

5. If there are opportunities, I will take any course related to English.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

6. Learning English makes me happy.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

7. I will not try to figure out the meaning of unknown word and grammar.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

8. Compared with other subjects, I dislike English (it was not my choice to be in this class)

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

9. I dislike English.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------



10. Learning English is fun.

Not agree    Somewhat agree    Partially agree    Mostly agree    Totally agree

11. Learning English is important to me.

Not agree    Somewhat agree    Partially agree    Mostly agree    Totally agree



## APPENDIX D

### Anxiety towards In-Class Activity Questionnaire (ATIAQ)

A. Below are a series of descriptions related to English in-class activities. Please circle the appropriate number that best matches your feelings about each statement.

Very Relaxed 1	Relaxed 2	Undecided 3	Anxious 4	Very Anxious 5
1. Read orally alone in class.				
Very Relaxed	Relaxed	Undecided	Anxious	Very Anxious
2. Write a composition in class.				
Very Relaxed	Relaxed	Undecided	Anxious	Very Anxious
3. Learn to sing English songs as a class after the instructor.				
Very Relaxed	Relaxed	Undecided	Anxious	Very Anxious
4. Do exercises in the book in class.				
Very Relaxed	Relaxed	Undecided	Anxious	Very Anxious
5. Learn English in groups of 3 or 4 in class.				
Very Relaxed	Relaxed	Undecided	Anxious	Very Anxious
6. Make an oral presentation in front of the class.				
Very Relaxed	Relaxed	Undecided	Anxious	Very Anxious
7. Compete in class games by teams.				
Very Relaxed	Relaxed	Undecided	Anxious	Very Anxious
8. Repeat individually after the instructor.				
Very Relaxed	Relaxed	Undecided	Anxious	Very Anxious
9. Practice conversation individually with instructor in class.				
Very Relaxed	Relaxed	Undecided	Anxious	Very Anxious
10. Interview each other in pairs in class.				
Very Relaxed	Relaxed	Undecided	Anxious	Very Anxious

11. Work in groups of 2 or 3 and prepare a skit.

Very Relaxed      Relaxed      Undecided      Anxious      Very Anxious

12. Read silently in class.

Very Relaxed      Relaxed      Undecided      Anxious      Very Anxious

13. Take dictation test on vocabulary or text.

Very Relaxed      Relaxed      Undecided      Anxious      Very Anxious

14. Watch the movies and then turn in your project about the movies.

Very Relaxed      Relaxed      Undecided      Anxious      Very Anxious

15. Repeat as a class after the instructor.

Very Relaxed      Relaxed      Undecided      Anxious      Very Anxious

16. Write your work on the board.

Very Relaxed      Relaxed      Undecided      Anxious      Very Anxious

17. Translate English into Arabic/ French in class.

Very Relaxed      Relaxed      Undecided      Anxious      Very Anxious

18. Be called on to give an answer.

Very Relaxed      Relaxed      Undecided      Anxious      Very Anxious

19. Introduce yourself in English in front of the class.

Very Relaxed      Relaxed      Undecided      Anxious      Very Anxious

20. Translate Arabic/ French into English in class.

Very Relaxed      Relaxed      Undecided      Anxious      Very Anxious

- B. Below are a series of descriptions related to your English instructors' behaviors and characteristics. Choose the appropriate descriptions to answer questions 1 and 2. Use the Letter (I) for question 1 and the letter (D) for question 2 to the left of each description to identify your choice. You can choose as many descriptions for each question as you like.

### Questions

- 1) What behaviours and characteristics does your instructor have which tend to increase your anxiety in English language class? (I)
- 2) What behaviours and characteristics does your instructor have which tend to reduce your anxiety in English language class? (D)

### Descriptions Related to Your English Instructors' Behaviors and Characteristics

1. Instructor compliments students.
2. Students can volunteer answers and are not called on to provide responses.
3. Instructor corrects your errors in front of the class.
4. Instructor tries to fail us by using difficult tests.
5. Instructor makes students feel comfortable.
6. Instructor says that he is not going to fail the students.
7. Instructor is patient.
8. Instructor does not provide any make up test when you fail in the test.
9. Instructor says that he will fail you if you do not study hard.
10. Instructor's manner of correction is not harsh.
11. Instructor is rigid and never smiles in class.
12. Instructor has a good sense of humor.
13. Instructor scolds (to speak angrily to someone because he has done something wrong) students.
14. Instructor is very friendly.

15. Instructor has attitude that mistakes are no big deal when learning English.
16. Instructor's manner is relaxed.
17. Instructor often gives students a quiz without notice.
18. Instructor does not make you feel stupid when you make a mistake.
19. Instructor says that you will have no future if you don't have good English.
20. Instructor encourages students to speak English.
21. Instructor has attitude that mistakes are made by every one when learning English.
22. Instructor understands students.



## APPENDIX E

### Self-perceived Proficiency Scale

Please circle the appropriate number that best matches your feelings about each statement.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. I can converse fluently in English.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

2. I think my English proficiency is low.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

3. I can understand the content of English books.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

4. I can understand the dialogue in movies or TV programs.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

5. I can write English letters or E-mails.

Not agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree
-----------	----------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

## APPENDIX F

### Anxiety towards Test Types Evaluation

Please circle the appropriate item that best matches your feelings about each statement.

Not anxious	A little anxious	Anxious	Very anxious
1	2	3	4

1. Listening comprehension.

Not anxious	A little anxious	Anxious	Very anxious
-------------	------------------	---------	--------------

2. Reading comprehension test (time limited).

Not anxious	A little anxious	Anxious	Very anxious
-------------	------------------	---------	--------------

3. Reading comprehension test (no time limited).

Not anxious	A little anxious	Anxious	Very anxious
-------------	------------------	---------	--------------

4. Writing test (time limited).

Not anxious	A little anxious	Anxious	Very anxious
-------------	------------------	---------	--------------

5. Writing test (no time limited).

Not anxious	A little anxious	Anxious	Very anxious
-------------	------------------	---------	--------------

6. Oral test (in which the instructor scores).

Not anxious	A little anxious	Anxious	Very anxious
-------------	------------------	---------	--------------

7. Oral test (by tape recorder or computer/ Language lab).

Not anxious	A little anxious	Anxious	Very anxious
-------------	------------------	---------	--------------

8. Grammar test.

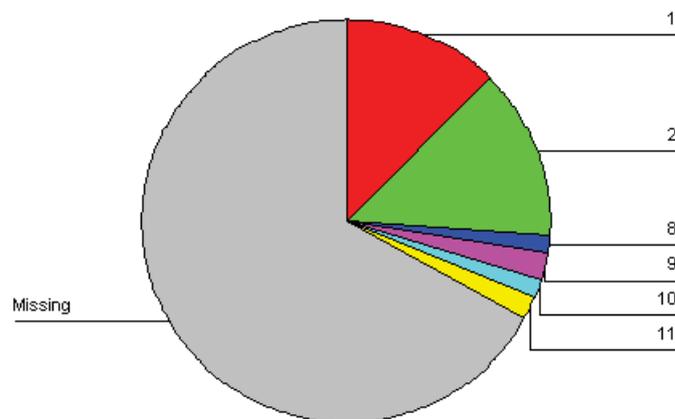
Not anxious	A little anxious	Anxious	Very anxious
-------------	------------------	---------	--------------

## Appendix G

### Strategies used by learners to cope with language anxiety

Hauck and Hurd (2005) offered a list of eleven strategies to deal with language anxiety to their research respondents (n=48). They were asked to tick strategies that applied to them and then select the most important one. The strategies were:

1. Use positive self-talk (e.g. I can do it; it doesn't matter if I make mistakes; others make mistakes).
2. Actively encourage myself to take risks in language learning, such as guessing meanings or trying to speak, even though I might make some mistakes.
3. Imagine that when I am speaking in front of others, it is just a friendly informal chat.
4. Tell myself when I speak that it won't take long.
5. Give myself a reward or treat when I do well.
6. Be aware of physical signs of stress that might affect my language learning.
7. Write down my feelings in a day or notebook.
8. Share my worries with other students.
9. Let my tutor know that I am anxious.
10. Use relaxation techniques e.g. deep breathing, consciously speaking more slowly, etc.
11. Other.



**Figure 9:** Most important strategies. Source: Hauck and Hurd (2005). Retrieved October 30, 2010. From: [http://www.eurodl.org/materials/contrib/2005/Mirjam\\_Hauck.htm](http://www.eurodl.org/materials/contrib/2005/Mirjam_Hauck.htm)

## Résumé

La présente dissertation, au total quatre chapitres, vise à investiguer les facteurs affectifs et pédagogiques affectant l'apprentissage de l'anglais comme langue étrangère avec une mise d'accent sur l'anxiété linguistique parmi les étudiants de la deuxième année anglais de l'université 20 Août 1955 de Skikda, Algérie. Les sources, impacts et façons pour remédier à l'anxiété linguistique, si tant est qu'elle est prouvée problème, sont les buts généraux de l'étude. Cette recherche tente d'étudier le côté affectif ainsi que les conditions d'apprentissage dans cette catégorie d'apprenants d'anglais comme langue étrangère. Dans cette perspective, les différents facteurs affectifs qui ont montré, à travers la recherche et l'investigation, un poids et impact considérables sur l'apprenant d'anglais, son processus d'apprentissage, les compétences langagières ainsi que sa performance et son progrès en classe, sont décrits.

Ce travail tente également d'explorer l'attitude et le caractère de l'enseignant, l'atmosphère de l'apprentissage ainsi que les activités pédagogiques et les types d'examens qui sont susceptibles d'une façon ou d'une autre d'augmenter ou d'atténuer l'anxiété expérimentée par l'apprenant.

Ce travail a été mené à l'aide d'une batterie de six questionnaires qui ont été adressés à cinquante et un (51) étudiants de la deuxième année d'anglais de l'université 20 Août à Skikda.

Les résultats de cette étude montrent que l'appréhension de la communication est la catégorie d'anxiété dont souffrent la majorité d'apprenants en premier lieu suivi par l'anxiété des examens. Statistiquement parlant, les facteurs affectifs tel que - l'autoévaluation des compétences, la motivation, la réalisation ou la réussite scolaire, la compétence communicative, le temps passé à étudier l'anglais hors les heures de classe par semaine et le genre de personnalité – ont prouvé avoir une corrélation significative avec les niveaux d'anxiété expérimentés par les apprenants d'anglais langue étrangère, d'une part.. D'autre part, l'environnement de l'apprentissage tel que l'attitude et le comportement de l'enseignant, les activités pédagogiques administrées en classe ainsi que les types d'examens sont cruciaux pour créer un apprenant stressé ou détendu. Il s'est avéré qu'un enseignant rigide et sévère, les activités et examens oraux exposant l'apprenant directement à ses camarades sont les conditions les plus favorables de subir l'anxiété langagière dans ses plus hauts niveaux débilissants. Pour réduire la tension due à ce phénomène, plusieurs dispositifs sont proposés entre autres : la création d'une atmosphère saine pour l'apprentissage, la redéfinition du rôle de l'enseignant en classe, l'activation du rôle de l'apprenant, et la révision des méthodes d'évaluation.

## ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث بفصوله الأربعة إلى دراسة التوتر اللغوي و علاقته بالعوامل الانفعالية و البيداغوجية المؤثرة في تعليم الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لدى طلبة السنة الثانية لغة إنجليزية بجامعة 20 أوت 1955 سكيكدة. و من أجل تحقيق هدفنا، قمنا بوصف مختلف العوامل الانفعالية التي أثبتت البحوث السابقة أن لها تأثيرا معتبرا على مسار تعلم اللغة لدى المتعلم، طريقة استيعابه، المهارات اللغوية و كذا تطور أدائه بالقسم.

من خلال هذا العمل أيضا نسلط الضوء على مواصفات و تصرفات الأستاذ داخل القسم، الجو العام الذي تتم فيه عملية التعليم، التمارين و الأنشطة البيداغوجية و كذا نوعية الامتحانات التي يمكن لها بطريقة أو بأخرى أن تزيد أو تخفض من مستوى التوتر اللغوي لدى المتعلم.

أنجز هذا العمل من خلال ست استمارات أسئلة وجهت إلى واحد و خمسين طالبا بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية.

تظهر نتائج هذا البحث أن الخوف من التواصل و الحديث المباشر هي أحد فروع التوتر التي يعاني منها الطلبة بشكل واضح متبوعا بالخوف من الامتحانات.

كما أن تقصي العوامل الفردية التالية: التقييم الذاتي لمستوى المهارة اللغوية، التحفيز، التفوق الدراسي، مهارة التواصل، الوقت الذي يقضيه المتعلم في دراسة اللغة خارج القسم أسبوعيا وكذا نوعية الشخصية – أثبتت أن لها علاقة وطيدة مع مستويات التوتر اللغوي التي يتعرض لها الطالب هذا من جهة، و من جهة ثانية فإن العوامل البيداغوجية المتمثلة في الجو العام الذي تتم فيه عملية التعليم، مميزات الأستاذ، نوعية الأنشطة و الامتحانات المطبقة من أهم الأسباب لخلق متعلم متوتر أو منبسط.

كما يعتبر الأستاذ غير المتفهم و القاسي إضافة إلى التمارين و الامتحانات الشفهية من أهم الأسباب التي تؤدي إلى أعلى مستويات التوتر. للتحكم في هذه الظاهرة السلبية أو التقليل من تبعاتها يجب خلق جو ممتع للتعلم ، إعادة تحديد مفهوم دور الأستاذ، تفعيل دور المتعلم بالإضافة إلى مراجعة أساليب التقييم و الامتحان.