

Dealing with Language Learning Anxiety and the Role of Teachers in Ensuring Anxiety-Free Foreign Language Classrooms

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Abstract

This comprehensive mixed-methods investigation aimed to explore the challenges of anxiety experienced by foreign language learners and assess the pivotal role played by their teachers in alleviating such stressors. Quantitative data were acquired through a survey questionnaire, adapted from Horwitz et al.'s (1986) 33-point Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), distributed among foreign language learners. Concurrently, qualitative insights were collected through in-depth interviews conducted with teachers engaged in teaching foreign language programs. The synthesis of both students' experiences and teachers' perspectives facilitated a constructive analysis, culminating in nuanced findings that contribute to our understanding of effective strategies and teacher's role in reducing anxiety levels in foreign language learning classrooms.

Keywords: Anxiety, Foreign Language Learning, FLCAS, Classroom, Learner, Teacher.

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Introduction

The landscape of foreign language acquisition has been expounded through diverse perspectives by eminent linguists such as Jacobson, Vygotsky, Sapir, Paul Grice, and others. Despite their varied viewpoints on language learning, a common thread runs through their postulates; the imperative of anxieties to achieve optimal outcomes. Numerous forms of anxiety have been identified as impediments to the language learning process, with state anxiety, trait anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety emerging as prominent categories over the years.

In context to anxiety-focused research, a significant body of work has explored strategies for reducing the level of anxiety in foreign language classrooms. Among these, the role of teachers stands out as pivotal, given that anxious students often grapple with discomfort in the classroom, hindering their progress toward proficiency. This study aims to identify and understand the obstacles, particularly anxiety, faced by students in learning foreign languages, while concurrently investigating the instrumental role played by their teachers in fostering an improved learning environment.

For the assessment of anxiety, Horwitz et al. (1986) crafted the 33-item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), categorizing anxieties into three components: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Notably, the fear of making mistakes and facing criticism in a public setting induces a formidable anxious state among students, leading to diminished efforts in learning. In this context, the teacher's role as a facilitator holds transformative potential in breaking down barriers for such students, positively influencing their commitment and intention to master the language.

This research endeavors to gauge the anxiety levels experienced by participants in foreign language learning and to establish a connection between these anxieties and the impact of teachers in mitigating them. By evaluating the students' responses and conducting in-depth interviews with teachers on pertinent issues, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the

interplay between anxiety and the teacher's role. Ultimately, the research explores whether the teacher's influence stands out as the most critical factor in reducing anxiety among foreign language learners.

Literature Review

Learning a foreign language is a challenging task that requires cognitive, affective, and social skills. Many students who excel in other subjects struggle to learn a foreign language due to various factors, such as lack of motivation, self-confidence, or exposure. One of the most prominent factors that affects foreign language learning is anxiety, which is a complex and multifaceted psychological phenomenon. Anxiety can negatively impact the learning process and outcomes of foreign language learners, as it can interfere with their attention, memory, comprehension, and performance.

Anxiety in foreign language learning has been extensively researched since the 1980s, when Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) proposed the concept of foreign language anxiety as a distinct type of anxiety that is specific to the language learning context. They developed a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to measure the level of anxiety experienced by students in foreign language classes. They found that foreign language anxiety was related to lower achievement, lower self-esteem, and higher dropout rates among foreign language learners.

Since then, many studies have explored the sources, effects, and coping strategies of foreign language anxiety from different perspectives and in different settings. For example, Humphries (2015) suggested that encouragement from teachers and peers is a key factor in reducing anxiety and enhancing motivation among foreign language learners. Price (1991) reported that students felt less anxious in language classes when the teacher was friendly, supportive, and approachable. Young (1992) identified six potential sources of anxiety in language classes: personal and interpersonal factors, learner beliefs, instructor beliefs, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures, and language testing.

Williams and Andrade (2008) conducted a survey of 243 Japanese students in 31 English communication classes at four universities in Japan. They found that language anxiety was mainly associated with the output and processing stages of the acquisition process, such as speaking, listening, and writing. They also found that students attributed their anxiety to their teachers and classmates, who could be either supportive or threatening, depending on their attitudes, behaviors, and expectations.

In Bangladesh, several studies have also investigated the phenomenon of foreign language anxiety among students. Naima (2013) and Ferdous (2012) identified anxiety as the main barrier to learning English as a foreign language. They found that most of the students in Bangladesh were more anxious about speaking English than listening, reading, or writing. They attributed this to the lack of opportunities to practice speaking, the fear of making mistakes, and the pressure of social norms and expectations.

Khan (2015) explored the ways to reduce foreign language anxiety and create a positive learning environment in language classes. He suggested that interactive classrooms, teachers' involvement with the students, group work, peer discussion, practice with partners, and communication with the teacher, as well as interesting topics and humor in language classes, could help the students feel more comfortable and confident in the foreign language classroom.

From the above review, anxiety is a significant factor that influences foreign language learning, and that teacher facilitation is a crucial strategy to alleviate anxiety and promote learning. Therefore, this study aims to examine how teachers can facilitate foreign language learning and reduce anxiety among students, and what impact their facilitation has on the anxiety level and learning outcomes of the students in foreign language classrooms.

Foreign Language Anxiety

Definition of Anxiety

Among the various obstacles and challenges in the realm of foreign language acquisition, anxiety has garnered considerable

attention. Numerous researchers and psychologists have presented their interpretations of language anxiety, describing it as a sense of discomfort, concern, nervousness, and trepidation encountered during the process of learning or using a second or foreign language. According to Horwitz (2001), language anxiety is characterized as the subjective experience of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry linked to the activation of the autonomic nervous system. Gardner and MacIntyre (1994) define language anxiety as "the feeling of tension and apprehension, particularly in the context of second language situations, encompassing speaking, listening, and learning." This psychological phenomenon of language anxiety has also been labeled as "xenoglossophobia" by psycholinguists.

Types of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)

Anxiety is a psychological phenomenon, and it has been classified into different categories by different researchers based on different criteria. But as the subject matter of this study is foreign language learning anxiety (FLA), the researcher focused on 3 types of FLA documented by Horwitz et al (1996). Firstly, communication apprehension which refers to fear or anxiety associated with communication with others, in language classroom with peer learners or teachers. Secondly, fear of negative evaluation which means the fear originated from the speculation that the teacher may negatively evaluate the learners and it may defame them in front of their classmates. Thirdly, test anxiety refers to a combination of physical symptoms and emotional reactions that interfere with the learners' ability to perform well on tests.

Causes of Anxiety

Extensive research in the field of applied linguistics has explored language learning anxiety, identifying and categorizing various causes. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) propose three perspectives for studying anxiety: trait, state, and situation-specific. Trait anxiety relates to a stable personality trait that predisposes some individuals to general anxiety. State anxiety is an emotional response to a specific situation or event, while situation-specific anxiety occurs only in certain contexts, such as language learning.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) devised a scale to measure foreign language anxiety, delineating three components: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension involves the fear of speaking or listening in a foreign language, while test anxiety pertains to concerns about performance on language assessments. Fear of negative evaluation involves worrying about being judged negatively by others due to language abilities.

Various factors contribute to language learning anxiety, including learners' beliefs, expectations, self-perceptions, language skills, learning styles, teacher feedback, classroom environment, and social and cultural norms. Abdullayeva (2023) categorizes these factors as learner-induced, classroom-related, skill-specific, and society-imposed. Learner-induced anxiety may arise from erroneous beliefs, unrealistic standards, poor language abilities, perceived incompetence, competitive nature, and fear of negative evaluation. Classroom-related anxiety may stem from teacher behavior, teaching methods, assessment practices, peer interactions, and class size. Skill-specific anxiety may be linked to specific language skills, such as speaking, listening, reading, or writing. Society-imposed anxiety results from social and cultural expectations and pressures on language learners.

The detrimental effects of language learning anxiety on learners' ability to acquire foreign languages are notable. Horwitz (2001) contends that anxiety can impede cognitive processes like attention, memory, and problem-solving, affecting linguistic performance in terms of fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Anxiety also influences affective and motivational states, including self-esteem, self-efficacy, interest, and enjoyment, which in turn impact behavioral outcomes such as participation, persistence, and achievement.

In summary, language learning anxiety is a complex phenomenon with diverse causes and negative consequences for language learners. Understanding these causes and effects enables teachers and learners to adopt effective strategies to cope with and reduce anxiety, ultimately enhancing language learning outcomes.

Teacher in Language Learning

A teacher acts as the center of learning in any classroom. And for language learning, the teacher plays an even more important role as the teacher must work with the attitude, behaviour, and motivation of the learners. In addition to these, in case of an anxious attitude of the learners, the teacher becomes the most important factor for the learners as the teacher is their go-to person at that situation.

The Role of Teacher

Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating students' learning and development. However, the role of teachers is not static or uniform, but rather dynamic and diverse, depending on the context, the subject, the students, and the pedagogy. This literature review aims to explore the different ways that teachers can influence the academic, social, and emotional outcomes of their students, as well as their own professional identity and growth.

One of the main dimensions that defines the role of teachers is the degree of student-centeredness in their teaching practices. Student-centered teaching is an approach that emphasizes the active involvement and autonomy of students in the learning process, rather than the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the students (Weimer, 2003). Student-centered teaching can take various forms, such as inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, and flipped classroom (Hmelo-Silver et al., 2007). These methods require teachers to adopt different roles, such as facilitator, guide, coach, mentor, co-learner, and evaluator, rather than lecturer, authority, or expert (Larmer et al., 2015).

The literature suggests that student-centered teaching can have positive effects on students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes, such as academic achievement, motivation, engagement, self-regulation, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills (Hattie, 2009). However, these effects are not automatic or guaranteed, but depend on various factors, such as the quality of the learning tasks, the alignment of the assessment, the support and

feedback provided by the teacher, and the readiness and willingness of the students (Prince, 2004). Moreover, student-centered teaching can also pose some challenges and difficulties for both teachers and students, such as increased workload, time constraints, classroom management issues, resistance to change, and lack of confidence or skills (Ertmer & Simons, 2006).

Another important dimension that shapes the role of teachers is the socio-emotional aspect of teaching and learning. Teachers can influence the socio-emotional development of their students in different ways, either directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, positively or negatively (Villaseñor, 2019). Directly, teachers can implement explicit socio-emotional learning programs or activities that aim to foster students' self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2013). Indirectly, teachers can model and promote socio-emotional skills through their own behavior, interaction, and feedback, as well as create a positive and supportive classroom climate and culture (Jones et al., 2013).

The literature indicates that socio-emotional learning can have beneficial effects on students' academic, personal, and social outcomes, such as improved test scores, grades, attendance, behavior, attitudes, well-being, and mental health (Durlak et al., 2011). However, these effects are not uniform or consistent, but vary depending on the quality and duration of the intervention, the characteristics and needs of the students, and the context and culture of the school (Brackett et al., 2012). Furthermore, socio-emotional learning can also have implications for teachers' own well-being and effectiveness, as they may experience stress, burnout, or compassion fatigue, or alternatively, satisfaction, resilience, or self-efficacy (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

In conclusion, the role of teachers is multifaceted and complex, as they have to balance different demands and expectations from various stakeholders, such as students, parents, administrators, and policymakers. Teachers also have to adapt and adjust their role according to the changing needs and circumstances of their students and themselves. Therefore, teachers need to have a clear and flexible

understanding of their role and identity, as well as a continuous and reflective professional development.

Methodology of the study

The researchers followed the mixed method of data collection to have a comprehensive outlook on the subject matter, enhancing validity and reliability of the study. Quantitative data have been collected through a questionnaire adapted from Horwitz et al (1986)'s Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). A set of key-Informant Interview (KII) questions was prepared to explore the attitude and concern of teachers towards students' anxiety. This set contained open-ended questions which facilitated an opportunity of discussion between the researchers and the interviewed teachers.

From 204 undergraduate students of different foreign language courses, 40 were selected for the questionnaire survey. Stratified sampling techniques were followed to ensure the participation of learners of different foreign languages (Parsons, 2017). The researchers also interviewed three teachers from those language programs through the mentioned KII questions.

Research Questions

The study revolves around the following questions and attempts to find their answers through a systematic analysis.

1. What type of anxieties are often faced by foreign language learners?
2. How can teachers help to reduce anxiety of foreign language learners?

Limitations

The researchers collected data from several batches of foreign language learners to present a clear view of the subject matter under study. Despite that, all the participants being from the same institution stand out as a significant limitation of this study.

Consent

All the data was collected through prior permission of the participants and the confidentiality were maintained. The researchers followed the ethics of research throughout and were extremely careful to collect data. Both oral and written consents were collected from participants.

Data Analysis and Discussion

In this section, the results of the collected data from the students' survey and teachers' interviews have been discussed elaborately. The findings from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) have been stated in the first part followed by the key informant interview questions' answer from the teachers. The researcher divided the 33 questions from the Horwitz (1986) FLCAS into three different groups for testing three different classroom anxiety; those are- communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. From the answers of the eight interview questions for the teachers, only the significant responses are directly stated and discussed to provide teachers' views about foreign language anxiety and teachers' role in it.

Data Analysis of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

The adapted questionnaire contained 33 close-ended questions and the questions were designed to identify 3 types of anxieties. Those are: communicative apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. The close end answers were designed based on the 5-point Likert chart. Findings from the conducted survey are systematically presented below.

Communicative Apprehension

If the learner is not comfortable speaking in foreign/target language and suffers from a sort of inferiority complex, then it can be said that they are suffering from communicative apprehension. Anxiety. The question number 1, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20, 27, 30 and 32 were directed to find out the level of communicative apprehension

anxiety. The participants were asked to choose their agreement and disagreement with the statement of the questions, the answer ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” The value of the answer is set as strongly agree=5, agree=4, neutral=3, disagree=2, strongly disagree=1. The findings from the questions related to communicative apprehension is illustrated through the following table:

* f =Frequency

*Formula used for mean calculation= f of

$(SA*5+A*4+N*3+D*2+SD*1)/40$ (total participants)

	Strongly Agree=5 (f)	Agree=4 (f)	Neutral=3 (f)	Disagree=2 (f)	Strongly Agree=1 (f)	Mean	Overall Mean
Ques no: 1	5	14	6	7	7	3.00	3.725
Ques no: 9	12	15	3	6	4	3.625	
Ques no: 11	17	11	7	3	2	3.95	
Ques no: 12	9	19	3	5	4	3.6	
Ques no: 13	12	11	2	6	9	3.275	
Ques no: 14	10	16	3	5	6	3.475	
Ques no: 16	17	11	7	2	3	3.925	
Ques no: 20	15	17	6	1	1	4.1	
Ques no: 27	12	21	3	2	2	3.975	
Ques no: 30	13	19	4	1	3	3.95	
Ques no: 32	16	16	7	0	1	4.15	

Q1: I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.

Q9: I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.

Q11: I don't feel comfortable talking to my classmates in foreign language.

Q12: When speaking in foreign language, I get so nervous that I forget things I know.

Q13: It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in language class.

Q14: I would be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.

Q16: Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious when speaking in class.

Q20: I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in my language class.

Q27: I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my foreign language class.

Q30: I feel exhausted by the number of rules you have to learn to speak foreign language.

Q32: I would probably feel uncomfortable around the native speakers of the foreign language.

The table reflects that the overall mean value for questions directed to find out the communication apprehension is 3.725, which is higher than benchmark value 2.5. Hence, it is evident that the participant foreign language learners suffer from communication apprehension anxiety.

Fear of Negative Evaluation

Fear of negative evaluation means the fear originated from the speculation that the teacher may negatively evaluate the learners and it may defame them in front of their classmates. The question

number 2, 3, 4, 7, 15, 19, 24, 25, 29, 31 and 33 were directed to find out the fear of negative evaluation of the learners. The findings from the questions related to fear of negative evaluation is illustrated through the following table:

*f=Frequency

*Formula used for mean calculation= f of $(SA*5+A*4+N*3+D*2+SD*1)/40$ (total participants)

	Strongly Agree=5 (f)	Agree=4 (f)	Neutral=3 (f)	Disagree=2 (f)	Strongly Agree=1 (f)	Mean	Overall Mean
Ques no: 2	7	17	6	3	7	3.35	3.79
Ques no: 3	19	12	5	3	1	4.125	
Ques no: 4	12	23	1	1	3	4.00	
Ques no: 7	9	24	2	1	4	3.825	
Ques no: 15	7	21	7	3	2	3.7	
Ques no: 19	12	16	2	5	5	3.625	
Ques no: 24	19	11	0	3	2	3.675	
Ques no: 25	17	17	3	2	1	4.175	
Ques no: 29	15	18	4	2	1	4.1	
Ques no: 31	17	13	7	1	1	4.025	
Ques no: 33	10	9	2	9	10	3.00	

Q2: I worry about making mistakes in language class.

Q3: I shiver when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.

Q4: *It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is asking me in the foreign language.*

Q7: *I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am.*

Q15: *I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.*

Q19: *I am afraid that my language teacher will not correct every mistake I make.*

Q24: *I feel very self-conscious about speaking foreign language in front of other students.*

Q25: *Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.*

Q29: *I get nervous when the language teacher asks me anything.*

Q31: *I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak foreign language.*

Q33: *I get nervous when the language teacher looks towards me in the class.*

The table reflects the overall mean value for questions directed to find out the fear of negative evaluation is 3.79, which is higher than average benchmark score 2.5. Therefore, it is evident that the participants foreign language learners suffer from a significant amount of fear of negative evaluation.

Test Anxiety

Test anxiety refers to a combination of physical symptoms and emotional reactions that interfere with the learners' ability to perform well on tests. The question number 5, 6, 8, 10, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 26 and 28 were directed to find out the test anxiety of the learners. The findings from the questions related to test anxiety is illustrated through the following table:

*f=Frequency

*Formula used for mean calculation= f of $(SA*5+A*4+N*3+D*2+SD*1)/40$ (total participants)

	Strongly Agree=5 (f)	Agree=4 (f)	Neutral=3 (f)	Disagree=2 (f)	Strongly Disagree=1 (f)	Mean	Overall Mean
Ques no: 5	9	13	6	7	5	3.35	3.94
Ques no: 6	17	15	2	5	1	4.05	
Ques no: 8	11	19	3	5	2	3.8	
Ques no: 10	13	12	5	9	1	3.675	
Ques no: 17	21	15	1	2	1	4.325	
Ques no: 18	12	16	4	5	3	3.725	
Ques no: 21	23	8	3	2	4	4.2	
Ques no: 22	15	19	2	2	2	3.975	
Ques no: 23	20	16	0	4	0	4.3	
Ques no: 26	17	14	4	3	2	4.075	
Ques no: 28	12	16	7	4	1	3.85	

Q5: The test of the language courses seems harder than other subjects to me.

Q6: During foreign language tests, I feel it would be better to learn something else than language.

Q8: I feel anxious during tests in my language class.

Q10: I worry about the consequences of failing in my language course.

Q17: Though I prepare myself well, I feel anxious before the foreign language examination.

Q18: My lack of confidence is the reason behind my poor result in some language courses.

Q21: The more I study for a language test, the more I get confused.

Q22: I speak well in the foreign language, response well in the class but cut a sorrow figure in the examination.

Q23: I always feel that the other students will do better in language examinations than I do.

Q26: I feel more tense and nervous before my language examination than in my other examination.

Q28: When I am on my way to the language test, I feel very worried and restless.

Hence, the table reflects the overall mean value for questions directed to find out the test anxiety is 3.94, which is higher than the average benchmark value of 2.5. Consequently, the data illustrated that those participants foreign language learners suffer from a significant amount of test anxiety as well.

Moreover, if we compare the mean of communicative apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety; we can see that the mean value of test anxiety is slightly higher than the former two.

Findings from Teachers' Interviews

After collecting data from the students about their foreign language anxiety, the researchers interviewed 3-course teachers of three different foreign languages to find out their view about foreign language anxiety. The researcher asked 8 questions to the teachers reflecting teachers' views about foreign language anxiety and their opinion about teachers' role in reducing it. When the teacher was asked about whether they realized that their students suffered from foreign language anxiety, their answer was positive.

One teacher stated,

“I often found my students not confident enough to answer questions in the classroom though I am aware that they knew the answer to the question.”

Another teacher stated,

“In my courses, most of the students stay confident in my class but it is true that some of them suffer from different levels of anxieties. I have witnessed several students whom I knew as meritorious but failed to achieve good marks in the test due to personal nervousness and negative emotions about the test.”

The rest of the questions were about teachers' perspective about resolving the anxious state of the learners; those are structurally elaborated in the next two sections.

Causes of Anxiety According to Teachers

When the teachers were asked about their point of view about the causes of students' anxiety in a foreign language, all three of the teachers stated that the main problem of learning a foreign language is the lack of orientation to the target language. They added that most of the students come to classes like a blank sheet without any prior knowledge about the language. Hence, they often face trouble in going with the same pace of the lesson activities.

Moreover, they stated that it is the mental fear of the students which held them back. Most of the students are not confident enough to express themselves. Whenever the teacher gives any correction, many of the students count it as a negative evaluation of them. Most of the students do not understand that making mistakes is a common stage for everybody when they are learning a new language.

Teachers' Role in Reducing Anxiety

When the teachers were asked about whether they see any role of teachers in reducing students' foreign language anxiety, they agreed that the teacher plays the central role in the class. One teacher even stated that it is the duty of his/her to pull his/her student up when they are not confident in the classroom.

They think that teachers can play so many roles for a student, which determines a student's attitude and interest in the course. Some said that a teacher can always reduce the anxious state of the students by creating a friendly environment in the classroom. One teacher stated that the traditional teacher- centered concept of the classroom hardly works in a language classroom. He has identified the role of a teacher in a language classroom as more of a facilitator, who facilitates all the requirements of the students.

One teacher stated,

“The main role of a language teacher is not to confuse students by correcting them when the student is making mistakes in the foreign language; rather, the teacher should politely guide the students to realize his/her mistakes.”

Another teacher stated,

“Keeping the students’ motivation high in the language classroom is the main challenge for the teacher; a teacher should offer some out of lessons activities in between long classes to keep their motivation high and cheer them up.”

Suggestions for Teachers

During the concluding segment of the teachers' interview, an inquiry was made seeking insights on fostering an enhanced language learning environment within the classroom. The recommendation put forth emphasized the imperative role of motivating students to actively engage in classroom activities. Encouraging teachers to employ diverse strategies, the suggestion advocated for the incorporation of group activities and peer collaborations. The aim was to cultivate a cohesive understanding among students, eliminating any reservations they might have about expressed themselves in front of their peers when prompted by the teacher.

To foster a supportive and conducive atmosphere, the recommendation underscored the importance of transforming the classroom into an interactive and friendly space for students. This transformation is envisioned to inspire a sense of ease and openness, facilitating a more comfortable environment for students to participate actively.

Furthermore, the suggestion extended to personalized interactions with anxious students. The emphasis here was on engaging with such students on an individual basis, creating an opportunity for the teacher to address and alleviate any concerns or anxieties they may be harboring. This personalized approach aims to establish a rapport that fosters trust and reassures anxious students, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and encouraging language learning environment within the classroom.

Discussion

RQ 1: What type of anxieties are often faced by foreign language learners?

In this study, the authors investigated the foreign language anxiety of students and the teacher's role on its causes and solutions. Students encountered varying degrees of anxiety during their foreign language learning endeavors, impacting both their overall performance and self-assurance. Teachers acknowledged the prevalence of foreign language anxiety among their students, attributing it to factors such as a lack of prior knowledge, apprehension about making errors, and exposure to negative feedback. In response, educators collectively acknowledged their pivotal role in alleviating student anxiety. They are committed to fostering a friendly and supportive classroom environment, facilitating the learning process, and actively motivating students to engage in language acquisition with confidence.

These findings are consistent with previous research on foreign language anxiety, which has shown that anxiety is a common and complex phenomenon that influences the language learning outcomes of students (Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Previous studies have also suggested that teachers can play a

significant role in alleviating the students' anxiety by adopting various strategies, such as providing positive feedback, encouraging communication, and fostering a sense of community in the classroom (Dörnyei, 2001; Young, 1991).

RQ 2: How can teachers help to reduce anxiety of foreign language learners?

Based on the literature review and the data analysis, the following themes emerged as possible strategies for teachers to decrease students' anxiety levels and improve their communicative skills in a foreign language.

Attacking negative thoughts: Teachers can help students to overcome their irrational beliefs and unrealistic expectations about their language performance by providing positive feedback, encouragement, and recognition of their achievements. Teachers can also help students to set realistic and attainable goals, and to focus on their progress rather than their mistakes.

Creating a supportive and collaborative classroom environment: Teachers can foster a sense of community and trust among students by using group work, pair work, and cooperative learning activities. Teachers can also create a safe and comfortable atmosphere for students to express themselves in the target language by reducing the pressure of evaluation, error correction, and competition. Teachers can also use humor, games, and fun activities to lower students' affective filter and increase their motivation and interest.

Raising students' awareness and coping skills: Teachers can help students to understand the nature and causes of their anxiety, and to realize that anxiety is a common and normal phenomenon in language learning. Teachers can also teach students some coping strategies to deal with their anxiety, such as relaxation techniques, self-talk, and cognitive restructuring. Teachers can also provide students with some resources and tips to enhance their language learning, such as authentic materials, online tools, and self-study methods.

These strategies are consistent with the findings of previous studies that have suggested various ways to reduce foreign language anxiety among learners of different languages. However, it is important to note that foreign language anxiety is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that may vary depending on the individual, the context, and the language. Therefore, teachers need to be sensitive and flexible to the needs and preferences of their students, and to adopt a holistic and learner-centered approach to language teaching and learning. By doing so, teachers can help students to overcome their anxiety and to enjoy their language learning experience.

However, the study also has some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size of the study was small and limited to three courses of three different foreign languages. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable to other contexts and populations. Second, the data collection methods were based on self-report measures, such as questionnaires and interviews, which may be subject to bias and subjectivity. Third, the study did not measure the actual language proficiency or achievement of the students, which could be used as an objective indicator of the impact of anxiety on language learning.

Therefore, the authors suggest that future research should address these limitations by using larger and more diverse samples, employing multiple and more objective data sources, and examining the relationship between anxiety and language performance. Furthermore, future research could also explore the effects of different types of anxiety, such as trait, state, and situation-specific anxiety, on language learning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Additionally, future research could investigate the effectiveness of various interventions and techniques for reducing foreign language anxiety, such as relaxation, cognitive restructuring, and cooperative learning (Dörnyei, 2001; Young, 1991).

The study contributes to the existing literature on foreign language anxiety by providing insights from both the students' and the teachers' perspectives. The study highlights the importance of understanding and addressing the students' anxiety in the language

classroom, as well as the role of the teachers in creating a positive and conducive learning environment. The study also suggests some directions for future research that could further enhance the knowledge and practice of foreign language teaching and learning.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to assess the varying degrees of foreign language anxiety experienced by language learners and explore the role of teachers in mitigating these anxieties. The examination of student surveys and teacher interviews revealed distinct manifestations of foreign language anxiety among students. The findings highlight the pivotal role teachers can play in alleviating anxiety, emphasizing the positive impact of motivational strategies and approachable behavior.

The identified sources of anxiety among students include insufficient orientation about the target language, limited exposure to the language learning process, and the fear of potential embarrassment in social settings. These factors underscore the significance of addressing social status and self-esteem concerns among learners to create a more supportive learning environment.

Furthermore, both teachers and students identified a friendly classroom environment as a key factor in reducing anxiety levels. Students who reported experiencing foreign language anxiety expressed a notable improvement when teachers provided assistance during challenging situations. This underscores the importance of teacher support in fostering a conducive and less anxious atmosphere for language learners.

In conclusion, foreign language anxiety emerges as a common phenomenon in the process of acquiring a new language, distinguishing it from other academic subjects. The study underscores the crucial role that teacher guidance and motivation play in diminishing anxiety levels, as emphasized by both students and teachers. This dual perspective highlights the significance of a collaborative effort to create an environment conducive to effective language learning.

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