

Measuring Language Anxiety in an EFL Context

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Abstract

It has been reported that the learners in foreign language classes suffer from considerable levels of anxiety because they are faced with the challenge of handling the contents in the medium of the target language they are not very much familiar with. While interacting with their teachers, class fellows and even the textbooks, the students are confronted with different social, cultural and psychological factors that create anxiety in EFL learners that makes their objective of achieving proficiency in the target language rather difficult. The present study is an attempt to identify Saudi EFL learners' anxiety and its causes by administering FLCAS (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986) to randomly-selected 216 freshmen students enrolled in the preparatory year programme at Taif University. The results reveal that Saudi preparatory year students represented by the participants of this study bear medium level of language learning anxiety. Among the four anxiety factors, communication apprehension anxiety remained at the top with an average mean of 3.1 followed by English class room anxiety. Fear of negative evaluation anxiety has been assigned the third position and test anxiety got the least average mean. The following suggestions are forwarded based on the findings of the data analyses that have significant pedagogical implications. It is suggested that EFL teachers should discuss language learning anxiety, its effects and various related issues with the students in the beginning so that they should be on board to minimize foreign language anxiety. It is also highly recommended that the teachers should exploit appropriate teaching methodologies to ensure friendly atmosphere in EFL classes to facilitate learning process. The students should be encouraged to participate actively not only in various class activities but also contribute positively by sharing their likes and dislikes in learning process. The teachers should ensure that the students' level is taken into consideration while presenting, explaining and practicing the target language. It is important to ensure better teacher-students and students' mutual relationship for increased interaction in the target language.

Key Words: language anxiety; proficiency; pedagogical implications

1. Introduction

Considering the significant and ever-increasing role of English language in different walks of modern life, Saudi Arabia is among those countries which are investing huge resources to promote English language culture and achieve effective ELT. Nevertheless, despite all these efforts Saudi EFL learners are reported to have serious lacking in their English language proficiency (Javid, Ajmal, Farooq, 2012). Though there may be some factors specific to the socio-cultural dynamics of Saudi EFL learners, learning a foreign language in classroom setting is often full of challenges compared to the acquisition of mother tongue that comes naturally (Trang, 2012). It has also been reported that among various factors that cause this challenge, motivation, intelligence, gender, personality, attitudes, age, anxiety etc. occupy an important place in this regard (Trang, 2012).

Learning English as second or foreign language pedagogy has undergone tremendous changes during the last few decades and individual learners and their differences have become major areas of interest in ELT research. Gardner and MacIntyre (1992) have posited that ESL/EFL individual differences fell into three categories which are: 1) cognitive factors including language learning strategies, language learning experiences, language learning aptitude, intelligence etc., 2) affective factors such as learning styles, motivational constructs, attitudes and beliefs toward language, language anxiety etc. and 3) other miscellaneous factors including the age and socio-cultural experiences of the learners. Among these multiple factors "one of the affective factors which play an important role in learning second or foreign language is anxiety" (Al-Shboul, Ahmad, Nordin, & Rahman, 2013). Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate its role and the findings have revealed that it is an extremely important predictor that affects ESL/EFL learners' performance (Liu & Huang, 2011; Olivares-Cuhat, 2010; Krashen, 1987). Gardner, Tremblay, and Masgoret (1997) have tested the influence of various effective variables on language learning anxiety and the results reported that anxiety was found to be the most significant factor that hindered language achievement among EFL learners.

The interest in investigating the correlation of anxiety with language learning achievement dates back to 1970s but the frequency of relevant studies has increased significantly especially during the last two decades. These studies can be divided into two broader categories. The first category of these studies is the one that attempted to

investigate the effect of anxiety on learning English as a second or foreign language in general (Al-Shboul, Ahmad, Nordin, & Rahman, 2013; Liu & Huang, 2011; Alghothani, 2010; Awan, Azher, Nadeem, & Naz, 2010; Batumlu & Erden, 2007; Hauck & Hurd, 2005; Burden, 2004; Abu-Ghararah, 1999; Sanchez-Herrero & Sanchez, 1992; Bailey, 1983 etc.) whereas a considerable number of researcher aimed to find out the correlation of anxiety in relation to different language skills, i.e., speaking, listening, reading and writing, individually (see for example Burden, 2004; Casdado & Dereshiwsky, 2004; Cheng, 2004; Horwitz, 2001; Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, & Daley, 2000; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Sanchez-Herrero & Sanchez, 1992). Among all these studies, the research study that was conducted by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) has contributed significantly to identify foreign language anxiety because they developed a systematic and comprehensive instrument namely Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) that has been widely used worldwide to investigate this component of great pedagogical importance.

2. Literature Review

Among the factors that influence language learning process, anxiety is considered one of the most important ones. The realization of its significance was first recognized in the Western countries as early as 1970's and numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship of anxiety and foreign language learning effectiveness (See for example Brown, 1973; Chastain, 1975; Scovel, 1978; Bailey, 1983). It has also been reported that anxiety negatively affects achievement of a foreign language (Horwitz, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Campbell and Ortiz (1991) have stated that nearly 50% of second language (SL) and foreign language (FL) learners experience varying degree of anxiety whereas research also indicate that level of anxiety is much higher in FL learners (Siegel, 1989). The definition of the term anxiety seems to be multifaceted phenomenon as various people have defined it from different perspectives, e.g., some have defined it to understand this phenomenon through identifying its nature and symptoms. Muhareb (1997) has posited that "anxiety is an ambiguous term used in a variety of contexts" (p. 34). It has been defined as "a subjective experience of apprehension or tension, imposed by the expectation of danger or distress or the need for a special effort" (Kelly, 1980, p. 3). Sellers (2000 cited in Haskin, 2003) defines anxiety as "feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, insecurity, or apprehension and is intricately intertwined with self-esteem issues and natural ego-preserving fears" (p. 33). As mentioned earlier the term anxiety has been understood from different perspectives and it may be categorized into two main kinds. One group emphasizes on its physiological symptoms whereas the second group attempts to understand it through the perspective of learning a foreign language. Representing the physiological side Saito and Samimy (1996) have stated that "research has shown that foreign language anxiety can be identified by physiological symptoms such as sweaty palms, nervous stomachs, increased heartbeats, and accelerated pulse rates" (p. 240). In the same direction, Young (1991) has reported that

"foreign language anxiety may manifest itself through psycholinguistic factors such as distortion of sounds, inability to reproduce the intonation and rhythm of the language, 'freezing up' when called on to perform, and forgetting words or phrases just learnt or simply refusing to speak and remaining silent." (p. 428)

A growing mass of research has offered valuable insights into the fact that anxiety is not limited to any particular academic discipline but it is found among the students of various disciplines. Cassady (2010) has introduced the term *academic anxiety* as "a unifying formulation for the collection of anxieties learners experience while in schools" (p. 1). It has also been reported that "there is some commonality in terms of the nature and consequences of anxiety, the type of anxiety triggered in and suffered by learners from each specific discipline is, to a certain extent, unique to that specific discipline" (Trang, 2012, p. 69). Considering this background, foreign language anxiety (FLA) is also reported as one kind of anxiety that affects foreign language learners. Much research conducted in the various regions of the world strongly indicates that foreign language anxiety (FLA) is not an abstract concept studied in laboratory settings on induced-anxiety conditions, but a real construct that affect numerous EFL learners (e.g., Coryell & Clark, 2009; Kostić-Bobanović, 2009; Liu, 2006; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Tallon, 2009; Trang, 2012).

The construct of anxiety is defined as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 78). Talking about the learners' psychological underpinnings during the process of learning a second/foreign language, Tanveer (2008) postulates that "feelings of anxiety, reticence, apprehension and nervousness are commonly expressed by foreign language learners in learning foreign languages" (p. 3). Among numerous definitions of this important construct, the one formulated by Horwitz et al. (1986) occupies a significant status which suggests that foreign language anxiety is "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language

learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p.128). Research has revealed that anxiety may be classified into three sub categories, i.e., trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety. It has been reported that trait anxiety manifests itself into a more permanent predisposition to be anxious during some process whereas situation-specific and state anxiety are usually the result of and are experienced during a specific event or situation (Brown, 2001; Scovel, 1978). Among these three kinds of anxiety, "language anxiety could be classified under the category of situation-specific anxiety, which refers to the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient" (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993 cited in Qaddomi, 2013, p. 1537).

It has been reported that EFL anxiety has powerful impact on foreign language learning process and learners' scope of success and achievement and language learning process is negatively proportionate to high level of FLA (Wu, 2010; Gregersen, 2003; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Price, 1991). Wu (2010) has reported that numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between FLA and language learning process (Aida, 1994; Brown, 2000; Cheng, 2002; Ewald, 2007; Horwitz et. al., 1986; Young, 1992). It has also been observed that early studies that were undertaken to investigate this construct didn't show consistent results and seemed unable to analyse this emotional and psychological construct. Occhipinti (2009) has posited that "studies conducted in the 1970s were, in fact, difficult to interpret because of inconsistent findings" (p. 11). Scovel (1978) has reviewed and analysed the available early literature on the relationship of anxiety and language learning and stated that it was not easy to establish a clear-cut relationship between foreign language achievement and the anxiety learning suffer from. He further elaborates that it may be due to the lack of reliable instrument to identify this knotty relationship. Therefore, review of early literature has also showed the presence of some studies which have reported a positive relationship between FLA and learning achievement (Chastain, 1975; Scovel, 1978) or like the study of Kleinmann (1977) which failed to exhibit any clear-cut relationship between these seemingly contradicting constructs. Among the early studies which showed that FLA and language learning achievement are negatively linked to each other include Chastain (1975), Gardner, Smythe, Clement, and Gliksman (1976) and McCoy (1979). Based on the contradicting results in the relationship of FLA and language learning performance, researchers presented two interesting definitions of this complex construct. Talking about the presence of two kinds of anxieties, Alpert and Haber (1960) stated in one of their important papers related to the "description of a new achievement-anxiety scale which has been devised to indicate not only the presence of or absence of anxiety, but whether the anxiety facilitates or debilitates test performance" (p. 207). Occhipinti (2009) reports that "the first one, termed *facilitating anxiety*, is described as the positive force which may lead the student to become even more motivated for language learning" leading the learners of a language "to deals with the task in a more rational way, attempting more interpretive messages" (p. 12). The flip side of this kind of anxiety is "*debilitating anxiety*" which demotivates the learner and results in an avoidance behavior toward learning a foreign language (Alpert & Haber, 1960; Scovel, 1978).

Though numerous studies have been conducted to investigate various aspects of FLA due to its significant role as an important affective element in learning a language, the study of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) may be considered as the most influential in this regard. They investigated 225 learners from a beginning language class held at University of Texas and developed a systematic instrument known as Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which proved to be a unique contribution to identify the scope of FLA and has been widely used by the researchers worldwide to measure FLA and its effect on language learning process. This instrument includes 33 Likert-scale items. This instrument comprises of four related components namely 1) communication apprehension, 2) test anxiety, 3) fear of negative evaluation and 4) fear of language classes.

Qaddomi (2013) conducted a perceptive investigation to find out EFL learners' anxiety studying at Al- Quds Open University (QOU). It has also been investigated whether anxiety levels are influenced along gender and educational level lines. The study was conducted on randomly selected 52 EFL learners from Al-Quds Open University and the most commonly used scale FLCAS designed by Horwitz et al. (1986) was adopted for this survey report. The findings of the study have showed that EFL learners from QOU are anxious especially when they have to speak with native speakers. It has also been reported that female EFL learners from QOU suffer from higher level of anxiety as compared to their male counterparts in EFL classrooms. The results did not show any statistically significant differences due to the participants' educational level. It has been frequently reported that university students need to communicate in the target language in FL classrooms that make them anxious: a situation that leads to FLA. Ezzi (2012) investigated Yemeni EFL learners of the English Department in the Faculty of Education at Hodeidah University to measure their level of anxiety in relation to their gender,

educational level, age and residence. The participants were 163 EFL Yemeni learners: 84 (6 males and 78 females) 2nd year and 79 (6 males and 73 females) 4th year students. To collect data Arabic version of revised FLCA scale (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) was administered to the participants of the study. The results indicate that Yemeni EFL learners represented by the population of this study bear high level of anxiety in favour of female cohort. The findings also showed that significant differences were recorded along age and residence factors as well but no differences were found due to their educational level. Suggestions have been forwarded to minimize FLA. Nahavandi and Mukundan (2013) investigated Iranian EFL learners to identify their FLA. They administered Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale FLCAS (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) to the participants of the study to measure anxiety of Iranian EFL learners in the four sub scales of FLCAS, i.e., communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and fear of English classes. The findings of the study revealed that the participants exhibited high level of FLA in all four sub-scales. Among the four sub-scales the results showed that communication anxiety was the most predominant anxiety component. It has also been reported that no significant differences were reported along mother tongue and gender. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) investigated 97 college students who were learning French to find out their level of anxiety and the results indicate that the participants who were more anxious in their language classes showed lack of confidence as exhibited by the fact that they found it difficult to express themselves in the target language and tended to underestimate their academic abilities toward learning French language. Another study that was conducted by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) revealed that FLA and learning achievement are negatively correlated in all the three stages of learning a second/foreign language: input, processing and output. The findings of Horwitz (1986) also suggested that language anxiety bear negative effect on language learning process and can rather cause language learners to postpone language learning indefinitely or may force them to change majors.

3. Research Questions

The objective of the study is to find out the answers of the following research questions:

- a. What are the underlying factors of communication apprehension anxiety among the preparatory year students at Taif University?
- b. What are the underlying factors of test anxiety among the preparatory year students at Taif University?
- c. What are the underlying factors of negative evaluation anxiety among the preparatory year students at Taif University?
- d. What are the underlying factors of anxiety of English classes among the preparatory year students at Taif University?

4. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The researcher reviewed the print as well as online resources such as relevant books, journals, academic articles etc. to form the theoretical framework for this survey research. Data concerning the empirical work was gathered through the administering Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) to randomly selected 216 students enrolled at preparatory year programme at Taif University. The data generated was manually coded and descriptive analysis was run to calculate the frequencies for the various items of the questionnaire. The results were presented and discussed in the light of previous research in this field. Findings and recommendations are forwarded as a logical conclusion of this research survey.

5.2 Sample Size

Two hundred sixteen (n= 216) randomly selected male and female students enrolled at preparatory year programme at Taif University participated in this survey research.

5.3 Statistical Analysis

1. The responses of the participants are manually coded entered and descriptive analysis has been run using SPSS (version 17).
2. The descriptive statistics in terms of means, medians, standard deviations and percentages have been calculated to present results and discussion.

5.4 Instrumentation

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986); a reliable tool to identify language learning anxiety in EFL context, was administered to the participants of this study and the data generated through these questionnaires was carefully synthesized to find out the answers of the research questions.

6. Results and Discussion

The questionnaire used in this survey research is “the FLCAS” that contains 33 items which are related to four main factors of causing anxiety in a language classroom. They include communication apprehension anxiety, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation and anxiety of English classroom. The first category contains 8 items (1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, & 32) which are related to communication comprehension anxiety. The next factor has only 5 items (2, 8, 10, 19, & 21) which are included in this inventory to gather data related to test anxiety. The third category of this inventory includes 9 items (3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, & 33) and these items are supposed to generate data related to EFL learners’ fear of negative evaluation. The last factor comprises of 10 items (4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 16, 17, 22, 26, & 28) and are associated with the anxiety related caused by English classroom.

Table 1: Data analyses for communication apprehension anxiety items

No	Questionnaire items	N	Mean	SD
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	216	2.8889	1.10250
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	216	3.6204	1.12244
14	I would <i>not</i> be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	216	3.1389	1.31155
18	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.	216	3.2963	1.17540
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	216	2.6574	1.15063
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	216	2.8889	1.07689
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	216	3.0000	1.22759
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.	216	3.2500	1.24359

Table 1 details the descriptive analyses for eight questionnaire items that elicited the participants’ responses related to communicative apprehension anxiety. Communication apprehension anxiety is learners’ reluctance and shyness to communicate in the target language and is “a distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors...arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz, et al., 1986, p.128). Aida (1994) also reports that the people who suffer from communicative apprehensive anxiety tend to avoid communication and sometimes even withdraw from communication. It has also been stated that in some extreme cases, language learners start cutting class to avoid the situation that causes anxiety and consequently they are left behind in their studies. Generally speaking the participants of this study assigned medium mean values to all the eight items of this factor indicating that their general level of communication apprehension anxiety is not very high. The results are in line with Qaddomi (2013) who also reported medium level of communicative apprehensive anxiety experienced by EFL learners at Al-Qudus University. The highest value is calculated for the item “I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class”. This seems to suggest that their anxiety is not caused by the mere act of speaking but it is triggered if they are not well prepared for their language classes. The finding is in line with Qaddomi (2013) who investigated EFL learners at A-Quds Open University and reported that the participants’ EFL learning anxiety was high on this item. The second highest mean value has been given to the item stating that they feel rather more comfortable around native speakers of the target language. This finding confirms the results of Javid et al. (2013) who investigated Saudi English major university undergraduates from the same academic context who have also showed preferences for learning English because it helps them understand native speakers of English. The participants ranked the item third highest which state that “I feel confident when I speak in foreign language classes” confirming the general trend of this factor as indicated by medium mean values assigned to all items. The lowest values remain for the items

which elicited their responses related to being self-conscious when speak in front of their class fellows and getting nervous and confused in their language classes. These results conform the overall trend of this research study regarding communication apprehension anxiety but contradict the study of Javid (2011) who investigated Saudi medical undergraduates of Taif medical college and the results reported that the cohort of that study did not like to speak in front of their class fellows. The results are in line with the findings of Liu and Jackson (2008) who have stated that language anxiety has a positive correlation with communication apprehension anxiety and it bears a negative correlation with language class risk-taking and sociability. This result partially contracts the studies of Tianjian (2010) and Nahavandi and Mukundan (2013) which revealed that majority of their participants experience moderate to high levels of speaking anxiety. The participants have assigned a medium value of 3 to the items related to experiencing nervousness when they don't understand the words of a language teacher. This partially confirm the results of Javid, et al. (2013) who investigated the attitudes of English-major undergraduates of the same university who have reported that they want to learn English to better communicate with their teachers in classes. The remaining items of this factor have been assigned medium range of around 3.

Table 2: Data analyses for test anxiety items

No	Questionnaire items	N	Mean	SD
2	I <i>don't</i> worry about making mistakes in language class.	216	3.0741	1.04507
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.	216	3.0926	1.45338
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	216	2.3056	1.33265
19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	216	2.8241	1.14793
21	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	216	2.6111	1.38318

Table 2 details the data analyses for 5 items that have been included in this itinerary to identify the EFL learners' test anxiety. Much research has offered valuable insights into the fact that test anxiety is a major component of FLA. Horwitz et al. (1986) have posited that many students forget several grammatical points during tests which they know pretty well due to this kind of anxiety. Sarason (1984 cited in Oxford, 1999) states that test anxiety is "the tendency to become alarmed about the consequences of inadequate performance on a test or other evaluation" (p.54). Conway (2007) states that this test "anxiety is produced when students remember, after the test, that they made a mistake and put down a wrong answer because of their nervousness during the test". He also suggests that the 'question types' and 'specific question format' that the learners are not fully well aware of might be the reason behind test anxiety. Supporting this Young (1991) also states that, "in language testing, the greater degree of student evaluation and the more unfamiliar and ambiguous the test tasks and formats, the more the learner anxiety is produced" (p.429).

The participants have assigned medium low values to all these five items confirming the results of Al-Shboul et al. (2013) who have reported that Palestinian EFL learners also assigned medium range to test anxiety suggesting that the cohort of this study consider test anxiety a reasonably major factor in their poor performance in examinations. Among the items of this factor, "I am usually at ease during tests in my language class" has been given the highest ranking followed by the item "I don't worry about making mistakes in language class". Both these items clearly suggest that Saudi EFL learners represented by the participants of this survey have medium level of test anxiety which hampers their performance in various examinations. The results of both these items are partially in line with the findings of Al-Shboul et al. (2013) who have also reported uneasiness and fear of making mistakes in their exams. The lowest mean values have been assigned for the 8th and 21st questionnaire items respectively which are related to the consequences of failing their English exams and the confusion even after studying much: both these items also indicate their medium test anxiety. Low mean value has been reported for the item which states that "I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make" highlighting the psychological underpinning of the participants that they are not afraid of the fact that their teachers will know their mistakes. This finding matches the results of (Javid, 2011) who investigated the preferred assessment techniques of Saudi medical undergraduates and the participants exhibited high preferences for the items which elicited their responses toward the option of immediate corrections made by their language teachers. They ranked all the items very high stating that they like their teachers to correct their mistakes immediately as well as they like them to assess them on all language skills.

Table 3: Data analyses for negative evaluation items

No	Questionnaire items	N	Mean	SD
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.	216	3.0000	1.19690
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	216	2.9907	1.20846
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	216	3.2130	1.18165
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	216	3.2685	1.26936
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	216	2.9444	1.16406
23	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	216	3.1019	1.10760
25	Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	216	1.7870	.93561
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	216	2.7222	1.13164
33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	216	3.4630	1.21560

There are several factors that cause second/foreign language anxiety among learners and fear of negative evaluation is an important factor in this regard. It has been defined as “apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that other would evaluate oneself negatively” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.128). Coa (2013) further explains that “fear of negative evaluation is likely to be manifested by a student’s over concern with others’ criticism or judgments about his or her performance in foreign language classroom” (p. 86). It has been suggested that this construct is triggered in any context that involves evaluation and an EFL classroom is a setting in which the students’ performance is frequently assessed and evaluated by the teachers and sometimes by the students as well. The learners bear this fear from the only fluent speaker in the room i.e., the teacher in the first place that has important significance for the learners (Horwitz et al., 1986). The next factor, rather may be more important, is the fear of evaluation or criticism from their class fellows. It has been reported that the learners with higher level of anxiety are those who are weaker as compared to their other class mates and feel that better students will look down upon them: a factor that makes them hesitant to speak in front of their class fellows (Young, 1991). The study of Young (1990) reveals that the participants would actively participate in class room activities and speak out loud if they were sure that the answers were not wrong.

The results of this survey show medium range for approximately all questionnaire items of this category partially confirming the findings of Qaddomi (2013) who has also recorded low average mean of only 2.98 for this category by EFL learners at Al-Quds Open University. The highest mean has been assigned to 33rd and 15th items respectively which are related to learners’ nervousness when the teachers ask questions which they haven’t prepared in advance and they don’t understand what the language teachers are correcting. The participants have ranked 13th items the third highest in which they have highlighted their embarrassment to volunteer answers in their language classes. This finding qualifies the results of Javid (2011) who investigated medical undergraduates of the same university who have been reported to dislike criticism from their peers and are afraid to commit mistakes in front of the class causing their class fellows to laugh at them. This result partially confirms the findings of Na (2007) who have posited that EFL learners have high fear of negative evaluation. The results of other questionnaire items also confirm the same trend showing that Saudi preparatory year students are afraid of legging behind in their language classes and bear negative fear of evaluation mainly from their peers that hinders their smooth progress in learning the target language. The findings are in line with the results of Qaddomi (2013) who also indicates that “their fear of being evaluated by the teacher was not as big as their fear of being evaluated by their classroom mates” (p. 1549). It seems rather important that EFL teachers should take positive steps to improve the confidence of their students and create a motivating atmosphere in their classes so that all learners feel encouraged to participate in all activities.

Table 4: Data analyses for anxiety of English classroom items

No	Questionnaire items	N	Mean	SD
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	216	2.6296	1.17804
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.	216	3.7130	1.46938
6	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	216	2.7037	1.11863
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.	216	3.0370	1.15679
12	In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	216	3.6481	1.03263
16	Even If I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	216	2.0741	1.07144
17	I often feel like not going to my language class.	216	2.7593	1.26396
22	I <i>don't</i> feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.	216	3.7315	1.11319
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	216	2.0556	1.10671
28	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	216	3.1204	1.08020

Table 4 details the data analyses for the items that are related to anxiety of English classroom and like the other three factors the participants have also assigned medium low values to this factor as well similar to the findings of Qaddomi (2013) who have reported that EFL learners of Al-Quds Open University also assigned medium mean values to the items of this category. The overall results of this category are also in line with the results of Darmi and Albion (2012) that also revealed medium values assigned by Malaysian EFL university undergraduates but the results contradict the findings of Nahavandi and Mukundan (2013) who investigated the attitudes of Iranian EFL learners and have reported high levels of anxiety for all four factors included in FLCAS. The participants of the study assigned highest mean value to item 22 that states that "I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class" followed by items 5 and 12 respectively. There seem some contradictions in the responses because highest ranked two items suggest that they don't feel any pressure while preparing for their language classes and are ready to take more language classes whereas the third highest ranking item reveals that language classes' pressure is very acute and causes nervousness that the learners even forget things they know. The lowest ranking items also reveal interesting trends towards language classroom anxiety. The lowest mean has been reported for the item which states that they feel more tense and nervous in their language classes as compared to other classes revealing that they do not experience any significant difference and their nervousness is subject-neutral confirming the findings of two highest ranking items. Results of the 2nd and 3rd lowest ranking items also exhibit similar trends as have been revealed by other items of this category. In general the participants of this survey study have shown medium levels of anxiety for classroom anxiety.

7. Findings and conclusions

The results of data analyses reveal that Saudi preparatory year students represented by the participants of this study bear medium level of language learning anxiety. Among the four anxiety factors, communication apprehension anxiety remained at the top with an average mean of 3.1 followed by English class room anxiety. Fear of negative evaluation anxiety has been assigned the third position and test anxiety got the least average mean. It has been reported that the cohort of the study feel comfortable and confident when speak in foreign language classrooms in front of their class fellows and even when they have native speakers around them. The only panicking factor is when they have to communicate in the target language without prior preparation. The participants have also suggested that they don't have high level of anxiety related to classroom and they are ready to take more language classes. It has been revealed as well that they do not distinguish language learning and other subject classes as far degree of anxiety is concerned. The highest ranking fear of negative evaluation anxiety items have been 'I get nervous when the teacher ask questions which I haven't prepared in advance' and 'I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting'. It has also been found out that the participants bear medium level of anxiety towards the fear of being laughed at by other students who have better English language proficiency. It has been gathered that the participants do not bear high levels of test anxiety. Their fear of taking language tests, making mistakes in their language tests and even failing the tests has been recorded in medium range.

The following suggestions are forwarded based on the findings of the data analyses that have significant pedagogical implications not only for EFL teachers who are busy teaching Saudi preparatory year students but also for EFL students and administrators as well. Much research has offered valuable insights into the fact that high level of language learning anxiety is detrimental to the process of language learning and EFL faculty should take appropriate pedagogical measures to reduce this negative factor among their students to maximize language learning possibilities. It seems important to provide the students with an anxiety-free language learning atmosphere in EFL classes by faculty members. It is suggested that EFL teachers should discuss language learning anxiety, its effects and various related issues with the students in the beginning so that they should be on board to minimize FLA. It is also highly recommended that the teachers should exploit appropriate teaching methodologies to ensure friendly atmosphere in EFL classes to facilitate learning process. The students should be encouraged to participate actively not only in various class activities but also contribute positively by sharing their likes and dislikes in learning process. The teachers should ensure that the students' level is taken into consideration while presenting, explaining and practicing the target language. It also transpires that for better learning, the students should be given sufficient time and academic help so that they confidently and actively take part in various classroom activities. It is also extremely important to consider students' interest and capacity while selecting topic and teaching pace so that students' motivation is ensured. Exploitation of students' acquired knowledge and their personal interests especially for their oral practice will be quite beneficial because it helps minimizing their inhibition and maximizing their motivation and participation. Last but not the least is to ensure better teacher-students and students' mutual relationship for increased interaction in the target language. Taking advantage of group/pair work should be instrumental in this regard.

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Appendix
Questionnaire (English)

FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY SCALE (FLCAS)
 (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986)

Personal

Name: Mobile:

Email: GPA:

Tick the right column

5 = strongly agree 4 = agree 3 = neutral 2 = disagree 1 = strongly disagree

		1	2	3	4	5
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.					
2	I <i>don't</i> worry about making mistakes in language class.					
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.					
4	I frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.					
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.					
6	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.					
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.					
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.					
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.					
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.					
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.					
12	In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.					
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.					
14	I would <i>not</i> be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.					
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.					
16	Even If I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.					
17	I often feel like not going to my language class.					
18	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.					
19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.					
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.					
21	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.					
22	I <i>don't</i> feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.					

23	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.					
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.					
25	Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.					
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.					
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.					
28	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.					
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.					
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.					
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.					
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.					
33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.					

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