Examining Language Anxiety on the Performance of English as Second Language Learners

[1]Dr. Perveen Akhter Farhat, [2]Nighat Sultana, [3]Misbah Iqbal

1. Assistant Professor, Department of English Lahore Leads University.

    Email: drparveen.eng@leads.edu.pk

2. PhD Scholar English (Linguistics), Lecture Lahore Leads University.

    Email: nighat.eng@leads.edu.pk

3. Assistant Professor in English, Government Graduate College for Women Marghzar Lahore. Email: mzs414153@gmail.com

Abstract

Second language anxiety is a prevalent phenomenon that creates negative impact on the performance of learners who learn English as second language. The aim of this study is to investigate the role of anxiety on the performance of ESL learners in the context of learning English as a Second Language (ESL). Moreover, this research identifies the causes of anxiety among students to learn English as a second language in the class room. This study also examines whether learners' perception and behaviors contribute to become a cause of anxiety in second language learning in the class room. The model and framework FLCAS that was introduced by Horwitz and Cope, was applied in this study. Hundred females and hundred males of first semester undergraduate students, aged 19 to 23 from the classroom of English Department at Lahore Leads University were selected for this research. Two hundred participants were selected for structured questionnaire to gain further insights into their English language learning experiences.In this study quantitative approach was applied that utilized data analysis techniques through Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to obtain the result. This study revealed no significant gender differences in anxiety levels. It was observed that both male and female participants experience increasing anxiety during writing assignments, oral presentations, and in exams as well. However, both male and female respondents showed different results in regards to other factors such as high level of confidence in writing, comfortable level in listening skill, peer judgment in speaking tasks, motivation, teachers' support, lack of awareness of institutional resources and stressful assessment.

Key Words:

Anxiety, Second Language Learners, Foreign/Second Language Classrooms Activities

Introduction

English has become an integral part of daily life, playing crucial roles across various levels of society. The teaching of English as a second language (ESL) holds immense importance in education leading to challenges for students in effectively using the language. A primary obstacle in the second language learning process is identified as language anxiety, a widely acknowledged phenomenon in the second language classroom (Siriwardena, 2016). Anxiety, as described by Horwitz and Cope (1986, p.125), is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with the arousal of the nervous system. Language Anxiety (LA), a specific psychological construct related to language learning classrooms, involves a complex interplay of self-perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). Among language learners, three common types of anxiety emerge: state anxiety, trait anxiety, and situational anxiety. State anxiety is limited to specific situations, such as using a second language, while trait anxiety is a general sense of unease across various situations. Situational anxiety consistently occurs within a given situation over time (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 87).

Second language anxiety (SLA), as described by Horwitz (2001), involves negative emotional reactions towards language acquisition. Learners' personal characteristics, beliefs, and perceptions play a crucial role in determining their second language anxiety. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) elaborate that second language anxiety is a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon encompassing self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors associated with foreign or second language learning.

The current study employs quantitative approach to investigate how learners' beliefs influenced their anxiety levels, specifically examining specific anxiety, and whether these anxiety levels have influence on gender. This study focuses on the causes of language anxiety about the English as second language learning held by first-year undergraduates in Lahore Leads University. The research aims to evaluate the gender of first-year undergraduates studying English as a second language has different levels of second language anxiety that creates hindrance on their performance in the class room. The FLCAS Model was used in this research.

Literature Review

Ganschow (1991) characterizes second language anxiety (SLA) as a natural consequence of challenges and limited achievements in second language learning. Ellis (1994) asserts that language anxiety tends to intensify when acquiring a second language. Worde (1998) specifies that a substantial proportion of learners, ranging from one-third to one-half, express experiencing debilitating levels of language anxiety. Numerous studies have explored the impact of SLA on learners' performance in second language classrooms. Pichette (2009) contends that learners encounter SLA as they fear criticism, negative evaluation, and judgmental remarks in a second language learning setting. Lababidi (2016) highlights the manifold challenges faced by second language learners, rooted in psychosocial and educational factors unique to each learner's context. Ehrman (1996) elucidates that individuals employ various methods, including "defense mechanisms," to

safeguard their emotional equilibrium and self-esteem. Anxious language learners may exhibit defensive indicators such as hesitancy in participation, avoidance of tasks, and a negative attitude. Horwitz (2001) notes the extensive research on SLA/FLA, emphasizing anxiety as a highly studied variable in psychology and education. Researchers have delved into identifying the effects on learners' language acquisition processes and diagnosing various causes of SLA.When investigating second language anxiety, it is essential to incorporate different variables introduced by Bailey in 1983. One such variable, the intra-personal variable, can significantly impact learners' language anxiety, encompassing personal characteristics, beliefs, and attitudes within second language learning (Bailey, 1983.). Gargalianou et al. (2015) identify socio-biographical variants such as personality, self-worth, age, frequency of language use, and gender as factors influencing learners' language learning process. Peacock (2001) and Altan (2006) underline that some learners hold unrealistic beliefs about language learning, such as the notion that a second language should be spoken with a native-like accent and that learning involves memorization and translation. Bailey's study (1983) one of the first to examine the second language anxiety from learners' perspectives, reveals that the competitive nature of second language learning can induce anxiety as learners compare themselves with their peers. Park (1995) conducted a study involving 338 English as a foreign language learners in Korean universities, identifying themes like motivation, formal English, self-efficacy, social interaction, learning spoken English, and foreign language aptitude as significant sources of anxiety. Bacon and Finnemann's study (1990) with 938 Spanish language learners suggests that curriculum planners should consider learners' attitudes towards language learning and understand their expectations.

Guiora (1983) asserts that foreign language learning itself is a "profoundly unsettling psychological proposition." MacIntyre and Gardner (1993) find that anxious learners often underestimate their true language proficiency. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) link overstudying to second language anxiety, while Hashemi and Abbasi (2013) clarify that the cultural and social environment can impact learners' second language anxiety (SLA), is emphasizing the significance of the learning environment. Learners may be particularly concerned about factors such as ethnicity, foreignness, social status, relations within the class, or gender.

Gender is highlighted as a prominent factor in the language learning process by Batters (1986). Kitano (2001) establishes a link between gender and second language anxiety, noting that male learners who perceive themselves as less competent in a second language tend to experience higher level of anxiety as compared to female learners. While Campbell and Shaw (1994) and Kitano (2001) suggest that female learners experience less anxiety level, On the other hand, some other researchers reported the opposite notion (Donovan & MacIntyre, 2005; Furnham & Heaven, 1999; Machida, 2001). Öztürk and Gürbüz (2013) observe that female learners exhibit greater motivation in learning English than their male counterparts but they also note that female learners tend to feel more anxious when speaking English in the classroom compared to male learners. According to Ohata (2005), teachers' perceptions are important in learners' second language acquisition. Second language teachers can help to reduce the anxiety level of the students when teaching the target language. As mentioned by Kráľová (2016), traditional learning styles,

its strictness and formality were major sources of stress. Creating a learner-friendly atmosphere in the classroom and selecting appropriate teaching methods are few of the solutions that teachers can employ to help decrease learners' second language anxiety.

Conversely, the study by Dewale, MacIntyre, Boudreu and Dewale (2016) finds that female learners describe their second language classroom as more enjoyable than male learners, despite experiencing higher levels of anxiety. Studies by Dewaele et al. (2008) and Matsuda and Gobel (2004) indicate no significant difference in second language anxiety between gender groups. The inconclusive nature of the results from studies on the relationship between learners' gender and second language learning over the years prompts this study to focus specifically on the gender of tertiary level learners and their beliefs about SLA in the context of English as a second language learning.This research examines the factors contributing to language anxiety among first-year undergraduate ESL students at Lahore Leads University. It seeks to assess whether there are variations in the degree of second language anxiety based on gender, and how such differences impact classroom performance. Additionally, this study fills a research void, as previous investigations have not explored how gender and personal beliefs of first-year undergraduates influence their anxiety levels when learning English as a second language.

Statement of the Problem

Language anxiety is a prevalent issue among ESL learners and it causes to hinder their performance to learn English as second language. This study helps to understand the nature of language anxiety and its effect on the performance of ESL learner in the classroom.

Research Objectives

1- To investigate the causes of language anxiety among ESL learners.
2- To assess the influence of language anxiety on the academic performance of ESL learners in the classroom.

Research Questions

1- What are the causes of language anxiety among the ESL learners in the classroom?
2- How does language anxiety influence the academic performance of ESL students?

Research Framework

The model and framework Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was introduced by Horwitz and Cope in 1983, has been applied in this study. The FLCAS is a self-report instrument designed to measure the level of anxiety that students experience in the context of learning a foreign language in the classroom. It is widely used in the field of language education to assess and research the anxiety specifically associated with learning and using a foreign language, which can affect both learning outcomes and student confidence and behaviour. The scale includes four items that address anxiety related to

communication in the language being learned, understanding the teacher, and interacting with peers in the language learning setting.

Figure 1

Language Anxiety Scale
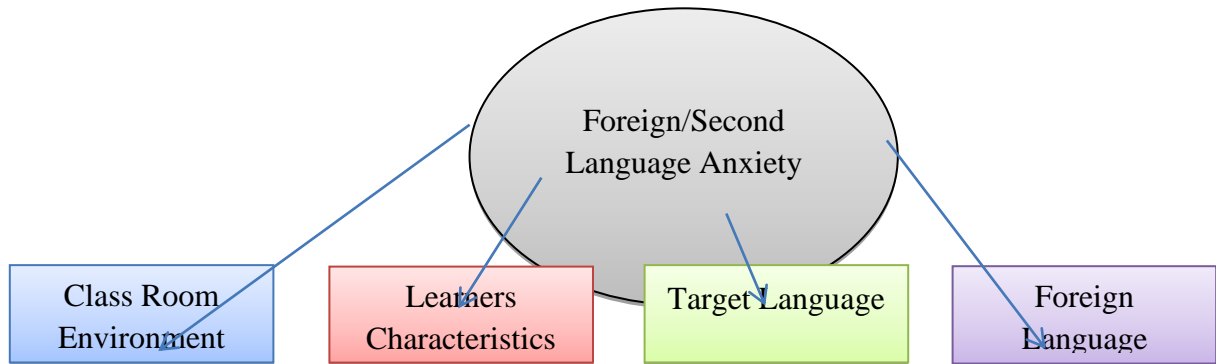
This tool helps to get better understand how anxiety influences language learning processes and proposes different strategies to reduce anxiety and improve educational outcomes in language education.

Methodology

Participants

Quantitative method was applied in this research. Total 200 students from first year undergraduate (100 males and 100 females) from Lahore Leads University were taken as samples for this study. The age of the students ranged between 19-23 years. The students belonged to different regions of the country and they all had different experiences of learning English as second Language.

Instruments

Survey research was conducted and 1 to 5 point likert scale was used. The questionnaire was developed in the framework (FLCAS) Foreign/Second Language Classroom Activities Scale which Horwitz and Cope introduced this framework in 1983. The questionnaire consists of 31 statements and 10 sections. These 31 statements were provided with a response continuum; SD= strongly disagree, D= disagree, N= neuter, A= agree, SA= strong agree. The randomly 200 undergraduates students (100 males and 100 females) were asked 31 questions using likert scale 1 to 5 manly focusing on the response provided by participantsfor the selected questions which have been developed in the frame work of Horwitz (1983).

Procedure

The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire according to their perspectives of English and how the anxiety influenced on them to learn English as a Second Language. After the completion of the questionnaire by the participants of Lahore Leads University, randomly 200 undergraduates students were selected (100 females and 100 males) to carry out the structured questionnaire. The selected participants were asked approximately 31 questions in the questionnaire. However, the number of questions varied depending on the answers provided by the participants. The gathered data from both (males and females) the questionnaire was then thoroughly analyzed to identify whether the gender of the learners causes the anxiety level when learning English as a second language.

Analysis

The participants of the study were asked to complete the questionnaire according to their perceptions towards English language and their experiences in learning English as a second language. The table below indicates the statistical analysis of responses provided by the participants for 31 developed questions in the frame work of (Horwitz 1983). SPSS software was used to analyze the data. For this research, 200 participants were selected randomly. This analysis is based on 200 valid responses and examines the distribution of agreement levels using frequency counts.

Demographic Information

Table 1

Gender of the participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Male	100	49.3	50.0	50.0
Valid	Female	100	49.3	50.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

The table 1 shows the gender distribution of participants in a study; indicate the frequency and percentage of male and female respondents. In this study 100 male and 100 female were selected. SPSS software was applied to find out the Frequencies to generate such tables, which provide insights into the distribution of categorical variables.

Table 2

I often feel anxious when learning English as a second language.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly disagree	30	14.8	15.0	15.0
	Disagree	80	39.4	40.0	55.0
Valid	Neutral	51	25.1	25.5	80.5
	Agree	29	14.3	14.5	95.0
	Strongly agree	10	4.9	5.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	

Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

Table 2 suggests that high frequency is 80 which show disagree participant. This majority response indicates that mostly participants do not feel anxiety during learning English. The 51 participants were chosen a neutral stance.About a quarter of respondents may have mixed feelings and situational anxiety. This neutrality might indicate variability in anxiety depending on learning circumstances, teaching methods, or personal experiences. The 10 participants strongly agreed. A minority of participants clearly experience significant anxiety, representing a group that could benefit from targeted interventions. The frequency analysis (SPSS) reveals that the majority of participants do not feel anxious while learning English, with only a minority reporting anxiety.

Table 3

Anxiety affects my motivation to engage in English language learning activities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	40	19.7	20.0	20.0
	Disagree	40	19.7	20.0	40.0
	Neutral	49	24.1	24.5	64.5
	Agree	51	25.1	25.5	90.0
	Strongly agree	20	9.9	10.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

In the given table 3, a ration of 40 participants have expressed that anxiety does not affect their motivation. It indicates that a significant portion of learners cannot perceive anxiety as a barrier and hurdle to their engagement in English learning activities. The 49 participants (24.5%) remain undecided, that show uncertainty about the impact of anxiety on their motivation. While, 51 participants have given response that anxiety affects their motivation.This analysis indicates that while a significant portion of learners do not experience anxiety as a demotivating factor, a considerable minority does.

Table 4

The classroom environment in my English language classes contributes to my anxiety

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	49	24.1	24.5	24.5
	Disagree	81	39.9	40.5	65.0
	Neutral	40	19.7	20.0	85.0
	Agree	20	9.9	10.0	95.0
	Strongly agree	10	4.9	5.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

Table 4 indicates that 49 participants are strongly disagree, while81 participants have given reportofdisagree, which make a cumulative total of 65.0% who believe the classroom environment does not significantly contribute to their anxiety.This majority indicates a generally supportive or neutral classroom setting for most learned. 40 participants havereported being neutral. It is suggesting uncertainty about the relationship between classroom environment and anxiety. The 20 participants are agree, and 10 participants are strongly agreed, that contribute to a cumulative 15.0% who find the classroom environment anxiety-inducing a minority, which indicate the need for attention to potential stressors within the classroom, such as teacher-student dynamics, peer pressure, or instructional methods. The findings indicate that mostly participants do not perceive the classroom environment as a source of anxiety, as the minority does.

Table 5

Teaching methods used in my English classes increase my anxiety levels.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	60	29.6	30.0	30.0
	Disagree	42	20.7	21.0	51.0
	Neutral	38	18.7	19.0	70.0
	Agree	10	4.9	5.0	75.0
	Strongly agree	50	24.6	25.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

Table 5 suggests that sixty participants remained strongly disagree. This describes that more than half of the participants believe teaching methods do not significantly contribute to their anxiety. The 38 participants reported a neutral response, which reflect uncertainty and ambivalence regarding the relationship between teaching methods and anxiety. This group indicates that anxiety levels are influenced by factors other than teaching methods or by variability in teaching styles. The 10 participants reported to be agreed, while 50 participants express strongly agree**.**This significant minority suggests that some teaching methods indeed heighten anxiety levels for these participants. The given analysis shows that mostly participants do not find teaching methods anxiety.

Table 6

The overall atmosphere in my English language classes, including interactions with peers, affects my anxiety levels.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	11	5.4	5.5	5.5
	Disagree	90	44.3	45.0	50.5
	Neutral	31	15.3	15.5	66.0
	Agree	48	23.6	24.0	90.0
	Strongly agree	20	9.9	10.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	

Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

Table 6 reveals that 11 participants reported strongly disagreed, and 90 participants show disagree. It indicates that a majority of participants believe the classroom atmosphere, including peer interactions, and does not contribute significantly to their anxiety levels. The 31 participants responded neutrally, which indicate that some participants perceive the classroom atmosphere as neither mitigating nor exacerbating their anxiety. The 48 participants responded agree, and 20 participants reported strongly agreed. This indicates a significant minority feel that the classroom atmosphere, including peer interactions, exacerbates their anxiety. The findings highlight a divided perception of the classroom atmosphere's impact on anxiety. While the majority find the environment non-anxiety-inducing, a significant minority experiences anxiety due to peer interactions and the overall atmosphere.

Table 7

I am aware of resources (e.g., tutoring, language labs, and workshops) available to help improve my English skills at Lahore Leads University.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	18	8.9	9.0	9.0
	Disagree	62	30.5	31.0	40.0
	Agree	80	39.4	40.0	80.0
	Strongly agree	40	19.7	20.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

In the given table 18 the participants responded strongly disagree. This indicates a small proportion of participants are completely unaware of the available resources; whereas, 62 participants disagreed. This portion shows lack awareness from resources. 80 participants' responded agreed with the statement. This large group of participants acknowledges being aware of available resources which show effective communication and visibility of support mechanisms for this subgroup. The 40 participants strongly agreed. This subgroup not only acknowledges awareness but also feel confident about utilizing these resources. The data reveals a majority of students are aware of English language support resources, reflecting positively on Lahore Leads University's efforts.

Table 8

Specific challenges I face when speaking English in class impact my anxiety.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	4.9	5.0	5.0
	Disagree	50	24.6	25.0	30.0
	Neutral	90	44.3	45.0	75.0
	Agree	40	19.7	20.0	95.0

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly agree	10	4.9	5.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

In the given table the 10 participants responded strongly disagree that indicates specific challenges during speaking English in class impact their anxiety. The 50 respondents gave response disagree with the statement that they don't think speaking English in class causes anxiety. The 90 respondents were neutral, this result indicates that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The 40 participants agreed that speaking English in class impacts their anxiety. The 10 respondents strongly agreed that speaking English in class leads to anxiety. An important proportion of respondents reported a neutral stance, which suggests that some students face challenges speaking English in class. This data reflects mixed perceptions among students regarding the impact of speaking challenges on their anxiety in English classes.

Table 9

Overcoming language-related anxiety is crucial for my future success.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	20	9.9	10.0	10.0
	Neutral	40	19.7	20.0	30.0
Valid	Agree	80	39.4	40.0	70.0
	Strongly agree	60	29.6	30.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

In table 9, a ratio of 20 responses indicates disagree with the statement that they do not consider overcoming language-related anxiety crucial for their future success. The 40 participants have selected the neutral option, which indicate that they neither agree nor disagree on the significance of overcoming language-related anxiety for future success. The 80 participants agreed that overcoming language-related anxiety is crucial for their future success. The 60 responses were expressed strongly agreed that overcoming language-related anxiety is crucial for their future success. This analysis indicates that the majority of students perceive overcoming language-related anxiety as crucial for their future success, which spotlights a widespread recognition of the importance of managing anxiety in language use.

Table 10

I am confident in my English writing abilities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly disagree	10	4.9	5.0	5.0
Valid	Disagree	20	9.9	10.0	15.0
	Neutral	70	34.5	35.0	50.0

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Agree	69	34.0	34.5	84.5
	Strongly agree	31	15.3	15.5	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

Table 10 indicates that 10 participants strongly disagree, that indicate a very low level of confidence in their English writing skills. Least number of 20 responses were found disagree, that show a lack of confidence but not as strongly as the first group. Highest level of frequency of 70 participants indicated a neutral stance. This reflects uncertainty about their writing abilities. The 69 responses indicated agree, which show a high level of confidence in their English writing skills. The 31 respondents strongly agree, indicating very high confidence in their writing abilities.The given data suggests that a highly proportion of respondents are confident in their English writing skills, whereas a substantial group remains neutral and lacks confidence.

Table 11

Writing assignments contribute to my anxiety in English classes.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	4.4	4.5	4.5
	Disagree	51	25.1	25.5	30.0
	Neutral	40	19.7	20.0	50.0
	Agree	30	14.8	15.0	65.0
	Strongly agree	70	34.5	35.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

Table 11 shows that 9 respondents strongly disagreed, which indicate they do not associate writing assignments with anxiety. The 51 participants responded disagree, suggesting a quarter of the participants does not feel anxiety from writing assignments. The 40 respondents were neutral, that indicate lack of strong feelings regarding writing assignments and anxiety. The 30 participants agreed, knowing some level of anxiety associated with writing assignments. The 70 responses were found strongly agreed, which show that a specific portion of students experience high anxiety due to writing assignments. The analysis reveals that writing assignments are a significant source of anxiety for many students in English classes, with nearly half of the respondents expressing agreement

Table 12

I feel comfortable with listening to English lectures or discussions in class.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	20	9.9	10.0	10.0
	Neutral	20	9.9	10.0	20.0
	Agree	100	49.3	50.0	70.0

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly agree	60	29.6	30.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

In table 20, the participants disagreed, that indicate a lack of comfort with listening to English lectures and discussions. The 20 responses were neutral, suggesting a lack of strong feelings about listening abilities in English. The 100 participants agreed, showing that half of the students feel comfortable with listening to English lectures and discussions. The 60 participants strongly agreed, which indicate a high level of comfort with English listening tasks. This analysis indicates that mostly students feel comfortable with listening to English lectures anddiscussions.

Table 13

Understanding spoken English in academic contexts poses challenges for me.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	70	34.5	35.0	35.0
	Neutral	30	14.8	15.0	50.0
Valid	Agree	80	39.4	40.0	90.0
	Strongly agree	20	9.9	10.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

The table 13 suggests that 70 involved participants disagreed that they do not find understanding spoken English in academic contexts challenging. While, 30 were neutral, that indicates mixed perceptions about the challenges posed by spoken English in academic settings. The majority of the participants with figure of 80 responses were found agreed, which indicate a significant portion of students who are facing challenges in understanding spoken English in academic contexts. A least number with 20 respondents strongly agreed, reflect a smaller group that experiences pronounced difficulties.This analysis reveals a significant proportion of students who find understanding spoken English in academic contexts challenging.

Table 14

I am aware of resources (e.g., tutoring, language labs, and workshops) available to help improve my English skills at Lahore Leads University.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly disagree	18	8.9	9.0	9.0
	disagree	62	30.5	31.0	40.0
Valid	Agree	80	39.4	40.0	80.0
	Strongly agree	40	19.7	20.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		

| Total | | 203 | 100.0 | | |

In the table 14, the 18 responses were found strongly disagree, which indicate a lack of awareness about available resources. The participants with 62 responses disagree, suggesting limited awareness of institutional resources for English improvement. However, 80 respondents agreed, that show a significant proportion of students are aware of available resources. The 40 participants strongly agreed, that reflect a high level of resource awareness among this subset. This analysis reveals that a majority of students at Lahore Leads University are aware of resources to enhance their English skills, whereas a significant minority remains unaware.

Table 15

Utilizing available resources has helped me address my language-related anxiety.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	4.9	5.0	5.0
	Disagree	30	14.8	15.0	20.0
	Neutral	60	29.6	30.0	50.0
	Agree	62	30.5	31.0	81.0
	Strongly agree	38	18.7	19.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

Table 15 suggests that the respondent strongly disagreed, that indicate the resource utilization had no impact on their language-related anxiety. The results show that the 30 responses were disagreed, which reflect that these resources have been ineffective. The respondents with 60 responses were neutral, that suggest uncertainty about the impact of resources on their anxiety levels. The responses of 62 participants agreed, showing a significant proportion of students found the resources helpful in reducing their language-related anxiety. The 38 participants strongly agreed, affirming that the resources have been instrumental in alleviating their language-related anxiety. This analysis reveals that institutional resources are perceived as beneficial by half of the respondents in addressing language-related anxiety. However, the substantial proportion of neutral and negative responses indicates room for improvement in the design, delivery, and communication of these resources.

Table 16

I am motivated to improve my English language skills.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	10	4.9	5.0	5.0
	Neutral	50	24.6	25.0	30.0
	Agree	80	39.4	40.0	70.0
	Strongly agree	60	29.6	30.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	

Missing	System	3	1.5
Total		203	100.0

The table 16 shows 10 respondents disagreed, which indicate a lack of motivation to improve English skills. The half responses with ratio of 50 were neutral, that suggest ambivalence about their motivation. Majority participants with number of 80 agreed, that represent a significant proportion motivated to improve their English skills. Strongly agreed responses with number of 60 indicate a high level of motivation among this subset.This analysis demonstrates a predominantly motivated student body and their positive attitudes toward improving English skills. However, the neutral responses reveal an opportunity to enhance clarity and focus in students' language learning goals

Table 17

I have specific language learning goals that influence my efforts.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	70	34.5	35.0	35.0
	Agree	92	45.3	46.0	81.0
	Strongly agree	38	18.7	19.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

In the given table.17, the 70 participants reported neutrality that indicates a lack of clarity and decisiveness regarding the presence of specific language learning goals. The responses of 92 participants indicate that they agreed, suggesting that nearly half acknowledge having defined goals influencing their efforts**.** The 38 participants strongly agreed, which reflect a subset with a clear and robust commitment to achieve their language learning objectives.This analysis indicates that 65% of students understand the importance of specific language learning goals, which highlights a generally positive orientation toward goal-directed efforts.

Table 18

My English language teachers are supportive in addressing my concerns and anxiety.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	20	9.9	10.0	10.0
	Neutral	20	9.9	10.0	20.0
	Agree	80	39.4	40.0	60.0
	Strongly agree	80	39.4	40.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

The given table expresses that the 18 participants who responded disagree, that indicates the minority felt a lack of adequate support from their teachers. The respondents with 20

responses expressed neutrality, which reflect indifference toward the level of teacher support. While, agreed responses and strongly agreed responses showed same figure of 80. This analysis indicates that 80% of students get their teachers as supportive in addressing language-related anxiety, reinforcing the pivotal role of educators in getting a positive learning environment, whereas 20% neutral and negative responses reveal areas for improvement in communication and engagement.

Table 19

I feel comfortable interacting with peers who are fluent in English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	40	19.7	20.0	20.0
	Neutral	20	9.9	10.0	30.0
	Agree	120	59.1	60.0	90.0
	Strongly agree	20	9.9	10.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

The table 9 shows that 40 respondents disagreed, that indicate discomfort when interacting with fluent peers. A least number with 20 responses were neutral, that suggests uncertainty and mixed feelings about these interactions. A majority of the respondents with number of 120 agreed that the feel comfortable engaging with fluent peers. Just 20 responses strongly agreed, which reflect a smaller, yet significant group with high confidence in such interactions.The analysis describes a generally positive trend, with 70% of participants feeling comfortable interacting with fluent peers, whereas the 20% reporting discomfort and the 10% neutral responses indicate reveals for improvement.

Table 20

I have felt judged or embarrassed by my peers regarding my English language skills.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	11	5.4	5.5	5.5
	Disagree	60	29.6	30.0	35.5
	Neutral	30	14.8	15.0	50.5
	Agree	71	35.0	35.5	86.0
	Strongly agree	28	13.8	14.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

In the given table 11 respondents strongly disagreed while 60 participants disagreed collectively accounting for 35.5% of the sample. This significant proportion indicates that over one-third of the participants feel confident and unjudged about their English language skills in peer interactions. The participants with number of 30 chose a neutral stance that suggests a level of uncertainty about experiencing peer judgment. Most highest number

with 71 responses agreed and 28 strongly agreed, together representing 49.5% of the sample.This suggests nearly half of the participants felt judged or embarrassed by their peers, that highlights the prevalence of social anxiety related to English language proficiency in the context studied.The data reveals that nearly half of the participants experience judgment or embarrassment due to their English skills.

Peer Interactions, Feedback and Assessment

Table 21

I am satisfied with the feedback I receive on my English assignments.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	21	10.3	10.5	10.5
	Neutral	70	34.5	35.0	45.5
Valid	Agree	91	44.8	45.5	91.0
	Strongly agree	18	8.9	9.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
	Total	203	100.0		

A relatively small percentage (10.5%) of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the feedback received. This indicates that some participants find the feedback inadequate. A significant portion of participant maintained a neutral stance. This reflects variability in the feedback quality. However, the 91 respondents agreed, and the 18 responses strongly agreed, that form a majority who expressed satisfaction with the feedback. This analysis indicates a majority satisfaction with feedback on English assignments, that reflect positively on existing practices, whereas the neutral and dissatisfied responses underscore the need for a more personalized and consistent feedback approach.

Table 22

The Assessment format (e.g. exams, presentations) have impact on anxiety level.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly disagree	10	4.9	5.0	5.0
	Disagree	31	15.3	15.5	20.5
Valid	Neutral	50	24.6	25.0	45.5
	Agree	70	34.5	35.0	80.5
	Strongly agree	39	19.2	19.5	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

In the given table 10 participants strongly disagreed that the assessment format impacts their anxiety. This suggests that they feel confident regardless of the format. A slightly larger group 31 respondent disagrees, that indicates their experience little and no additional anxiety based on assessment type. A significant proportion 50 respondents remained neutral. That was unaffected by the format of assessments. This group represents a quarter of the sample, which indicates mixed feelings. Respondents with ration of 70

agree that the assessment format impacts their anxiety; whereas, the 39 participants strongly agree, that reinforce the finding that assessment types can significantly influence anxiety. The analysis reveals that assessment formats significantly impact anxiety for a majority of respondents. While some students remain unaffected, the findings underscore the need for more inclusive and flexible assessment strategies to reduce anxiety and enhance learning outcomes.

Table 23

My overall confidence in my English language abilities is high.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	4.9	5.0	5.0
	Disagree	53	26.1	26.5	31.5
	Neutral	59	29.1	29.5	61.0
	Agree	58	28.6	29.0	90.0
	Strongly agree	20	9.9	10.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

A small group of 10 participants strongly disagreed, that indicate very low confidence in their English language abilities. A significant portion of 53 participants disagreed, that suggest a lack of confidence in their abilities. The 59 participants reported neutrality regarding their confidence. Neutral responses indicate ambivalence, possibly reflecting varied experiences. The 58 respondents agreed, suggesting moderate confidence in their English abilities. The analysis indicates confidence levels, with nearly one-third reporting low confidence and one-third reporting neutrality.

Table 24

Language-related anxiety has affected my self-esteem or confidence.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	4.9	5.0	5.0
	Disagree	49	24.1	24.5	29.5
	Neutral	61	30.0	30.5	60.0
	Agree	50	24.6	25.0	85.0
	Strongly agree	30	14.8	15.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

In the given table 24, a small group of 10 participants strongly disagreed, which indicate that language-related anxiety has no impact on their self-esteem and confidence.A larger group of 49 respondents also disagreed, that suggest they are generally strong to the effects of language-related anxiety. The largest proportion of 61 participants expressed neutrality that indicates mixed experiences regarding the impact of language-related

anxiety on their self-esteem and confidence. The analysis indicates that language-related anxiety has a significant impact on self-esteem and confidence for a considerable portion of respondents.

Table 25

Overcoming language-related anxiety will contribute to my personal and academic growth.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly disagree	20	9.9	10.0	10.0
	Disagree	29	14.3	14.5	24.5
Valid	Neutral	31	15.3	15.5	40.0
	Agree	100	49.3	50.0	90.0
	Strongly agree	20	9.9	10.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

Table 25 expresses a small proportion of 20 participants strongly disagreed with the statement, that indicate skepticism about the role of overcoming anxiety in their growth. A slightly larger group of 29 participants disagreed, that indicates they do not perceive Neutral responses indicate diverse experiences with anxiety and a lack of understanding of its potential impact. The 100 respondents agreed that overcoming language-related anxiety enhance their personal and academic growth. This givendata reveals that a majority of respondents recognize the importance of overcoming language-related anxiety for their growth, while a smaller group either disagree or remain neutral.

Table 26

Improving my English language skills is crucial for my future success.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	20	9.9	10.0	10.0
	Neutral	30	14.8	15.0	25.0
Valid	Agree	100	49.3	50.0	75.0
	Strongly agree	50	24.6	25.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

In the given table 26, a small portion of 20 participants disagreed with this statement, that they do not think improving English skills as a critical factor for their future success. A significant group of 30 participants expressed neutral responses that indicate ambivalence about the importance of English proficiency for future success. The 100 participants agreed, it emphasizes the widespread belief that improving English skills is an important factor in achieving success. This dominant response highlights the significance of English proficiency in a globalized academic and professional landscape, especially in

multilingual contexts like Pakistan. This analysis reveals that an overwhelming majority of respondents view improving English language skills as crucial for their future success, whereas the minority who disagree and remain neutral underscore the need for nuanced approaches that address diverse perspectives and career paths.

Table 27

I envision using English in my future career or academic pursuits.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	20	9.9	10.0	10.0
	Neutral	60	29.6	30.0	40.0
	Agree	40	19.7	20.0	60.0
	strongly agree	80	39.4	40.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

The given table 28 expresses that 20 respondents strongly disagreed with this statement, that they do not envision using English in their future endeavors. This minority reflect individuals whose career paths do not heavily rely on English proficiency. While, 60 participants chose a neutral stance, that suggest ambivalence about the role of English in their future plans. The largest category of 80 participants who reported, strongly agreed, that English will play a pivotal role in their future plans. These respondents associate English with broader opportunities in academia, global job markets, and professional growth. This analysis reveals that a majority of participants acknowledge the importance of English in their future academic and professional growth. Whereas notable minority either remain neutral or do not prioritize English, which reflect diverse perspectives and career contexts.

Table 28

Overcoming language-related anxiety is crucial for my future success.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	20	9.9	10.0	10.0
	Neutral	40	19.7	20.0	30.0
	Agree	80	39.4	40.0	70.0
	strongly agree	60	29.6	30.0	100.0
	Total	200	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.5		
Total		203	100.0		

The given table 28 expresses that 20 participants disagreed with this statement, that they do not view overcoming language-related anxiety as crucial for their future success. This group feel confidence in their language abilities. The ration of 40 respondents were neutral, whereas 80 respondents agreed that overcoming language-related anxiety is crucial for their future success.This indicates that a significant portion of participants recognize the

importance of managing language-related anxiety, likely for academic performance, career progression, and social integration in multilingual environments. 60 respondents strongly agreed, emphasizing that they believe overcoming language-related anxiety is essential for their academic or professional success. This analysis shows that the majority of respondents believe overcoming language-related anxiety is important for their future success that highlights the importance of managing anxiety in academic and professional contexts.

Findings

This study has explored the influence of second language anxiety (SLA) on the performance of first-year undergraduate ESL learners at Lahore Leads University. This analysis is based on Horwitz's (1983) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), whichindicates the important points regarding students' confidence, motivation, and anxiety levels in learning English as a second language.Both male and female participants were shown a strong interest in learning English and acknowledged its importance for academic growth and future career success. Participants were considered thatEnglish communication is a source of pride during interacting with peers and teachers.

There were not found significant difference between male and female learners in form of language anxiety levels.Both genders were responded same toincrease anxiety during writing assignments, oral presentations, and examinations.Moderate to high confidence was reported in writing skills by 50% of respondents, but lacked confidence(10%), and neutral (35%), indicate the need to boost self-assurance.Listening skill was generally perceived as (50%) comfortable, though 10% were felt discomfort, which highlight the gaps in oral comprehension skills.Writing assignments became the cause of stressfor 50% of respondents, whereas 30% participants did not feelanxiety, that reflectvaried responses to tasks.Speaking anxiety was connected to peer judgment, 49.5% feelings were judged, which contribute to social anxieties.presentationsand Examinations emerged as significant triggers of language anxiety.Motivation was explored as a special factor for reducing anxiety and improving language skills,70% respondents were agreed on its importance. Mostly Participants have highlighted the value of institutional resources, but 40% have expressed lack of awareness of available tools. Teacher support and cooperation played a significant role. 80% of participants feelingwere identified supported, although 20% identified areas for improvement.Participant's interactions were effective for building confidence, with 70% feeling comfortable, but 30% reported discomfort, that indicate a need for inclusive peer strategies.54.5% of participants were expressed satisfaction with feedback quality, whereas 10.5% were expressed dissatisfaction. Assessment formats contributed to **stress** for 54.5% of respondents, which highlight the need for flexible and inclusive assessment strategies.Language anxiety impacted self-esteem, and confidence with 30.5% reporting mixed effects, that emphasize the importance of emotional support to address barriers to learning.English proficiency was regarded as essential for future success, with 50% agreeing and 30% strongly agreeing. Whereas 25% of participants remained neutral or disagreed,that reflectuncertainty about career goals.This

studywas identified the necessity of personalized feedback, inclusive assessment formats, and goal-setting strategies to reduce anxiety and enhance

confidence.Teacherencouragement,Institutional support, and peer engagement were identified as critical areas for strengthening students' academic and professional outcome .

To sum up the discussion, it could be stated that 50% reported moderate to high confidence in writing skill and 50% feel comfortable with listening tasks, 30–35% indicated uncertainty, that highlight a need to boost self-assurance. Peer judgment put up to social anxiety, especially in speaking tasks, whereas motivation 70% and teacher support 80% were identified as important factors in reducing anxiety. The findings also reveal that 40% participants show lack awareness of institutional resources and 54.5% found assessments stressful, which indicate a need for inclusive strategies.

Conclusion

This study was explored the impact of second language anxiety (SLA) on the performance of first-year undergraduate ESL learners at Lahore Leads University, applying Horwitz's (1983) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) as a framework. The findings were confirmed that both male and female respondents demonstrated a strong interest in learning English as a second language. They have recognized its importance for academic success and future career prospects. This study has explored that language anxiety was a common experience among respondents, during writing assignments, oral presentations, and exams. This anxiety was connected to fear of peer judgment, lack of confidence, and stress related to assessment formats.

In spite of these challenges, most participants' reports and responses were moderated to high confidence in their English skills, particularly in speaking and listening tasks. They admitted the role of peer support,motivation, and institutional resources inreducing anxiety and enhancing language performance. Teacher support played a crucial role in reducing anxiety levels , that is why 80% of participants were expressed satisfaction with the guidance that were provided by teachers.Gaps were identified in utilization of resource, awareness of learning techniques and strategies.

This analysis has emphasized students' English language proficiency and motivated them to improve; varying levels of anxiety and confidence highlight the need for selected interventions. Individualized feedback, all-inclusive and flexible assessment formats, and structured goal-setting can further support ESL learners. However, collaborative learning environments and institutional support can help address social anxieties and improve self-assurance.

References

Altan, M. Z. (2006).Beliefs about language learning of foreign language-major university students.*Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 31*, 45–52.

Aida, Yukie (1994). Examination of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Copes' construct of foreign language anxiety – the case of students of Japanese.*Modern Language Journal, 78*(2), 155-168.

Argaman, O., & Abu-Rabia, S. (2002). The influence of language anxiety on English reading and writing tasks among native Hebrew speakers.*Language, Culture and Curriculum, 15*, 143-160.

Bacon, S.M., &Finnemann, M.D. (1990).A study of attitudes, motives and strategies of university foreign language students and their disposition to authentic oral and written input.*Modern Language Journal, 74*(4), 459–473.

Baily, K.M. (1983). Competitiveness and anxiety in adult second language learning. Language Learning. 33(4),63-103.

Alexieva, Bistra (1997). A typology of interpreter-mediated events.*The Translator, 3*(2), 153-174.

Cheng, Yuh-show (1998). Foreign language anxiety in Taiwanese student interpreters.*Meta, 54*(3), 605-621.

Coughlin, Josette (1988). Inside or between languages, oral communication equals interpretation. In L. D. Hammond (Ed.), *Language at Crossroads. Proceedings of the 29th Annual Conference of the American Translators Association* (pp. 105-113). Medford, N.J.: Learned Information.

Guiora, A. Z. (1983). The dialectic of language acquisition.*Language Learning, 33*, 3–12.

HashemiM.,&Abbasi M. (2013). The role of the teacher in alleviating anxiety in language classes.*International Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences, 4*, 640–646.

Horwitz, E. K. (2001). Language anxiety and achievement.*Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 21*, 112-.

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. A. (1986).Foreign language classroom anxiety.*The Modern Language Journal, 70*(2), 125-132.

Kitano, K. (2001). Anxiety in the college Japanese language classroom.*The Modern Language Journal, 85*, 549–566.

Kráľová, Z. (2016). Foreign language anxiety.*Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia*.

Kuntz, P.S. (1996). Beliefs about language learning: The Horwitz Model. *University of Wisconsin-Madison*.

Lababidi, R. L. (2016). Language Anxiety: A Case Study of the Perceptions and Experiences of Students of English as a Foreign Language in a Higher Education Institution in the United Arab Emirates. *English Language Teaching, 9*(9), 185-198.

MacInytre, P. D., Gardner R. C. (1989). Anxiety and language learning: Towards a theoretical clarification. *Language Learning, 39*, 251-75.

Krashen, S. (1982).*Principles and practice in second language acquisition* (2nd ed.). Oxford, England: Pergamon Press.

Kruk, M. (2018). Changes in foreign language anxiety: A classroom perspective. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 28*(1), 31-57.

Liu, M., & Jackson, J. (2008).An exploration of Chinese EFL learners' unwillingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety.*The Modern Language Journal, 92*(1), 71-.

Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding second language acquisition*. London: Hodder Education.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Bailey, P., & Daley, C. E. (1999). Factors associated with foreign language anxiety. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 20*(2), 217-239.

Macaro, E. (2013). Second Language Acquisition: The Landscape, the Scholarship and the Reader. In *Macaro, E. The Bloomsbury Companion to Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 3-28). UK. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

McGregor, W.B. (2015). *Linguistics: An Introduction* (2nd ed). London. England: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Menezes, V. (2013).Second Language Acquisition Reconciling Theories.*Open Journal of Applied Sciences, 3*, 404-412.

Rajanthran, S., Prakash, R., and Husin, A. (2013). Anxiety levels of Foreign Language learners in the IEP classroom: A focus on Nilia University's Intensive English Programme (IEP). *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 2041-2051.

Ramalingam, P. (2013). *Educational Psychology: Teaching and Learning Perspectives*. New Delhi: McGraw Hill Education (India) Private Limited.

Serraj, S. &Noordin, N. (2013).Relationship among Iranian EFL Students' Foreign Language anxiety, Foreign Language Listening Anxiety and Their Listening Comprehension.*English Language Teaching, 6*(5), 1-12.

Shah, S.F. (2012). An Investigation into the alignment between the Government's dictated English Language Curriculum and Classroom Practice at Secondary level in Pakistan. (Doctoral Thesis).*Nottingham Trent University*. England.

Sigelman, C.K., and Rider, E. A. (2003).*Human Development*. New Delhi: Cengage Learning India Private Limited Trang, T. T. T.

Moni, K., &Baldauf Jr, R. B. (2013). Foreign Language anxiety: Understanding Its sources and Effects from Insiders' Perspective. *The Journal of Asia: 10*(1), 95-131.

Wang, N. (2005). Beliefs about Language Learning and foreign language anxiety: A Study of University Students' Learning English as a Foreign Language in Mainland China (Master's Dissertation). *University of Victoria*.

MacIntyre P. D. and Gardner R. C. (1989). Anxiety and Second Language-Language Learning: Toward a Theoretical Clarification. *Language Learning, 39*, 251-75.

Neale, J. M., &Katahn, M. (1968).Anxiety, choice, and stimulus uncertainty.*Journal of Personality, 36*, 235-45.

Horwitz E. K. (1986). Preliminary evidence for the reliability and validity of a foreign language anxiety scale.*TESOL Quarterly, 20*, 559-562.

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz,M. B., &Cope,J.(1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety *The Modern Language Journal, 70*, 725-732, 77, 67&1682.