

Investigating the Factors that Cause Language Anxiety in Iraqi EFL Learners

Prof. Ala' Hssein Oda, Ph.D.

Ali Hasan Khammat

M.A. Student

Abstract

Anxiety is an important affective variable in language learning and teaching which must not be overlooked. It should be investigated since it may interfere negatively or positively with the learning process at different levels affecting the learners' performance and achievements. With feelings of discomfort and insecurity, learners of English as a foreign language find it difficult to share their opinions and participate in class discussions.

The current study is designed to investigate the relationship between foreign language anxiety and students' achievement. For this purpose 59 fourth-year students at College of Education, University of Basrah, Iraq, are selected. To investigate the factors that cause the students' classroom anxiety, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) is administered to measure the students' foreign language classroom anxiety level. The study ends up with conclusions and references.

Introduction

From the fields of anthropology, psychology, and education, numerous perspectives on anxiety in general have been put forward. In the majority of the cases, they are concerned with the notion of fear and threat to the person's safety or psychological wellbeing in his/her interactions with the environment. Twenge (2000:1008), referring to Darwin's (1872) theory of evolution, affirms that "*emotions are adaptive ...they serve specific purposes for the survival of the individual. Anxiety and fear primarily serve to warn of potential danger and trigger physiological and psychological reactions*".

In the beginning of the twentieth century, Freud (1920: 343) declares that anxiety is similar to '*fear*' or '*fright*':

‘I avoid entering upon the discussion as to whether our language means the same or distinct things by the word anxiety, fear or fright. I think anxiety is used in connection with a condition regardless of any objective, while fear is essentially directed toward an object.’

As part of everyday experience, both anxiety and fear are normal emotions. The distinction between anxiety and fear is quantitative not qualitative depending on the cause. If the cause is clear, the emotion induced is categorized "*fear*"; if the cause is clouded, the emotion experienced is termed "anxiety" (Lader, 1984:5).

Classifications of Anxiety

In Terms of Effects

In light of the effects, anxiety can be categorized into two kinds; facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety (Alpert & Haber, 1960:61). The former results in experiencing a moderate anxiety which can help and facilitate the learner's performance, and it can serve as a motivator leading to better performance. The latter is when there is severe anxiety which can be debilitating and significantly hinders learners' performance through motivating them to assume an avoidance attitude and tend to escape from the learning task (Scovel, 1978:139). In other words, facilitating anxiety makes learners do positive things to improve the situation while debilitating anxiety causes fear which leads to a negative impact.

These two types are referred to as helpful anxiety and harmful anxiety (Oxford, 1999:58). For example, a student can become slightly anxious before a major exam; the slight anxiety felt can motivate the student to study for the exam and do better because of the time spent preparing for it. In contrast, high levels of anxiety may interfere with the student's ability to concentrate, process information, or remember information from long term memory. Under these circumstances, the student is less likely to do his or her best on the exam. In other words, facilitating anxiety makes people do positive things to improve the situation while debilitating anxiety causes fear which leads to a negative impact (Scovel, 1978:139). Below the above mentioned types will be discussed further.

Facilitating Anxiety

The idea that anxiety works as a positive force in learning is widely and deeply held in the educational field. This positive force is referred to as

'facilitating anxiety'. *'Facilitating'* is primarily defined as making something easier and is considered to be an asset to performance (Williams, 2008:1).

The facilitating side of anxiety encourages people to move on and people may not realise the presence of anxiety because they do not feel any tension (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1989: 252). Brown (2000:151) believes that foreign language anxiety could facilitate performance in some ways, such as keeping students alert. Bailey, (as cited in Brown 2000: 152) shows that facilitating anxiety is one of the keys to success, and closely related to competitiveness.

Debilitating Anxiety

Debilitating anxiety has a negative impact on student's motivation and his/her preparation before and during exams, like waiting until the last minute to revise and prepare for a big test or exam, feeling more anxious and unprepared or arriving at a test late and having to answer all of the questions in time (Alpert and Haber, 1960:207).

Debilitating anxiety is harmful, related to dropping motivation, negative attitudes and beliefs, and language performance difficulties (Oxford, 1999: 60). Debilitating anxiety occurs when a student participates in oral reports, role-playing and other types of interactive activities. Moreover, frustrating experiences in listening, speaking, reading and writing also create harmful anxiety because the learning experiences are frequently incomprehensible or negative in nature.

In Terms of Foreign-language-learning Perspective

A special kind of anxiety related to foreign language classes is the foreign language anxiety. The term *'foreign language anxiety'* was coined by Horwitz and Cope in 1986 to account for a specific anxiety that affects

the learning of foreign language. Foreign language anxiety is generally considered as a type of situational or contextual anxiety that is specifically associated with foreign language situations (Horwitz, 2001:114).

Foreign language anxiety is a situation-specific form of anxiety that does not appear to bear a strong relation to other forms of anxiety; it is related to the language-learning context. Thus when anxiety is limited to the language learning situation, it falls into the category of specific language reactions (Horwitz, et al, 1986:125).

Foreign Language Anxiety

Horwitz, et al (1986:127) are the first to approach foreign language anxiety as a separate phenomenon specific to foreign language learning experience and they outlined its theoretical framework. They argue that although general anxiety plays an important role in the development of foreign language anxiety, this type of anxiety is different from all kinds of anxiety because it is a "*distinct complex of self perceptions, feelings and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process.*" Gardner and MacIntyre (1993:159) describe the concept as apprehension experienced when a specific situation requires the use of a foreign language in which the individual is not fully proficient. They define it as '*the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with language contexts, including speaking, listening and learning*' (MacIntyre and Gardner 1994: 284). Ellis (1994:480) gives such a definition that foreign language anxiety is a type of situation-specific anxiety associated with attempts to learn a foreign language and communicate in it.

On the same track, Oxford (1999:62) states that "*language anxiety starts as transitory episodes of fear in a situation of performing in the*

language, it diminishes over time, . . . but if it does not decrease, it becomes a trait and will affect language learning pervasively.”

Foreign language anxiety is distinct from state anxiety, which occurs within specific, temporary situations and fades away when the threat (or situation) disappears (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991a:90-91). It is also distinct from trait anxiety, which is a permanent, individual difference. People with high levels of trait anxiety have a general tendency to become anxious in any situation (Scovel, 1978:132). Thus according to (Horwitz et al. 1986:125), foreign language anxiety is distinct from these types of anxiety and is classified as situation-specific anxiety. Hence, it belongs to a situation-specific anxiety; it is the fear or apprehension arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process; it is a complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning.

Characteristics of Foreign Language Anxiety

Foreign language anxiety has been viewed as a particularly negative psychological factor in the language learning process by many researchers and academics who have studied its impact on learners. In some cases, language anxiety has actually been cited as *“possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process.”* It is referred to as a wall-like barrier. On the other hand, if learners are relaxed and motivated, then this wall-like barrier will be lowered and the language input surrounding learners will more likely be attended to and acquired (Arnold and Brown, 1999:8).

In the case of language anxiety, students in a language class may have negative thoughts that do not intrude on their work in other courses. Anxious students engage in rumination over poor performance that limits their ability to process information in foreign language situations. Thus, the

students can be aware that only in language class do they experience difficulty. This leads to the differentiation of language anxiety from other forms of anxiety and to the isolation of its effects in the foreign language context (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991b:297).

Horwitz, et al., (1986:127) argue that foreign language anxiety can be related to three different forms of anxieties as components of foreign language anxiety; communication apprehension (the fear of communicating with other people), test anxiety (fear of exams, quizzes, and other assignments used to evaluate the students' performance), and fear of negative evaluation (the worry about how others view the learner).

Forms of Foreign Language Anxiety

Communication Apprehension

Communication apprehension is originally defined by McCroskey (1977:78) as *"an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons."* It is a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people. These feelings of shyness vary greatly from individual to individual, and from situation to situation. Communication apprehension occurs in cases where learners lack mature communication skills although they have mature ideas and thoughts. It refers to the fear of getting into real communication with others (Aydin, 2008:423).

In a foreign language classroom, language learners' oral tasks include not only learning a foreign language but also performing the language. Therefore, people who have trouble speaking in groups are more likely to experience even higher communication apprehension in a foreign language class *"where they have little control of the communication and their performance is constantly monitored"* (Horwitz, et al., 1986:127).

The typical participant structures of a foreign language learning class usually require learners to participate in class discussions, to debate, to speak voluntarily and to contribute to lessons through the asking and answering of questions. Horwitz, et al., (1986:126) submit the construct of communication apprehension to their conceptualization of foreign language anxiety. They think that interpersonal interactions are the major emphasis in the English class.

Test Anxiety

Test anxiety is a type of performance anxiety deriving from a fear of failure and evaluative situations. Although it overlaps with other constructs of foreign language anxiety, test anxiety is relevant to academic context where performance evaluation is frequent (Chan and Wu, 2004:293). Test anxiety is an apprehension towards academic evaluation. It could be defined as "*a fear of failing in tests and an unpleasant experience held either consciously or unconsciously by learners in many situations*" (Aydin, 2008:423). This type of anxiety concerns apprehension towards academic evaluation which is based on a fear of failure (Horwitz and Young, 1991:13). Test anxiety, as explained by Horwitz, et al. (1986:127) is quite pervasive in language classrooms because of its continuous performance evaluative nature. It is also important to note that oral testing has the potential to provoke both test and oral communication anxiety simultaneously in susceptible students.

Test anxiety usually occurs when students who have performed poorly in the past, develop negative and irrelevant thoughts during test-taking situations. As a consequence, these students are likely to become distracted during class and this distraction inhibits their performance in foreign language classrooms (Sarason, 1984:930). According to Horwitz et al. (1986:128), test-anxious students often put unrealistic demands on

themselves and feel that anything less than a perfect test performance is a failure.

Fear of Negative Evaluation

Fear of negative evaluation is observed when foreign language learners feel incapable of making the proper social impression and it is an apprehension towards evaluations by others and avoidance of evaluative situations (Aydin,2008:423). Although it is similar to test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation is broader in scope because it is not restricted to test-taking situations. In addition to situations of tests, it may take place in any social, evaluative situation such as interviewing for a job or speaking in foreign language class. Usually, people who are highly concerned about the impressions others are forming of them, tend to behave in ways that minimize the possibility of negative evaluations (Chan and Wu, 2004:294).

In foreign language classrooms, students with a fear of negative evaluation tend to *"sit passively in the classroom, withdrawing from classroom activities that could otherwise enhance their improvement of the language skills"* or even *"cutting class to avoid anxiety situations"* (Aida, 1994:157). 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, 2004:294).

Procedure and Method

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which is devised by Horwitz et al (1986) and considered by several researchers as a 'valid' and 'credible' measuring instrument, is used as the data collection instrument in the current study. Horwitz, via email sent to the present

researcher on Wednesday, November 23, 2011, has permitted the researcher to use this scale. The FLCAS is given to the subjects during one of their regular lessons. To make sure they understand what is being asked they are given a full lesson period (45 minutes) to answer the scale.

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

Starting in the mid 1980's, Horwitz and her colleagues have taken the lead in foreign language anxiety research. Horwitz et al. (1986) first attribute early inconclusive results to the lack of an adequate instrument to quantify foreign language anxiety. Then, based on performance anxiety theories and clinical experiences with foreign language learners, they identify three components of foreign language anxiety and developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS).

The FLCAS is specifically chosen as an instrument to measure students' language anxiety levels in the current study because the FLCAS is the very first anxiety measure designed to capture specific anxiety reactions in foreign language context and is the most widely known and accepted research instrument in the field of foreign language anxiety research. In addition, it is chosen because of its effectiveness in identifying respondents' perception of foreign language anxiety.

According to Horwitz (1986: 129), pilot testing of the scale at the University of Texas in Austin demonstrates its reliability and validity. In terms of internal reliability, the FLCAS achieves internal reliability, achieving an alpha coefficient of .93 with all items producing significant corrected item-total scale correlations. Test- retest reliability over eight weeks yields an $r = .83$ ($p < .001$). In one sample of 108 Spanish learners, scores range from 45 to 147 ($M = 94.5$, $Mdn = 95.0$, $SD = 21.4$). Internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, is .93, and test-retest reliability over 8 weeks is $r = .83$, $p = .001$, $n = .78$. The FLCAS with

33 items uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1 point) to strongly agree (5 points). According to Horwitz (1986:128), foreign language anxiety is "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" and it is comprised of three performance related anxieties; communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Each is represented by certain items within the FLCAS; Communication apprehension (items 1, 4, 9, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30, 32), Test anxiety (items 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28), and Fear of negative evaluation (items 2, 7, 13, 19, 23, 31, 33). The total scale scores range from 33 to 165. The higher the score, the higher the level of foreign language anxiety. Items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32 are key-reversed, i.e., negatively worded is just to prevent elaborate guessing on the part of the subjects.

The Subjects

The subjects of the study were the fourth year students at Department of English, College of Education, University of Basrah, Basrah, Iraq. The total number of subjects was 59. They all participate in taking FLCAS during the first term of the academic year 2011-2012. They were instructed that the results of the scale would be used for research purposes only.

Analysis and Discussions of Results

The data analysis is organized and prepared by gathering the scale scores for all subjects as Table (1) demonstrates:

Table (1): Total Sum and Percentage of Responses to the FLCAS

Item	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
1	7	11.86	13	22.03	23	38.98	15	25.42	1	1.69
2	2	3.39	16	27.12	11	18.64	14	23.72	16	27.11
3	13	22.03	12	20.34	12	20.34	16	27.11	6	10.16
4	21	35.59	19	32.2	11	18.64	8	13.55	0	0
5	11	18.64	18	30.51	17	28.81	11	18.64	2	3.38
6	3	5.085	13	22.03	20	33.9	10	16.94	13	22.03
7	9	15.25	15	25.42	16	27.12	13	22.03	6	10.16
8	1	1.695	11	18.64	14	23.73	22	37.28	11	18.64
9	14	23.73	15	25.42	12	20.34	13	22.03	5	8.47
10	25	42.37	24	40.68	5	8.475	5	8.47	0	0
11	9	15.25	26	44.07	18	30.51	6	10.16	0	0
12	15	25.42	22	37.29	11	18.64	10	16.94	1	1.69
13	9	15.25	17	28.81	11	18.64	14	23.72	8	13.55
14	6	10.17	29	49.15	8	13.56	10	16.94	6	10.16
15	13	22.03	32	54.24	12	20.34	0	0	2	3.38
16	5	8.475	26	44.07	10	16.95	13	22.03	5	8.47
17	2	3.39	6	10.17	14	23.73	19	32.20	18	30.50
18	8	13.56	14	23.73	21	35.59	14	23.72	2	3.38
19	8	13.56	31	52.54	7	11.86	8	13.55	5	8.47
20	10	16.95	19	32.2	13	22.03	13	22.03	4	6.77
21	3	5.085	22	37.29	9	15.25	13	22.03	12	20.33
22	6	10.17	14	23.73	21	35.59	15	25.42	3	5.08
23	7	11.86	17	28.81	16	27.12	15	25.42	4	6.77
24	4	6.78	22	37.29	15	25.42	12	20.33	6	10.16
25	6	10.17	22	37.29	12	20.34	15	25.42	4	6.77
26	4	6.78	11	18.64	19	32.2	13	22.03	12	20.33
27	6	10.17	14	23.73	13	22.03	19	32.20	7	11.86
28	8	13.56	15	25.42	18	30.51	15	25.42	3	5.08
29	19	32.2	23	38.98	5	8.475	11	18.64	1	1.69
30	4	6.78	25	42.37	19	32.2	11	18.64	0	0
31	6	10.17	13	22.03	4	6.78	23	38.98	13	22.03
32	6	10.17	21	35.59	21	35.59	7	11.86	4	6.77
33	19	32.2	32	54.24	5	8.475	2	3.38	1	1.69

As shown in Table (1), the responses ‘Strongly Agree’ (SA), ‘Agree’ (A), ‘Neutral’ (N), ‘Disagree’ (D) and ‘Strongly Disagree’ (SD) are calculated to gain a measure of agreement, disagreement, and neutrality with the percentages that refer to the number of subjects who agree, disagree or neutral with the item.

For the purpose of this analysis, the combinational percentages of participants who agree (A) and strongly agree (SA) with the item are combined to create an overall score of agreement with the item; and the combinational percentages of participants who disagree (D) and strongly

disagree (SD) are similarly calculated to gain a measure of disagreement, whereas the responses 'Neutral' (N) are counted as indecisive data. Table (2) shows the percentages of SA and A, N, and D and SD:

Table (2): Percentages of SA and A, N, and D and SD

NO.	Item	SA+A	N	D+SD
		%	%	%
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	33.90	38.98	27.12
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class	30.51	18.64	50.85
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.	42.37	20.34	37.29
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	67.80	18.64	13.56
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.	49.15	28.81	22.03
6	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	27.12	33.90	38.98
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	40.68	27.12	32.20
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.	20.34	23.73	55.93
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	49.15	20.34	30.51
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	83.05	8.47	8.47
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.	59.32	30.51	10.17
12	In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	62.71	18.64	18.64
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	44.07	18.64	37.29
14	I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	59.32	13.56	27.12
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	76.27	20.34	3.39
16	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	52.54	16.95	30.51
17	I often feel like not going to my language class.	13.56	23.73	62.71
18	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.	37.29	35.59	27.12
19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	66.10	11.86	22.03
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	49.15	22.03	28.81
21	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	42.37	15.25	42.37
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.	33.90	35.59	30.51
23	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	40.68	27.12	32.20
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	44.07	25.42	30.51
25	Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	47.46	20.34	32.20
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	25.42	32.20	42.37
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	33.90	22.03	44.07
28	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	38.98	30.51	30.51
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	71.19	8.47	20.34
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	49.15	32.20	18.64
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	32.20	6.78	61.02
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.	45.76	35.59	18.64
33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	86.44	8.47	5.08

Anxiety Provoking Factors

The data analysis is done quantitatively; the data are analysed by performing descriptive statistics in order to understand the actual sources of foreign language anxiety and to find out which of the three anxieties, communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety, respectively, is the most anxiety provoking aspect among learners. In a language classroom, the three anxieties all may occur at the same time.

Communication Apprehension

Table (3) shows the subjects' responses for Communication Apprehension:

Table (3): Communication Apprehension

Item No.	Type	Percentages		
		SA+A	N	D+SD
		%	%	%
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	33.90	38.98	27.12
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	67.80	18.64	13.56
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	49.15	20.34	30.51
14	I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	59.32	13.56	27.12
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	76.27	20.34	3.39
18	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.	37.29	35.59	27.12
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	44.07	25.42	30.51
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	33.90	22.03	44.07
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	71.19	8.47	20.34
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	49.15	32.20	18.64
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.	45.76	35.59	18.64

Whereas 76.27% of subjects get upset when they do not understand what the teacher is correcting, item 15, 71.19% of them get nervous when they cannot comprehend everything that the teacher says, item 29, and 67.80% of the subjects feel frightened when they do not understand what the teacher says in English item 4. 49.15% of the subjects feel unable to do with the task of learning language, as item 30 shows that subjects feel overwhelmed by the number of rules to learn to speak the English language. Subjects' lack of self-confidence when speaking the foreign language is revealed by the fact that 33.90% of the subjects have agreed with item 1, which is that they do not feel sure of themselves when they speak in English. Item 9 indicates that comprehension reactions are frequent as those corresponding to communication anxiety, since a perceived lack of competence can also lead subjects to display anxiety in the classroom in that 49.15% of the subjects claim that they start to panic if they are called upon to speak without having prepared in advance, item 9. 44.07% of the subjects feel self-conscious when speaking in front of their classmates, item 24. As far as the manifestation of speaking anxiety is concerned, item 27 reveals that only 33.90% of the subjects get nervous and confused when they speak in the foreign language classroom. 59.32% of subjects would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers, item 14, whereas only 37.29% feel confident when they speak in foreign language class, item 18. Item 32, subjects would feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language, scores 45.76%.

Chan and Wu (2004:304) find out that most students are particularly anxious when they have to speak a foreign language in front of their class. As to listening, it is a problem for language learners, too. Because of lack of control of oral communication, communication apprehension emerges (Macintyre and Gardner, 1991b:105)

The results of Communication Apprehension show that the highest three percentages are for items 15, 29, and 4; 76.27%, 71.19%, and 67.80% respectively. They are all related to the teacher. Communication Apprehension felt towards teachers is a factor provoking anxiety for subjects. In Iraq, normally teachers dominate in the classrooms and students may feel oppressed in the presence of the teacher. The controlled and dominated environment of the English classroom discourages students from participating in classroom activities which further affects their learning process and performance.

Oxford (1999:66) shows that some of the important instructor-learner interaction issues which are related to language anxiety are harsh error correction, ridicule and the uncomfortable handling of mistakes in front of class. Teacher-student learning style conflict is related to lower grade for students and to contribute to stress in the classroom. Young (1991:428) also points out that what really matters is "not necessarily error correction but the manner of error correction; when, how often, and most importantly, how errors are corrected." The teachers have both the power and the responsibility to counter the development of anxiety by building self-confidence through positive feedback and promoting self-perception of developing proficiency.

Foreign language anxiety could be increased when teachers believe that their role is to correct students when they make errors, when they do not promote group work, when they believe that the teacher should be doing most of the talking, or when they believe that their role is not that of a facilitator (Young, 1991:428). Horwitz et al. (1986:131) report that anxiety is increased when teachers correct student errors in a nonsupportive manner. Although students can recognize the importance of being corrected, they feel anxious over responding incorrectly, being incorrect in front of their peers, or looking or sounding inept.

Fear of Negative Evaluation

In the same way subjects' responses to the second components of foreign language classroom anxiety are calculated. Table (4) demonstrates the subjects' responses for Fear of Negative Evaluation:

Table (4) Fear of Negative Evaluation

Item No.	Type	Percentages		
	Fear of Negative Evaluation	SA+A	N	D+SD
		%	%	%
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class	30.51	18.64	50.85
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	40.68	27.12	32.20
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	44.07	18.64	37.29
19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	66.10	11.86	22.03
23	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	40.68	27.12	32.20
31	I am afraid that the other students would laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	32.20	6.78	61.02
33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	86.44	8.47	5.08

From the results presented in Table (4), it is found that item 33, not feeling prepared, makes a greater number of subjects anxious, 86.44%. Furthermore, 66.10% of subjects are afraid that the teacher is ready to correct every mistake they make, item 19. 44.07% of subjects also show their reticence to volunteer answers in the language class, item 13. 40.68% of the subjects show that they are not only worried about others' evaluation

but they also anticipate that their classmates would evaluate them negatively, item 7. Comparing themselves with the other subjects is also a source of fear of negative evaluation; 40.68 of the subjects have had a permanent feeling that the other subjects speak the foreign language better than they do item 23. 32.20% of the subjects agree with item 31. Concerning item 2, subjects' fear of making mistakes is an important factor since there are 30.15% of the subjects show that they haven't been worried about making mistakes in the language class, whereas 50.85% of them show that they are worry about making mistakes.

The results of Fear of Negative Evaluation demonstrate that the highest three percentages are for items 33, 19, and 13; 86.44%, 66.10%, and 44.07% respectively. For item 33, the subjects get nervous when the teacher asks questions without allowing for preparation time. Hence, the learners have suffered from fear of negative evaluation for they have had the fear of negative judgments by leaving unfavourable impressions on others, particularly the teacher. They experience the fear of shortcomings noted by others and the fear of disapproval by others.

Besides, the fear of making mistakes, item 19, is another source causing fear of negative evaluation. This indicates that the subjects fear from the teacher's correction for each mistake, 66.10%, is higher than the fear from the evaluation of the classmates because only 32.20 of subjects are afraid that the other subjects would laugh at them when they speak the foreign language, item 31, as they are all advanced learners and adults, understanding and helping each other. They are also equally having the desire of succeeding and fulfilling their goals. In connection with the self-confidence factor, item 13, students are afraid to volunteer answers in the language class. Self-confidence refers to how the learners think about themselves; the things they like or dislike and how confident they feel about themselves. It depends on how valuable they view themselves. This

view directly relates to the amount of praise or disappointment others have expressed. The lack of confidence makes a learner uncomfortable in new situations or activities. The talents the learners possess, they frequently belittle and they feel that others do not value them. Low self-esteem can result in poor academic achievement. When a learner lacks confidence, he lacks motivation to try his best and to learn new things. The learner will find himself in a circular loop, as low self-confidence leads to a lack of motivation and poor academic performance, while poor academic performance and low grades result in lowered self-esteem.

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b:105) propose that fear of negative evaluation is closely related to communication apprehension. Students may experience fear from being negatively evaluated by their classmates or the teacher, fear from having other students laugh or even being aware of their mistakes during the communication, which often produces large amounts of apprehension. 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. Fear of Negative Evaluation is avoidance of evaluative situations and expectation that others will evaluate them negatively. In this regard, the subject's display the fear of being evaluated by others, as it is also realized that their fear of being evaluated by the peers has not been as big as their fear of being evaluated by their teacher.

Test Anxiety

Table (5) shows the subjects' responses for Test Anxiety:

Table (5) Test Anxiety

Item No.	Type	Percentages		
	Test Anxiety	SA+A	N	D+SD
		%	%	%
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.	42.37	20.34	37.29
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.	49.15	28.81	22.03
6	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	27.12	33.90	38.98
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.	20.34	23.73	55.93
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	83.05	8.47	8.47
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.	59.32	30.51	10.17
12	In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	62.71	18.64	18.64
16	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	52.54	16.95	30.51
17	I often feel like not going to my language class.	13.56	23.73	62.71
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	49.15	22.03	28.81
21	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	42.37	15.25	42.37
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.	33.90	35.59	30.51
25	Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	47.46	20.34	32.20
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	25.42	32.20	42.37
28	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	38.98	30.51	30.51

As shown in Table (5), a great number of subjects accounted for 83.05% are worried about the consequences of failing the class, item 10. 62.71% of the subjects have responded that in class they can get so nervous that they forget things they know, item 12. 59.32% of subjects state that they don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language

classes, item 11. It is figured out that 52.54% of the subjects actually respond that they have worried about the foreign language class even when they are well prepared for it, item 16. This confirms that this is because those subjects are test-anxious either because of negative expectation of test results with their oral subject teacher, or because of unpleasant test experience in the past. Item 5, 'It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes', scores 49.15%. Feeling one's heart pounding when being called on in class is a frequent sensation among subjects, item 20 scores 49.15%. 47.46% of the subjects agree with the item that "English classes move so quickly I worry about getting behind, item 25. 42.37% of subjects have state that they tremble when they know that they are going to be called on in class, item 3. 42.37% of subjects state that the more they study for a language test, the more confused they get, item 21. 38.98% of the subjects have denied feeling sure and relaxed when they are going to the class, item 28. Besides, 33.90 % of the subjects reveal that they have felt pressure to prepare very well for the foreign language class, item 22.

Concerning the anxiety experiences lived inside the classroom, 27.12% of subjects find themselves in class thinking of things that have nothing to do with it, item 6; they have frequent distractions because of boredom and uneasiness. Furthermore, only 25.42% of subjects have shown that they feel more tense and nervous in the foreign language class than in other classes, item 26. 13.56% of the subjects often have felt like not going to the language class item 17. Item 8 shows that only 20.34 % of the subjects are usually at ease during tests in their language class, whereas the majority of them, 55.93% indicate that they are not at ease in their language class.

Test Anxiety is a form of performance anxiety associated with the fear of doing badly. The results of Test Anxiety reveal that the highest three percentages are for items 10, 12, and 11; 83.05%, 62.71%, and

59.32% respectively. Here the most important factor which cannot be ignored is the high expectations of Iraqi parents for their boys and girls. Such high expectations usually do not encourage students, but often result in more anxiety.

With regard to the highest anxiety provoking factors posited in this study, communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety, the percentages of agree (A) and strongly agree (SA), are calculated for the items of each component separately in order to determine which aspects of the foreign language anxiety that have produced the highest anxiety levels. Diagram A shows the percentages of each:

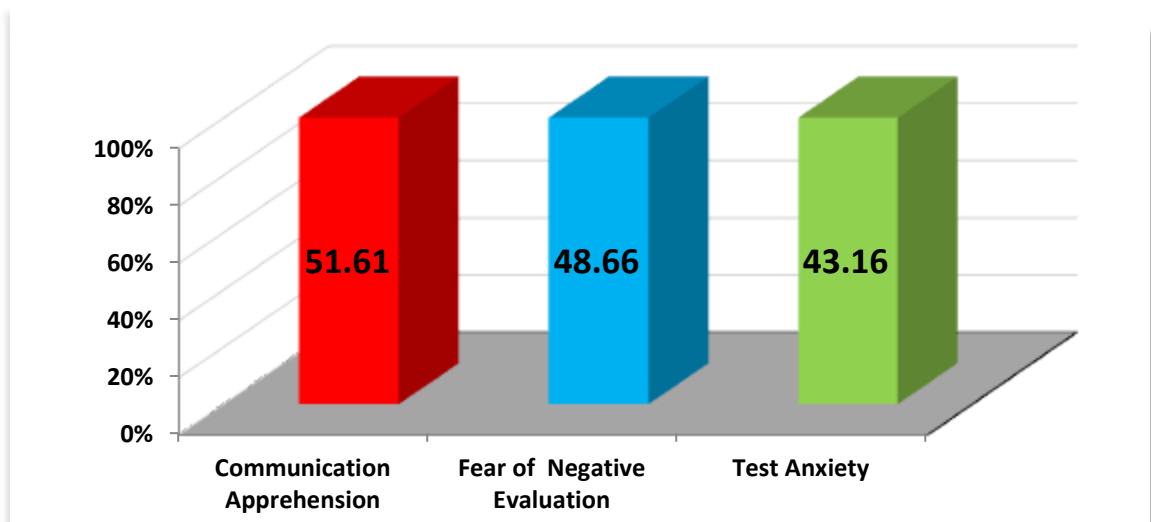


Diagram (A): The Means of the Three Components of Foreign Language Anxiety

From Diagram A, it can be noted that the mean of the items for communication apprehension is 51.61, for fear of negative evaluation 48.66, for test anxiety 43.16.

Clearly, among these three anxieties, communication apprehension is reported in the highest level, and fear of negative evaluation is the second one. Test anxiety is lower than the former two. These findings indicate that communication apprehension provokes the highest anxiety for the subjects.

Therefore, compared with other components of language anxiety, communication apprehension takes the first place.

Communication apprehension, the anxiety experienced in interpersonal settings, is related to both learning and recall of vocabulary items (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989:252). Therefore, students with high levels of communication apprehension appear to be disadvantaged from the beginning because basic vocabulary learning and production are impaired. Communication in a foreign language requires a great deal of risk taking, inasmuch as uncertain and unknown linguistic rules prevail (Horwitz et al., 1986:128). Indeed, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b:104) find that speaking is the most anxiety-provoking of second language activities. In addition, students are anxious when required to speak in a foreign language in front of their class. The frustration experienced by a student unable to communicate a message can lead to apprehension about future attempts to communicate (Horwitz et al., 1986:127). 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).

With respect to test anxiety, learners experience great language anxiety in highly evaluative situations. The more unfamiliar and ambiguous the test tasks and formats, the higher the prevailing level of language anxiety (Young, 1991:429). For high-anxious students, foreign languages require continual evaluation by the instructor; the only fluent speaker in the class (Horwitz et al., 1986:128).

Test anxiety is believed to be one of the most important aspects of negative motivation (Cubuku, 2007:135). Test anxious learners will doubtlessly suffer from stress and anxiety frequently. 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.

These findings help to explain why students with high levels of language anxiety tend to be more afraid of negative evaluation than their low-anxious counterparts. Mistaken beliefs about language learning can be a source of anxiety. For example, students may believe that the target language should not be attempted unless accuracy is maintained, and that they should not guess an unknown foreign language word. In fact, language learners expressed great concern over the accuracy of their statements, attached great importance to speaking with an excellent accent, supported the notion that language learning is primarily translating from English, believed that the four years at college are sufficient in order to become fluent in a foreign language, and believed that some people have a special gift for learning a foreign language. Such unrealistic beliefs apparently increase anxiety levels.

3. Conclusions

Iraqi students have the feeling of anxiety in their English classrooms. The reasons for such results can be explored from two aspects. One aspect is closely related to the students themselves. The other mainly deals with some external factors. In the aspect of students themselves, the existence of anxiety should firstly be attributed to their English proficiency, which was

not high enough to allow them to communicate with others freely, express themselves adequately in class and answer teachers' questions properly. So, in classrooms where much communication is needed, students are more anxious. Secondly, it is the cultural tradition that Iraqi people care much about their faces, so they don't like to receive low evaluations or criticism about themselves. This is the reason why they experience fear of negative evaluation than Test Anxiety. Moreover, during exams, the stress and the serious competition among students also cause some students to pay more attention to others' strong points and their own weak points, which results in the arousal of anxiety.

As for the external factors, it is indicated that contact with the people and culture of the foreign language could reduce anxiety. However, although Iraq has become more and more open to the world, and many foreigners have come to Iraq in the past nine years, most English learners, especially girls, seldom have opportunities to communicate with native speakers of English. Thus, students tend to experience more anxiety in English classrooms. Moreover, the existence of anxiety in English classrooms can also be ascribed to classroom atmosphere. In most Iraqi EFL classrooms, teachers play the role of controller or dominator. Students usually feel nervous or oppressed. Consequently, they lack a free, relaxed environment for English learning.

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الخلاصة

يعد القلق متغيراً مؤثراً ومهماً يجب أن لا يُغفل في عملية تعلم وتعليم اللغة. فضلاً عن ذلك، فإنه يجب أن يدرس لأنه قد يتدخل سلباً أو إيجاباً في عملية التعلم بمراحله المختلفة ويؤثر في أداء المتعلم وتحصيله. فنظراً لمشاعر عدم الارتياح والشعور بالامان، يجد متعلموا اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية ان من الصعب تبادل الاراء والمشاركة في المناقشات التي تدور في الصف.

تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى بيان العلاقة بين قلق اللغة الاجنبية وبين تحصيل الطلاب والعوامل التي تسبب قلق اللغة الاجنبية في الصف. ولهذا الغرض فقد اختير ٥٩ من طلاب المرحلة الرابعة في قسم اللغة الانكليزية، كلية التربية في جامعة البصرة في العراق. وللكشف عن العوامل التي تسبب قلق الطلاب في الصف، استُخدم معيار قلق اللغة الاجنبية في الصف والذي طوره هوارتز وهوارتز وكوب في سنة ١٩٨٦. تنتهي الدراسة بالاستنتاجات والمصادر.