

# The Effect of Anxiety on Learning English as a Foreign Language

Dr.

**Ala' Hussain Oda**  
**University of Basrah**  
**College of Education**

## **Abstract**

Anxiety of learners has become a central concern of second/foreign language learning research since it is considered one of the affective variables that influence this process. Studies conducted in this domain have confirmed the existence of the concept "language anxiety" and focused almost exclusively on the negative effects of tension ( or " stress " ) that induce this phenomenon. The present study is an endeavour to shed light on the nature of language anxiety and its role in the process of learning English as a foreign language. Besides, the 33 - item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale ( FLCAS ) developed by Horwitz, et al. ( 1986 ) is manipulated to identify the perceptions of EFL Iraqi learners towards feelings of anxiety during foreign language learning. The findings come to prove that those learners are highly anxious, the fact that may explain the mediocrity of their foreign language skills. The study ends up with presenting a number of suggestions that might be of aid to such learners to reduce the high levels of anxiety they are suffering from and to improve the environment of language learning in the classroom.

## **1. Introduction**

Foreign language researchers and educators have always tried to find out the factors that may create a healthy environment for learning a foreign language. This interest led to investigating what is known " affective variables ", which

include attitude, motivation, perceived competence, and anxiety, and their influence in foreign language teaching and learning. These variables have been the subject of a good deal of research, on the assumption that understanding them and how they work in the foreign language classroom will improve learner's performance and increase learning satisfaction. The first study in this field emerged in the seventies of the last century with the work of H. D. Brown ( 1973 ) "*Affective Variables in Second Language Acquisition*". Then, Stephen Krashan (1982 ) came to prove that stressful environments contribute to a 'filter' blocking easy language acquisition/ learning. This principle was to exert considerable influence on communicative teaching approaches in the years followed.

Since then, hundreds of studies have touched upon this issue which is sometimes conflated with the large concern of communication apprehension.

Research in this domain has increasingly focused the attention on foreign language anxiety as among the most important and the best affective predictors of foreign language achievement since students' anxiety level in a foreign language class may be " an early indicator of basic language problems" ( Ganschow & Sparks, 1996 : 199 ). As such, investigating the nature of this phenomenon holds great promise for improving language learning in the classroom. The present exploratory study possesses the characteristics of descriptive / analytical research in that it is concerned with the perceptions of respondents. It aims at achieving the following :

1. Introducing a theoretical background on the concept of foreign language anxiety as far as defining it and examining the role it performs in learning a foreign language.
2. Finding out the level of anxiety that EFL Iraqi learners may experience in learning English as foreign language throughout manipulating Horwitz, *et al.* Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (*FLCAS*).

3. Discussing the implications of the findings and presenting some suggestions to reduce anxiety and to improve foreign language learning in the classroom.

## **2. The Anatomy of Language Anxiety**

Defining what anxiety is has raised a lot of argument for the great deal of confusion that such a term exerts. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary ( 2000 : 45 ) exhibits two contradicting definitions of the term anxiety, one negative as " *the state of feeling nervous or worried that something bad is going to happen*", while the other is positive as " *a strong feeling of wanting to do something or of wanting something to happen.*" Psychologically, the concept of anxiety is seen, according to Scovel ( 1978 :34 ), as an emotional state of " *apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object,*" and in Horwitz, *et al.* ( 1986 : 125 ) as " *subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system.*" Such psychological definitions most commonly refer to a " *transitory emotional state or condition characterized by feelings of tension and apprehension and heightened autonomic nervous system activity*" ( Spielberg, 1972 :24 ). Consequently, anxiety is a state which can have both negative and positive effects, and which motivates and facilitates as well as disrupting and inhibiting cognitive actions such as learning. Thus, MacIntyre (1995 : 92 ) states that there are two types of anxiety that may affect the learner; facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety.

MacIntyre & Gardner (1991 : 88 ) postulate that anxiety plays little part in the learner's first experience with the foreign language since language aptitude and motivation are the dominant elements in this stage. Later on, some level of anxiety is to be developed, whose kind largely depends on the nature of experiences the learner is prone to. The following figure shows how each of the two types of anxiety performs its role in learning a foreign language.

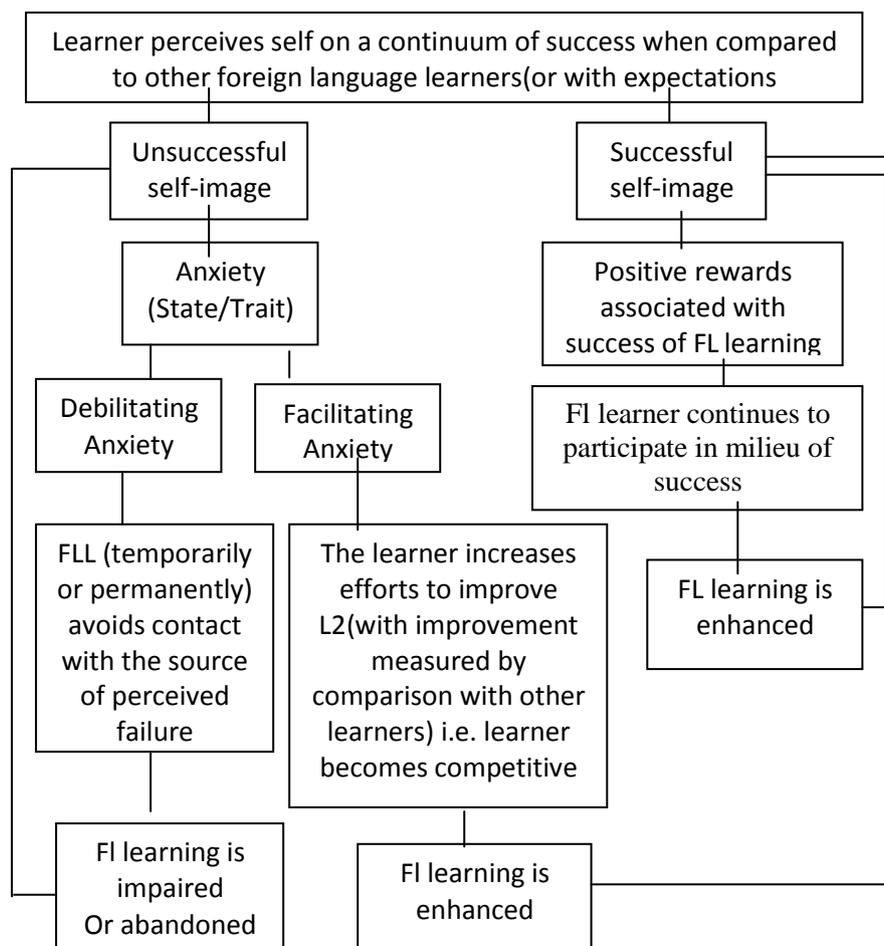


Figure ( 1 ) : The Kinds of Learner's self anxiety. Adopted from Bailey (1983 :97

Figure ( 1 ) represents the model set by Bailey ( 1983 : 97 ) in dealing with the effects of the/types of anxiety. Bailey ( 1983 : 93 ) reports that the unsuccessful self - image, just like the successful one, can be prone to the positive type of anxiety, i.e., the facilitating one and hence learning is enhanced. However, the unsuccessful self - image can be subjected to debilitating anxiety; the negative type, leading the learner to enter into the

cycle of perceived failure, which cannot be broken unless the learner continues learning the foreign language and develops it into facilitating anxiety.

Most of the literature, and so is the present study, concentrates on debilitating anxiety. When talking about school achievement, it is proved that anxiety is "*more likely to hinder than to facilitate it,*" and it can be seen to "*impair performance at both school and university level*" ( Turner, 1977 :226 ). In the field of learning foreign languages, studies suggest that it is common among foreign language learners since it is negatively associated with their language performance. ( Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993 : 157& MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994 : 2 ). Campbell & Ortiz ( 1991 : 159 ) estimate that up to one half of all language learners experience debilitating levels of language anxiety. This is made so obvious in the definitions set to clarify this term. Gardner & MacIntyre ( 1993 : 158 ), for instance, see it as "*the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient.*"

MacIntyre & Gardner (1989 : 252 - 253 ; 1994 : 10 ) confirm that foreign language anxiety affects each of the three stages of foreign language learning process : input, retrieval ( processing ), and output. According to them, anxiety at the input stage indicates that learners experience some sort of fear when they are confronted for the first time with a new word, phrase, or sentence in the foreign language. In other words, the level of anxiety at this stage influences negatively the learner's ability to receive, to concentrate, and to encode external stimuli. High levels of anxiety at the input stage may make those learners unsure of themselves, which makes them feel in need to listen for the same item in the foreign language more than one time and they may have to reread in the foreign language on several

occasions to compensate for missing or inadequate input. At the retrieval stage, anxiety reflects the apprehension the learners experience when cognitive actions are performed on the external stimuli;

that is when learners are trying to organize and store the input. What happens at this stage is that anxiety may lessen the efficiency with which memory processes are manipulated to achieve the task. High levels of processing anxiety may diminish the learner's ability to understand messages or to learn new vocabulary items in the foreign language. Anxiety at the output stage, the final step of learning, involves the worry experienced when learners are required to demonstrate their ability to produce previously learned material. It is assumed that output anxiety interferes with the processing of previous learning, and hence high level of anxiety at this stage might inhibit the learner's ability to speak or write in the foreign language. To sum up, anxiety works to make a barrier which impedes the flow into and out of the part of the brain responsible for language learning. We know that we know the word, but are surprised that we failed to recall it at the vital moment. The feeling of anxiety and sense of failure which follow can be debilitating for the nervous learner.

Anxiety is said to be of two kinds: trait anxiety, which refers to " *the individual predisposition for feeling of tension and uneasiness*" ( Turula, 2002 : 29 ), and state anxiety, which is defined as the " *apprehension experienced at a particular moment in time, for example, having to speak a foreign language in front of classmates*" ( Cassado & Dereshiwsky : 2001 :2 ). As such, foreign language anxiety seems to be classified under the second kind, state anxiety. Learners become anxious as a result of the pressures they are prone to in the foreign language classroom. Heron ( 1989 : 33 ) identifies these pressures to be of three

significant levels: acceptance anxiety ( "*Will I be accepted and liked?*" ), orientation anxiety ( "*Will I understand what is going on?*" ), and performance anxiety ( "*Will I be able to learn what I have come to learn?*" ). However, MacIntyre & Gardner ( 1991 :11) prefer to add a third kind of anxiety which is situation - specific. They add that the anxiety prevalent in the foreign language classroom is best described as situation - specific stemming from the social context in which the anxious learners find themselves, whereas state anxiety is seen as a problematic mixture of trait and situation - specific anxieties.

Cognitive and affective components of anxiety are identified as "*worry and emotionality*". Sarason ( 1986 : 21 ) views worry as "*distressing preoccupations and concerns about impending events.*", often taking the form of distraction, self - related cognition such as excessive self- evaluation, worry over potential failure, and concern over the opinions of others. Such outcomes often impair task performance. Similarly Horwitz, et al.( 1986 : i26' ) outline a theoretical framework for the investigation of levels of anxiety of foreign language learners. This framework proposes that language anxiety is made up of three essential components. The first component is "*communication apprehension*", which assumes that foreign language learners have mature thoughts and ideas, yet they are unequipped with the appropriate foreign language vocabulary with which to express them. The inability either to express themselves or to comprehend one another leads to apprehension and make-those learners afraid to speak in the foreign language, showing feelings of nervousness, confusion and even panic. The second component is "*fear of negative evaluation*". This feeling is exerted in the foreign learners because they are usually unsure of themselves, what they are saying and whether they are able to make the

proper social impression. The third component is " *general feelings of anxiety towards the foreign language*". Such feelings are described to be like fear or apprehension, but they have nothing to do with avoiding communication with others or to be negatively evaluated by them. These components are to create certain social and physical symptoms it is said that the anxious learners suffer from. Social symptoms are represented by forgetfulness, avoidance of speaking the foreign language, less attention ^^ with people, negative self- image, lack of confidence, and feeling unsure of -^ one's ability. Possible physical symptoms, on the other hand, are sweaty palms, nervous stomach, increased heartbeat and pulse rates, distortion of sounds, inability to reproduce the intonation and rhythm of the language, and avoiding eye contact.

The question that should be raised here is that , " *What are the language skills that anxiety mostly affects?*" Horwitz, et al (1991:30) answer that foreign language anxiety centers particularly on two skills only: listening and speaking. Unlike reading and writing, which give the learners a chance for contemplation, revision and correction, listening and speaking require high levels of concentration in a time frame not controlled by the learners. Anxious learners may find difficulties in recognizing sounds and structures or in understanding meaning. Elkhafaifi ( 2000 ) conducted a study to find out whether there is listening anxiety and what it plays in listening comprehension. He comes up with the result that listening anxiety is inversely related to listening proficiency, which implies that listening anxiety impedes listening comprehension. Simultaneously, speaking in the classroom ink|rpfit of other learners may arise some more anxiety since the learners will be afraid of making pronunciation errors or being laughed at by others ( Price, 1991 : 106 ). Another factor that contributes to

create some level of anxiety in the foreign language classroom is error correction. VonWorde ( 2004 : 5 ) notices that learners become *"frustrated when the teacher would correct the error before they had time to completely formulate a response,"* as well as the comments made by other learners which are related to the teacher's interruptions to correct speaking errors. These interruptions would definitely cause the learner to lose their focus.

The relationship between anxiety and another affective variable namely, motivation has been investigated . It is found out that there is a reciprocal relationship between them since *" high levels of motivation are likely to abate anxiety, and high levels of anxiety are likely to inhibit motivation"*( Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993 : 166).

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Setting and Subjects**

This study is designed to identify the perceptions of EFL learners in a general university setting towards feelings of anxiety experienced during learning English as a foreign language as measured by a series of anxiety scales. Specifically, the objective of the present study is to investigate the perceptions of ( 90 ) students surveyed at Basra University, College of Education, Dept. of English. Those students have been learning English for three academic years at the university, which makes them juniors. They are supposed to teach English in intermediate and preparatory schools after graduation. While conducting the experiment, scores of those learners' term exams in conversation and literature courses are to be examined. Those two subjects are selected in particular since they demand the learners to participate in the classroom and to receive information, mainly, throughout listening.

### **3.2 Instrument**

The instrument of the survey is the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale ( FLCAS ) questionnaire, devised by Horwitz, et al. ( 1986 ). This questionnaire consists of thirty - three items, each one on a 5 - point scale ranging from " *strongly agree* " ( Scale point 1 ) to " *Strongly disagree*" ( Scale point 5 ), the middle point being " *Neutral* " ( Scale point 3). The purpose of the scale is to examine the scope and severity of foreign language anxiety. The FLCAS has shown evidence of satisfactory reliability, internal consistency and construct validity ( Horwitz, 1991 ). The FLCAS is based on an analysis of potential sources of anxiety in a language classroom, integrating three related anxieties ( communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and general feeling of anxiety . This scale has been used in many studies in foreign language learning, such as ( MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989 ;Ganschow & Sparks, 1996; Onwuegbuzie, et al. 2000 ; Cassado & Dereshiwsky, 2001; 2004).The mean of the scores for each question is to be calculated. It has to be either higher or lower than 3.0,according to which it will be judged whether there is some level of anxiety. Based on that, Table ( 1 ) shows the questions indicating levels of anxiety for scores lower than 3.0 and for scores higher than 3.

Table (1) : The Level of Anxiety in the  
33 – questions of the FLCAS

No. of Question	Level of Anxiety
2,5,8,11,14,18,22,28,32	Show Some level of anxiety if higher than 3.
1,3,4,6,7,9,12,13,15,16, 17,19,20,21,23,24,25,26,27, 29,30,31,33	Show some level of anxiety if lower than 3.

The data obtained from the raw scores of the survey are assessed by one - way analysis of variance ( ANOVA ) to determine whether the mean of each question is significantly valuable at a ( 0.05 ) probability level. ANOVA values are found for the thirty - three variables. Three summated scores are to be created (Communication Apprehension, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and General feeling of anxiety by adding the scores of individual survey items. Table ( 2 ) exhibits the questions that each of the above variables is grouped into.

Table ( 2 ): The Three Summated Scales

Summated Scale Score Title	Individualal FLCAS Questions
Communication Apprehension	9,27,18,4,29,1,3,13,14,20, 24, 33
Fear of Negative Evaluation	7,23,31, 15,19,2,8,21
General Feeling of Anxiety	5,6,10,11, 12, 16, 17,22,25,26, 28, 30,32

### **3.4 Results and Discussion**

Visual inspection of Table ( 2 ), Which shows the means and standard deviation for answers to the thirty - three questions, reveals that the level of anxiety that the subjects exhibit is higher in ( 30 ) of the ( 33 ) questions. This result is confirmed in Table ( 3 ), which shows the ANOVA value of F obtained by dividing the between - mean squares by the within -mean squares , degree of significance for each individual anxiety scale item. The results come to prove that the perceptions of the subjects are significantly valuable at a ( 0.05 ) in ( 30 ) questions and invaluable in only ( 3 ) questions, namely, 5, 11, and 17 .

Table ( 1 ) divides the FLCAS questions into two groups depending on whether they show anxiety or not if their mean scores are higher or lower than ( 3.0 ). Three questions of the first group whose means should be higher than ( 3.0 ) scored the highest means of disagreement; viz. 2, 18, and 32. The subjects

display high level of anxiety when responding to questioner 2 ); " I don't worry about making mistakes in language class," ( M = 3.8; F = 49.5 ). This confirms the fact that those learners feel so worried of committing mistakes when they try to speak in the foreign language in the classroom in front of the teacher and their other learners lest they are laughed at or criticized. This is largely applicable to question (18); " I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class." ( M = 3.4; F = 49.5 ), and question ( 32 ); " I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language," (M = 3.5, F = 37.5 ).

Turning to the second group of the FLCAS questions, it can be found that there are four questions scored the highest number of agreement which lead their means to be lower than ( 3.0 ), and hence show a high level of apprehension. These questions are 4, 10, 12, and 33 . Examining the nature of these questions may help understand the reason beyond such a high score of responses. Question ( 4 ), " It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language," ( M = 1.9; F = 59.8 ), is related to how the learners feel when they cannot take in each word the teacher says in the foreign language. The same thing of negative self - related cognition those learners reflect in question ( 10 ), " I worry about the consequences of failing in my foreign language class," ( M = 1.8; F = 45.13 ), question ( 12 ), " In language class, I can get so nervous when I forget things I know," ( M = 2.01; F = 67.2 ), and question ( 33 ), " I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance," ( M = 2.03, F = 68.8 ). In general, such questions are mainly related to receiving information in the classroom via listening, i.e. input anxiety, and retrieving information which have been already memorized by the learners, i.e. output anxiety, which lead in the end to feel worry over the consequences of failing.

As for the three questions whose answers do not show anxiety on the part of the subjects, they are 5, 11, and 17 .

Question ( 17 ) belongs to the first group of the FLCAS questions, whose mean score should be lower than ( 3.0 ) in order to display some level of anxiety. However, question ( 17 ), " I often feel like not going to my language class, " scored ( M = 3.7 ;F=1.20). So the mean of scores comes to be higher than ( 3.0), and hence there is no anxiety. This cannot be surprising if we know that the majority of subjects respond with ( Neutral ), which explains the fact that although those subjects feel unrest in the foreign language classroom, still they show the desire to attend it so as to improve their level of performance in English as a foreign language. Questions ( 5 ) and (11 ), on the other hand, belong to the second group of the FLCAS questions, whose mean score should be higher than ( 3.0 ) in order that we can say there is some level of apprehension or anxiety. Nevertheless, question ( 5 ), " It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes, " scored (M=2.6; F = 1.9 ), and question ( 11 ), " I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language class, " scored ( M = 2.5 ; F = 1.5 ), which may support what is said about the former question, namely, question ( 17 ) since their means come to be lower than ( 3.0 ).

Table ( 3 ) : Mean Scores and Standard Deviation  
For the 33 FLCAS Questions

No. of Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	2.3	1.50
2	3.8	1.93
3	2.5	1.59
4	1.9	1.38
5	2.6	1.60
6	2.9	1.70
7	2.9	1.63
8	3.2	1.70
9	2.3	1.49

10	1.8	1.35
11	2.5	1.59
12	2.01	1.4
13	2.5	1.58
14	3.04	1.74
15	2.2	1.48
16	2.6	1.6
17	3.7	1.91
18	3.4	1.85
19	2.8	1.68
20	2.5	1.57
21	2.3	1.49
22	3.2	1.79
23	2.8	1.67
24	2.7	1.64
25	2.2	1.47
26	2.9	1.69
27	2.6	1.59
28	3.1	1.74
29	2.1	1.44
30	2.7	1.63
31	2.8	1.66
32	3.5	1.86
33	2.03	1.4

Table ( 4 ) : The ANOVA Values of the Scores of the FLCAS 33 Questions

No. of Question	F-Value	Degree of Freedom	Level of Significance
1	11.09	2.52	0.05
2	49.5	2.52	0.05
3	15.8	2.52	0.05
4	59.8	2.52	0.05

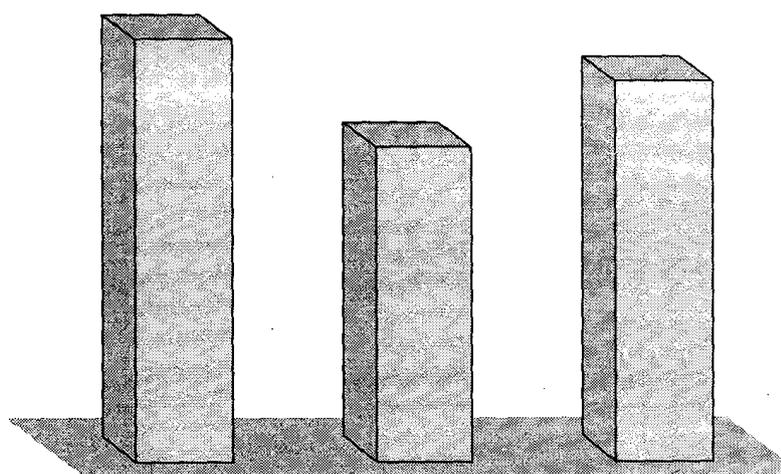
5	1.9	2.52	0.05
6	26.4	2.52	0.05
7	22.4	2.52	0.05
8	42.1	2.52	0.05
9	73.3	2.52	0.05
10	45.13	2.52	0.05
11	1.5	2.52	0.05
12	67.2	2.52	0.05
13	12.9	2.52	0.05
14	22.4	2.52	0.05
15	98.18	2.52	0.05
16	22.1	2.52	0.05
17	1.20	2.52	0.05
18	49.5	2.52	0.05
19	27.8	2.52	0.05
20	15.3	2.52	0.05
21	92.4	2.52	0.05
22	42.1	2.52	0.05
23	23.04	2.52	0.05
24	42.5	2.52	0.05
25	97.5	2.52	0.05
26	39.3	2.52	0.05
27	15.7	2.52	0.05
28	20.7	2.52	0.05
29	81.7	2.52	0.05
30	38.4	2.52	0.05
31	20.8	2.52	0.05
32	37.5	2.52	0.05
33	68.8	2.52	0.05

It is mentioned earlier that Horwitz et al. ( 1986 ) outline their FLCAS to consist of three essential components, which are to be called summated scales since each one of these components include a number of the FLCAS questions ( see Table 2 ). Table

( 5 ) sums up the mean and standard deviation for each of these summated scales.

Table ( 5 ) : The Mean & Standard Deviation of the Three Summated Scales Scores

Summated Scale Score Title	Total No. of Subjects	No. of Questions	Mean	Standard Deviation
Communication Apprehension	90	12	29.9	5.44
Fear of Negative Evaluation	90	8	22.28	4.69
General Feeling of Anxiety	90	13(10)	26.96	5.2



CA

FNE

GFA

CA = Communication Apprehension      FNE = Fear of Negative Evaluation

GFA = General Feeling of Anxiety

The actual number of questions included within the summated scale of general feeling of anxiety is ( 13 ), yet only ( 10 ) questions scored some level of anxiety on the part of the subjects. Whereas, the rest three questions, namely, 5, 11, and 17, are to be excluded for they show no anxiety.

It can be said from the close examination of Table (5 ) that the summated scale of communication apprehension scored higher levels of anxiety than the other two scales. This proves the great problem that our learners are suffering from in the foreign language classroom. They show a big deal of apprehension towards speaking and participating in the classroom, whether they prepared well or not, lest they commit mistakes in pronunciation or grammar. Communication apprehension involves the learners' ability to listen well and understand everything said in the classroom. So this is another problem to be added. Feeling afraid of not taking in what is going on in the classroom leaves the learners feeling worried that they have been left behind and the language classroom moves so quickly that they wouldn' t be able to digest rules and vocabulary. As a result, they will feel embarrassed to take part in the discussions raised or answering the questions. For safety, the learner prefers to resort to keeping silent and playing the role of audience in the classroom instead of being *one of the* active participants. For this reason and for the limited number of questions specified to it in the FLCAS, the summated scale of fear of negative evaluation gets the lowest mean of scores. The third summated scale, which is related to general feeling of anxiety, comes second in the mean of scores it gets after the scale of communication apprehension. This summated scale is related to how the learner generally feels in the environment of the classroom with all the pressure and tension that the learner is

prone to. Under such circumstances and to get rid of fear and tension, the learners find themselves thinking about things that have nothing to do with the class. Such feelings would negatively influence the learners when they prepared for a normal day in the classroom or for tests. Consequently, they are to feel nervous and feel that they forget everything they have studied, and hence reading more and more is the only way they have to ensure themselves that they will pass.

#### **4. Conclusions and suggestions**

The findings of this study appear to consolidate other studies in suggesting that language anxiety is a pervasive and prominent force in the foreign language learning context that has a detrimental effect on language learning or performance and that feelings of anxiety may be caused by learners not having developed proficiency in the foreign language. Because language anxiety is consistently associated with problems in language learning such as deficits in listening comprehension, reduced word production, impaired vocabulary learning, lower grades in language courses, and lower scores on standardized tests, understanding the mechanism of anxiety in language learning has been the major concern to educators and researchers.

The sources of language anxiety often are intertwined, causing difficulty in teasing out a discrete factor or source. Meanwhile, anxiety -provoking factors are to be classified into : non - comprehension, speaking activities, pedagogical and instructional practices, error correction, and foreign language courses. Kondo & Ying - Ling ( 2004 : 295 ) report that the question of what learners should actually do to cope with their anxiety in language classrooms has not given the due attention it deserves, and if any techniques have been suggested, they cannot

play a role in the customary decrease in the performance of highly language anxious - learners.

It is confirmed that it is the responsibility of the teacher to create a healthy environment in the language classroom so as to alleviate any level of anxiety the learners may experience. Turula ( 2002 : 31 ) sums up the role the teacher performs in three tasks; first, diagnosing the reasons of feeling anxious, uncomfortable, and loss of self - confidence in the classroom so as to decrease them; second, understanding the features of the good classroom dynamics; and third, creating classroom environments in which such dynamics may work well. In order to diminish the role of the teacher in raising the level of apprehension and frustration the learners feel in the language classroom, it is highly recommended that the teacher should not rely on the technique of error correction while the learner is trying to participate in the classroom. Instead, the teacher ought to give the learners the opportunity to discover their errors and at the same time correct them. In such a way, the teacher helps to corroborate the learners' self - confidence and eradicate some of the errors that the learners usually commit. An extremely anxiety - provoking technique, and one used by foreign language teachers, is calling on students one after another either by names or in seating order. What is suggested here is that the teacher has to give the learners the chance to volunteer taking part in the classroom and encourage them to do so by, for example, using games whose advantages can be summed up in: promoting spontaneous natural speech without conscious analysis of output, stimulating participation while lowering stress, and breaking away from the monotony of a traditional class. Furthermore, the teacher should not treat the learners in a way which makes them feel offended or humiliated such as in criticizing them severely when committing a mistake or belittling their intelligence. Out of this,

we may conclude that the role of the teacher is paramount in alleviating anxiety and it is the only person who is able to create a warm social environment in the classroom.

As for the learners, Kondo & Ying - Ling ( 2004 : 262) suggest five strategies to follow which might aid them in lessening their tension in the language classroom. These strategies involve: first, *Preparation*, which refers to the learners' endeavours to avoid threat in the classroom by improving learning and study strategies. In such a way, the learners' mastery of the subject matter will be increased, and hence it will reduce the anxiety associated with the language class; second, *Relaxation*, which indicates means that aim at reducing anxiety symptoms the learners experience such as taking a deep breath and trying to calm down; third, *Positive thinking*, which means that the learners should think positively about their performance in the classroom and they are not less than the others. These strategies are intended to divert the learners' attention from any stressful situation in the classroom to positive and pleasant cues, and bring relief to the anxious learners; fourth, Peer seeking, which is characterized by the learners' willingness to look for others who seem to suffer from anxiety in the language classroom just like him/her. For anxious learners, to realize that there are others who have the same problem may serve as a source of emotional regulation by social comparison; finally, *Resignation*, which is distinguished by the learners' attempts to do anything so as to alleviate their language anxiety such as thinking seriously of the answer to any question raised in the classroom instead of running away and refusing to face the problem.

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