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INTRODUCTION

As an educator with twenty years’ experience in one foreign language, as well as a learner of several others, the present writer has observed how strongly L2 acquisition and use may be affected by the anxiety which can accompany the process of learning. While apprehension frequently occurs in educational domains, it seems to be particularly prevalent in FL acquisition. This is largely attributable to the fact that language learning is a personal process, closely connected to the learner’s ego. Foreign language learners endeavour to express themselves authentically with the limited resources at their command. The apprehension related to the delicate nature of language learning becomes much more severe when an insensitive teacher adds to inherent anxiety by making students perform in front of others so they are evaluated by both the instructor and their peers. Another factor contributing to foreign language classroom anxiety is the tense atmosphere created by an authoritarian teacher who uses harsh error correction methods and does not create an environment of mutual support and acceptance.

As Jin *et al.* (2015) point out, research into the stability of FL anxiety, particularly diachronic stability is only in its infancy. The colleagues also claim that longitudinal studies related to FL anxiety are rare. Garrett and Young (2009) highlighted that previous longitudinal research exclusively focused on learners’ development of linguistic ability or communicative competence. Thus, as Jin *et al*. state, the scarcity of research into anxiety over time partly results from a traditional neglect of changes of learners’ inner feelings. Moreover, they claim that there has been dearth of research into the synchronic changes of FL anxiety as well.

The present study is hoped to fill the gap in the existing diachronic research into stability of language anxiety. It is longitudinal research involving application of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), designed by Horwitz *et al.* (1986) at two points: at the beginning and the end of a semester of an English course in the further education context. Furthermore, between the two points, qualitative data, i.e. student written narratives, were collected on a regular basis. The changes in the intensity of FL anxiety were investigated as stress-free, student-centred instruction was provided.

In addition, the present study reflects the growing position of positive psychology (PP) within the modern SLA field. As MacIntyre and Mercer (2014: 154) state, PP is “the empirical study of how people thrive and flourish; it is the study of the ordinary human strengths and virtues that make life good”. Positive psychology addresses three main topic areas: positive emotions, positive character traits associated with good living and positive institutions that enable people to flourish.

The social turn in SLA, as MacIntyre and Mercer (2014) propound, means that the field is taking seriously the contexts in which language learning takes place. The researchers also observe that conducting studies of positive institutions has been the weakest link for PP. Even though more attention has recently been paid to describing the contexts in which language learning occurs, particularly at classroom level, there is need for studies of the institutions that enable success and promote positive language learning environments. The present work is hoped to fill the gap by studying the further education context in Poland, which meets the criteria of a positive institution.

What is more, as MacIntyre and Mercer (2014: 166) state, alongside standard, large-sample methods, there has been interest in describing the complexity of individual cases:

Individual level research can describe in some detail the processes that lead to happiness, the protective force of learned optimism, or describe the most enjoyable facets of learning for a specific person, with nomothetic studies identifying how commonly occurring these events might be.

The present study is an example of an individual-level, mixed method approach, since triangulation was employed and qualitative data (student journals) was used as well as quantitative data. The journals, thanks to their personal nature, provided the insight into the complexity of individual cases.

This study is divided into five chapters. The first three chapters are theoretical. Nevertheless, they include pedagogical implications as well as the remaining two chapters. This is because the present writer has been a practising teacher for over twenty years and all of the described classroom situations are close to her heart, as she has personally experienced them with her students. Chapter One describes socio-affective factors in human behaviour, and how they relate to language acquisition. Variables such as student motivation, attitudes, beliefs, self-esteem, self-efficacy or inhibition are considered. Even though language aptitude plays the primary role in SLA, this factor is stable and hence, cannot be augmented by instructors. Therefore, I have selected other factors that can be boosted by teachers in the classroom. The focal part of the chapter deals with motivation, since it is the second most important variable, after language aptitude and is believed to override any negative factors, e.g. FL classroom anxiety.

Chapter Two describes emotions experienced by students during the process of language learning. Positive emotions, facilitating SLA are addressed as well as negative ones that hinder foreign language attainment. In line with positive psychology, the chapter focuses on what can be done to increase strengths and attributes such as resilience, enjoyment or optimism, rather than concentrate on negative emotions. A large part of the chapter deals with the phenomenon of unwillingness to communicate and includes implications for encouraging communication in the target language.

Chapter Three is the focal part of the thesis analysing the phenomenon of FL anxiety in depth. It describes different anxiety types and defines the concept. Sources, manifestations and language anxiety effects are presented. Moreover, the present writer looks into the role of anxiety in all aspects of foreign language learning, i.e. grammar, vocabulary pronunciation, speaking, listening, reading and writing. Possibilities for reducing apprehension related to each component are put forward. An important part of the chapter is the relationship between anxiety and what happens in the classroom. It focuses on the teacher’s role in alleviating anxiety, for example by proximity, community building, or emphatic behaviour.

The empirical part of the thesis aims to investigate foreign language anxiety and its stability in the further education context in Poland. It was a longitudinal study carried out over one semester of an Intermediate English language course. It took the form of action research, i.e. researching one’s own practice (Loughran *et al.*, 2002; Whitehead and McNiff, 2006; Norton, 2009). This means that the study was conducted on the present writer’s own students during their lesson time and the implications that arose were immediately put into practice. The participants were adults and young adults, i.e. middle school age and above. In order to obtain the most reliable results, the researcher employed methodological triangulation (Wilczyńska and Michońska-Stadnik, 2010) and used a wide range of data collection tools.

Chapter Four concentrates on analysing the results of quantitative data obtained by employing various types of tools. The most prominent instrument was the classic FLCAS (Horwitz *et al.*, 1986) and its post-test. Apart from measuring the importance of language anxiety in the further education context, the stability of the variable was investigated. Other instruments utilised for obtaining quantitative data included: Listening, Reading And Writing Anxiety Scale, An Inventory Assessing Anxiety Level Generated By Typical Language Class Activities, The Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory – BALLI and Style Analysis Survey.

Chapter Five, on the other hand, features qualitative data analysis. The data were collected using ‘Self’ Questionnaire and Student Journals, which contain extracts from the subjects’ narratives. The chapter includes the analysis of the narratives, my self-reflections and action points for improving the researcher’s teaching in order to ensure that it is not anxiety-provoking. Owing to the fact that the data were not anonymous, I got insight into the emotions of individual participants and was able to observe how their emotions evolved throughout the course of the study.

# SOCIO-AFFECTIVE VARIABLES

It is long established that the most significant factor determining second language acquisition is language aptitude. Nevertheless, also important are socio-affective variables such as student motivation, attitudes, beliefs, self-esteem or self-efficacy, as they are key factors of human behaviour. Understanding how human beings feel, respond, believe and value is an important aspect of any theory of SLA. Without such understanding, it would be impossible to explain why some learners have more difficulty than others in learning a second language. For this reason, this chapter will consider specific socio-affective factors in human behaviour, and how they relate to language learning.

Language aptitude undeniably plays a crucial role in second language acquisition, however, it is a constant variable and thus, cannot be modified by the teacher. Therefore, this writer will look into other variables that can be influenced by appropriate teacher behaviour. They include: motivation, attitude, learner beliefs, self-esteem and inhibition. Motivation is by far the most significant modifiable factor in SLA since it can override negative variables, such as low language aptitude or anxiety. Consequently, motivating students seems to be an essential element of the teaching process. Student beliefs and attitudes, also play a key role in foreign language learning. Thus, the teacher may facilitate SLA by encouraging positive attitudes and beliefs and eliminating negative ones. Similarly, the teacher’s effort to increase student self-esteem and reduce inhibition is likely to result in more effective learning.

The first chapter of a doctoral dissertation usually tends to be the most theoretical part of the study. In contrast, the first chapter of this work, as well as chapter two and three have a different character. Theoretical, psychological passages are mixed with some very practical teaching implications. In particular, the section on motivational strategies is almost entirely practical. This is because this writer is a practitioner with ample hands-on experience and feels personally engaged in all psychological aspects related to teaching. Therefore, instead of withholding practical suggestions till the end of the last chapter, the writer incorporates them whenever they seem appropriate.

## MOTIVATION

Motivation is the second most important socio-affective variable, after language aptitude, that has been found to influence language learning success or failure. As Dörnyei (2005: 65) states, it provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process. Without sufficient motivation, even the most able students, taught in the best way, cannot achieve long-term goals. High motivation, however, can make up for deficiencies in one’s language aptitude or inadequate learning conditions. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), in certain language environments motivation can override aptitude. Particularly where the social setting demands it, e.g. when the LI is a local vernacular and the L2 is the national language, many people manage to master an L2, regardless of their aptitude differences.

### DEFINING MOTIVATION

The term 'motivation' is rather difficult to define. As Ur (1996: 275) points out, it is easier and more useful to think in terms of the “motivated” learner: one who is willing or even eager to invest effort in learning activities and to progress. Naiman *et al*. (1978) came to the conclusion that the most successful learners are not necessarily those who learn easily, but those who display certain typical characteristics of motivation, such as:

1. positive task orientation (the learner is keen to undertake tasks and challenges, and feels confident about his or her success)
2. ego-involvement (the learner wants to succeed in order to maintain and promote his or her own positive self-image)
3. need for achievement (the learner feels a need to achieve, to tackle difficulties and succeed in what he or she sets out to do)
4. high aspirations (the learner is ambitious, undertakes demanding challenges, aims at high proficiency, top grades)
5. goal orientation (the learner is aware of the goals of learning and directs his or her efforts towards achieving them)
6. perseverance (the learner consistently makes an effort in learning, and is not discouraged by failures)
7. tolerance of ambiguity (the learner is not discouraged or frustrated by a temporary lack of understanding or confusion; he or she trusts that understanding will come later).

Three main perspectives to look at motivation have emerged over decades of research. In the light of the behaviouralperspective, motivation is the anticipation of reward. As put forth by Skinner (1953), human beings will pursue a goal because they perceive a reward for doing so. This reward serves to reinforce behaviour: to cause it to persist. According to behavioural theory, learners pursue goals in order to receive such external reward as praise, grades, certificates, diplomas, scholarships, careers or financial independence. From cognitive perspective, rewards play an important role as well. The difference, however, lies in the sources of motivation and in the power of self-reward. Some cognitive psychologists believe that underlying needs or drives are responsible for our decisions. For example, according to Ausubel *et al*. (1968: 368-379), motivation stems from such innate drives as exploration, manipulation, activity, stimulation, knowledge, ego enhancement. The drives act not so much as reinforcers, but as innate predispositions. From the constructivist point of view emphasis is placed on social context as well as individual, personal choices (Williams and Burden, 1997: 120). Each person has a different motivation and will act in a unique way. These unique acts, however, are always carried out within a cultural and social background, from which they cannot be completely separated. Constructivists believe that motivation stems from our interaction with others, as well as from one’s self-determination.

In one of the most recent studies on motivation, MacIntyre and Serroul (2015: 109) present the definition of the concept as the force that gives behaviour its energy and direction. The authors in question explain that the most basic motivational tendencies are to approach or to avoid an object, a person, or a an activity and that the strength of approach or avoidance fluctuate over time, since both the individual and the circumstances are not stable.

### FLOW AND OTHER THEORIES OF MOTIVATION

Motivation can be global, e.g. relatively stable, situational, e.g. referring to a particular situation, or task-oriented, e.g. referring to one subject-matter area or even a classroom exercise. Heckhausen (1991) observes that we can speak about a general tendency to be motivated to achieve a certain goal, and we can consider a particular state of motivation that is aroused at a given time. Motivation can also be intrinsic (when students learn for their own self-perceived needs and goals) and extrinsic (when students learn to receive an external reward from someone else).

Where the former type of motivation is concerned, Deci (1975: 23) has pointed out that:

Intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake and not because they lead to an extrinsic reward. Intrinsically motivated behaviours are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely feelings of competence and self-determination.

In a recent study, Oxford and Cuéllar (2014) hold that intrinsically motivated students learn an L2 for the enjoyment of finding out new things, for the pleasure related to learning something difficult or for the excitement experienced when using the language.

Extrinsic motivation, in contrast, stems from the anticipation of an external reward such as money, prizes, grades. Ryan and Deci (2009) developed a self-determination theory which assumes that people are active organisms with innate tendencies toward psychological growth and development. This active human nature is reflected in intrinsic motivation, e.g. the natural tendency to seek challenges, novelty and opportunities to learn. Deci (1971) discovered that giving monetary rewards to college students for trying to solve interesting puzzle problems decreased their intrinsic motivation. This means that tangible rewards were not additive, but negatively interactive with intrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan (1980) also suggested that evaluations, competition, deadlines, social pressure, surveillance and other motivators, popular at schools, diminish intrinsic motivation, whereas when people experience choice about acting and no external pressure, they can maintain it. To sum up, attempts to control students’ performance and efforts can weaken their sense of autonomy and interest and in consequence, their intrinsic motivation. Although people are intrinsically motivated to learn, social contexts can both support or diminish this natural tendency.

Most researchers, e.g. Wu (2003) or Noels *et al*. (2000), agree that intrinsic motivation promotes spontaneous learning, has a self-sustaining dynamic and leads to more effective kind of learning than extrinsic motivation. This may be because rewards for learning come in the shape of personal satisfaction, enhanced personal competence and skills. Ushioda (2008) believes that self-sustaining dynamics of intrinsic motivation may make it an optimal form of learning motivation; however, extrinsic motivation should not be lightly dismissed as less effective or less desirable. She points out that in many educational contexts certain types of an extrinsic goal e.g., examination success, academic, career or life ambitions are positively valued. According to van Lier (1996), intrinsic motivational factors such as enjoyment, sense of challenge, skill development and extrinsic ones, such as personal goals and aspirations, are best viewed as working in agreement with each other. What Deci and Flaste (1996) find crucial, though, is not whether the motivational factors are intrinsic or extrinsic, but whether they are internalised and self-determined (coming from the learner), or externally imposed by others (teachers, parents, curricula, educational and societal expectations). Thus, externally regulated motivation has only short-term benefits and therefore the teacher should encourage learners’ motivation from within.

In the well-known Maslow (1970) model of basic human needs it was believed that intrinsic motivation is clearly superior to extrinsic. Besides, Bruner (1966) states that one of the most effective ways to help both children and adults to think and learn is to free them from the control of rewards and punishments. Moreover, one of the weaknesses of extrinsic motivation is its addictive nature. People tend to become more and more dependent on tangible rewards and when the prize or praise is withdrawn, the desire to learn disappears. As Deci’s research (1971) demonstrates, positive feedback is one type of extrinsic reward that can have an effect on intrinsic motivation, as it boosts students’ feelings of competence and self-determination.

The traditional intrinsic/extrinsic division of motivation has been criticised by several researchers. Covington (2009: 151), for example, states that this distinction is misleading in that it implies that each of these motivational systems is responsive to a different class of rewards, and that no crossover is possible. He points out that everyday experience suggests just the opposite. What is often the case is a positive relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. For example, extrinsic rewards like money frequently boost intrinsic interests. Some researchers, e.g. Csizér & Dörnyei (2005) or Wu (2003), are of the opinion that the intrinsic-extrinsic continuum in motivation is applicable to foreign language classrooms around the world and that intrinsic and extrinsic factors can be easily identified.

The aforementioned view of motivation by Abraham Maslow’s view of motivation (1970) is related to a more recent flow theory, developed by Csíkszentmihályi (1988, 1990, 2008). This theory supports the importance of intrinsic involvement of learners in achieving proficiency goals in a foreign language. Csíkszentmihályi (1990) states that what makes experience genuinely satisfying is a state of consciousness called flow. It is a state of concentration so focused that it leads to a total absorption in an activity and at the same time to improved performance on a task. This is a feeling experienced by everyone in a variety of activities, e.g. making music, dancing, climbing or playing chess. Typical characteristics of flow are: feeling strong, alert, in effortless control, unselfconscious and at the peak of one’s abilities. This is a pleasurable state of exhilaration, during which both a sense of time and emotional problems seem to disappear. Flow has also been characterised as “optimal experience”, being “in the groove”, when “everything gelled“. Csíkszentmihályi (2008) believes that an activity that produces such a state is so rewarding that people are willing to do it for its own sake, with little concern for what they will get out of it, even if it is challenging. Flow might occasionally happen by chance, because of a fortunate coincidence of external and internal conditions. It does not normally happen, however, during passive, relaxing times, but when a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to achieve something difficult and worthwhile. Flow stems from factors such as perceived balance of skills and challenge, opportunities for intense concentration and perceived concentration, clear task goals, perceived sense of control, positive feedback that one is succeeding at the task, the perception that time passes more quickly and that the task is interesting or authentic. Finally, flow theory claims that owing to the intrinsically rewarding experience associated with flow, people push themselves to a higher level of performance. Csíkszentmihályi suggests that, in this way, flow contributes to optimal performance and learning.

The influence of flow on learning has been investigated in more detail by Egbert (2003). She presents two models of the relationship between flow and learning. As demonstrated in Figure 1.1., the interaction between individual learner characteristics and classroom environment factors, like task features, can lead to flow. Flow, in turn, leads to increased concentration on the task and motivates a person to use productive behaviours during the task, which results in changes in the learners’ skills, i.e. learning. Even though flow is something that individuals experience, it does not happen in isolation, but depends on both individual characteristics and conditions or other participants in the environment. In the classroom situation flow might depend on both other students and the teacher. In Snyder and Tardy’s (2001) study of flow, group flow seemed to occur between teacher and students or among students. A model of the relationship between flow and language acquisition is shown in Figure 1.2. This is a more refined version of Figure 1.1. with a target language task taking on a central role.

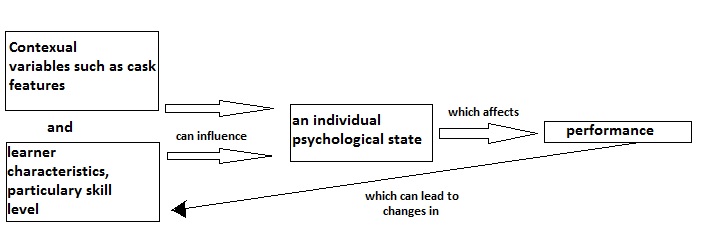


FIGURE 1.1 Simplified Model of Flow and Learning (after Egbert, 2003: 500)

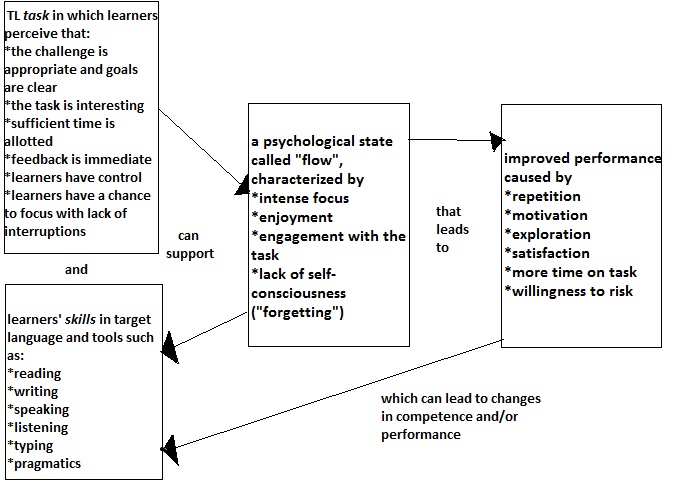


FIGURE 1.2 Model of the Relationship Between Flow and Language Acquisition (after Egbert, 2003: 502)

As mentioned above, an important condition for the flow experience to happen is the balance between the challenge of the task and an individual’s skills. The balance leads to success at the task, which motivates the learner to repeat the task at a more challenging level and to apply the skills acquired previously to achieve the more difficult task. According to Hekmer and Csíkszentmihályi (1996: 4), to maintain flow experience one must engage in new challenges to meet one’s increasing skills and one must perfect one’s skills to meet the challenges. This is presented in Figure 1.3. Whalen (1997), however, suggests that a high challenge and high skills are the ideal balance for flow, whereas a high challenge and low skills result in anxiety. Low challenge and high skills, on the other hand, induce boredom, while low skills and low challenge cause apathy (Figure 1.4). Egbert (2003: 504) believes that language learners with low ability and relatively low challenge might still experience flow if the task is interesting, if learners have optimal control and if the environment enables them to meet other conditions for flow.

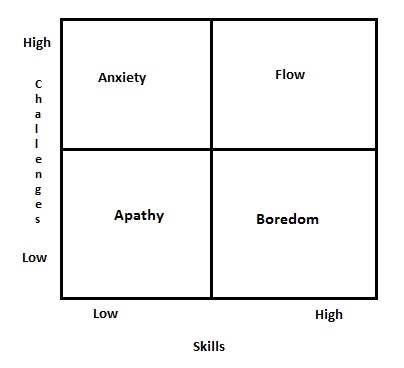


FIGURE 1.3 Whalen’s (1997) Challenge/Skills Balance (after Egbert, 2003: 503)

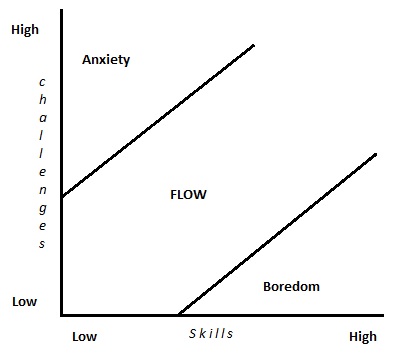


FIGURE 1.4 The “Flow Channel” Where Skills and Challenge are Balanced (after Egbert, 2003: 503)

Another condition for flow to exist is focused attention. Although it is believed that both conscious attention to form and subconscious learning during communicative activities are necessary for language acquisition, participants in flow research (Egbert, 2003: 504) report that unintentionally focused attention is vital for achievement of flow and that consciously used strategies prevent flow. Increased concentration seems to be connected with another component which supports flow experiences, i.e. interest. In McQuillan and Conde’s flow research (1996) the texts that supported flow were those in which the participants took interest, for which they had some prior knowledge and which they read for their own enjoyment. The third dimension of flow is student interest. This factor is related by flow theory to learner affect, and it is claimed that some stress is important in creating flow and, in consequence, learning. This is thanks to the fact that situations arousing flow are those that a person perceives as important or meaningful. As it has been demonstrated that language acquisition happens in a threat free environment, without language anxiety, the stress necessary to experience flow could be described as eustress, e.g. good, pleasant stress, accompanying excitement.

Another, crucial component of flow is learner control. As Abbot (2000) points out, autonomy-supporting environments and tasks are more conducive to flow than controlled ones. Examples of learner control could be involvement in decision making about the topics discussed in class or the choice of reading materials. Nevertheless, learners need to be guided and cannot be completely autonomous. Another aspect of flow is a sense of enjoyment and “playfulness”(Egbert, 2003: 505). When students are enjoying their language learning, they are more likely to experience flow.

### INSTRUMENTAL AND INTEGRATIVE ORIENTATIONS TO MOTIVATION

Orientations are goals, which along with attitudes, sustain students’ motivation to learn a second language. In the seminal pioneer work of over forty years ago, the relationship between a learner’s attitudes toward the second or foreign language and its community, and success in second language learning was researched by Gardner and Lambert (1972). They identified two types of orientations: integrative and instrumental. Instrumental orientation is language learning for practical goals, such as getting a better job or a higher salary, whereas integrative orientation describes learners who wish to integrate themselves into the culture of the second language group and become involved in social interchange in that group. Gardner (1985) believes that motivation differs from orientation because one might demonstrate a particular orientation, but not be motivated enough to attain the goal. Motivation reflects the power to achieve the goal reflected in one’s orientation. According to Gardner, the power results from the desire to attain the goal, positive attitudes and effortful behaviour. He states that integrative motive, or motivation includes such components as integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation and motivation. Integrativeness reflects a learner’s openness to identify with another language community. Motivation, however, consists of motivational intensity, desire to learn a language and attitudes toward learning a language. In contrast, instrumental motivation includes instrumentality, attitudes toward the learning situation and motivation. Instrumentality, in turn, consists of instrumental orientation, attitudes toward the target language group and interest in foreign languages. Motivation, as a component of instrumentality, is defined like in the integrative motive (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991). In a more recent approach, Dörnyei (2005: 69) argues that Gardner’s theory is rather confusing, as the term *integrative* appears in integrative orientation, integrativeness and integrative motive. The term ‘motivation’ causes confusion too, as it is also a subcomponent of integrative motivation (Figure 1.5).

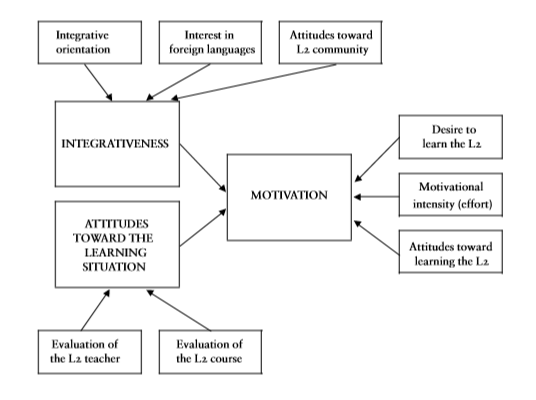


FIGURE 1.5 Schematic representation of Gardner’s (1985) conceptualization of the integrative motive (after Dörnyei, 2001: 17)

Originally, Gardner concentrated on integrative motive, disregarding the possibility of another kind of motivation, i.e. instrumental. As he claimed that integrative motive was the most important kind of motivation, he used this term instead of motivation in its broadest sense. Gardner (1985) believed that integrativeness was fundamental because learning a second language requires the adoption of word sounds, pronunciations, word orders, and other behavioural and cognitive features that are part of another culture. Integrativeness implies an openness on the part of individuals that would facilitate their motivation to learn a second language. Learners who are willing to identify with the other language group will be more motivated to learn the language and thus, achieve greater L2 competence than individuals who do not. Indeed, in the western Ontario context the integrative orientation is the prevailing motivating factor. Integrative motivation may play an important role in a second language learning context. On the other hand, Belmechri & Hummel’s experiment (1998: 224) proved that Francophones in Canada did not show any integrative motivation.

When it comes to foreign language learning, the theory under consideration does not seem to apply at all. In countries like Poland, for example, most learners do not wish to integrate into the culture of the target language group. In the case of English, it is difficult not even possible to identify a target language group and most students regard the language as a lingua franca, rather than associate it with a particular language group. For this reason, Yashima (2009: 146) replaced the notion of the target community with international community.

As in any country with a foreign language environment, such as Hungary, Gardner’s concept of integrativeness seems not to be relevant. The results of Csizér and Dörnyei’s research (2005) demonstrated that in Hungary not only was any real integration into the L2 community impossible, but even direct communication with members of an L2 community was an unrealistic expectation for most of their 765 respondents. This is why Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) suggested that integrativeness should be interpreted in a broader sense, as an identification process within the individual’s self-concept (see section 4.2.8. and subchapter 5.1). The possible self represents an idea of what someone might become, would like to become or is afraid of becoming. The ideal self, on the other hand, represents the qualities that people would like to possess, while the ought self stands for the characteristics one believes one ought to have (Higgins, 1987, 1996). Both the ideal self and ought self are related to desired attributes. The two future selves, however, are motivationally different. The ideal self is associated with hopes, while the ought self is associated with responsibilities and obligations. Thus, integrativeness from the self point of view can be understood as the L2 representation of one’s ideal self. If the person one would like to become is a proficient L2 speaker, one can be described as having an integrative disposition. Even though Dörnyei’s interpretation of integrativeness is entirely different from Gardner’s, he decided to leave the term unchanged, possibly giving Gardner credit for his contribution to motivational studies.

Early research on motivation described it as a stable characteristic of the learner. More recent research, in contrast, focuses on the dynamic nature of motivation and takes into consideration changes that have taken place over time. Dörnyei (2001) developed a process-oriented model of motivation that consists of three phases. The first phase, choice motivation, refers to getting started and setting goals; the second, executive motivation, refers to maintaining motivation; and the third phase, motivation retrospection, refers to students’ appraisal of their performance. Dörneyi believes that it is vital to motivate learners throughout these three phases. As Lightbown and Spada (2006: 64) point out, teachers can motivate students to learn if the content is interesting and relevant to their age and level of ability, the learning goals are challenging yet manageable and clear, and the atmosphere is supportive. However, no matter how competent a motivator a teacher is, if teaching lacks instructional clarity and the learners simply cannot follow the intended programme, they are unlikely to be motivated.

### MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES

Motivational strategies are techniques that promote the individual’s goal-related behaviour (Dörnyei, 2001: 28). The strategies can be successfully employed only if the following conditions are met:

* appropriate teacher behaviours and a good relationship with the students;
* a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere;
* a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms.

There are four main teacher behaviours that have the biggest influence on student motivation (Dörnyei, 2001: 32). The first one is enthusiasm. According to Gabryś-Barker (2014), the central part of enthusiasm lies in the teacher personality that is manifested by expressive, passionate teaching behaviours that are recognised by students and positively affect their attitudes and achievements. In the same vein, Csikszentmihalyi (1997: 77) states that the teacher’s enthusiasm and the ability to make it public is one of the most important elements in motivating students.

Young people are more intelligent than adults generally give them credit for. They can usually discern, for instance, whether an adult they know likes or dislikes what he or she is doing. If a teacher does not believe in his job, does not enjoy the learning he is trying to transmit, the student will sense this and derive the entirely rational conclusion that the particular subject matter is not worth mastering for its own sake.

Dörnyei (2001: 33) suggests that teachers share their own personal interest in the target language and language learning with the students. This seems to be beneficial, yet general. It is important that enthusiasm is demonstrated at every lesson stage. If the teacher gives students a task that he or she considers boring, there is very little chance that students will find it motivating. Frenzel *et al.* (2008) remind us that teachers’ own enjoyment and enthusiasm during teaching relates positively to students’ enjoyment, as positive emotions are transmitted from teachers to students. Similarly, Borg (2006: 23), believes that an effective language teacher is able to radiate positive feeling.

The second teacher behaviour promoting motivation is commitment to and expectations for the students' learning. As in the case with enthusiasm, if the teacher shows commitment towards the students' learning and progress, there is a very good chance that they will do the same thing. It is important that everybody in the classroom should feel that the teacher cares; that they are not there just for the salary; that the students’ success matters to them; that they are ready to work just as hard as students towards this success. Apart from showing commitment, Brophy (1998) suggests, teachers make an assumptions that students are eager learners. When they feel this is expected of them, they are more likely to become eager. The same is true about achievement. If teachers have high expectations, it is likely that students can reach high levels of achievement, but if they do not expect much, students will probably not achieve much. Most teachers have probably been nicely surprised when their students have managed to cope with the task the teachers considered too challenging. It seems that it is not good practice to abandon demanding tasks for fear of students not being able to achieve them.

A good relationship with students is another motivating factor. A number of researchers, e.g. Becker and Luthar (2002), Pianta *et al*. (2003), Stipek (2004), consider it a key factor in both motivating and engaging students to learn. As Wentzel (2009: 309) points out:

Effective teachers are typically described as those who develop relationships with students that are emotionally close, safe, and trusting, that provide access to instrumental help, and that foster a more general ethos of community and caring in classrooms. These relationship qualities are believed to support the development of students’ emotional well-being and positive sense of self, motivational orientations for social and academic outcomes, and actual social and academic skills.

Dörnyei (2001: 36) finds it essential that teachers develop a good relationship with students on both personal and academic level:

Teachers who share warm, personal interactions with their students, who respond to their concerns in an emphatic manner and who succeed in establishing relationships of mutual trust and respect with learners, are more likely to inspire them in academic matters than those who have no personal ties with the learners.

He adds that one of the components of good relationships with the students is their acceptance. This involves a non-judgemental positive attitude. Other components are the teacher’s availability and their ability to listen and pay attention to students. The way we listen tells learners how much we care about them. Students need to feel that teachers pay personal attention to them. Besides, teachers should realise that their job is not solely to teach, but to notice their students as human beings. There are a number of ways in which the teacher could show his or her personal interest in the students. First of all, apart from concentrating on the teaching material, he or she could spend some time on small talk and ask students some personal questions or they could ask students how they feel, react if they seem tired or not focusing on the lesson. It seems a good idea to acknowledge the students coming to class after being absent, to ask about the reason and offer help with catching up with the material.

Teachers could also try to find out about students’ lives outside school, their jobs, families or hobbies. It is very important that teachers remember this personal information and refer to it. Other ideas for small talk could be noticing changes in students’ appearance, e.g. a new hairstyle or piece of clothing. It also helps if teachers learn students’ first names and use them, smile, remember their birthdays etc. All these techniques could help teachers improve their relationship with students; however, it seems most effective if such behaviours are genuine and come naturally from teachers, as students can normally sense if this is not the case. Smuk (2009: 95) points out in the same vain:

The teacher’s authenticity, being reflected in the attitude towards the learners may strongly influence the learners’ behaviours, opinions, may strongly influence the learner’s behaviour, interpersonal relations, opinions, general and language competence as well as it may facilitate the very process of learning.

A good relationship with parents is yet another factor suggested by Dörnyei (2001) that can contribute to a good relationship with students. This, however, does not apply to adult education, or in countries like Poland, to further education, which plays an important role in foreign language instruction.

The second condition for the motivating strategies to work, after appropriate teacher behaviours and a good relationship with students, is a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere. Language learning is believed to be one of the most face-threatening subjects because of mistakes, which are a natural part of language learning process. Teachers need to make sure that students will not be criticised if they make a mistake so they feel comfortable taking risks. Classroom atmosphere could also be improved by the use of humour. This does not necessarily involve telling jokes, but creating a relaxed atmosphere and inviting laughter. Apart from the psychological aspect, classroom atmosphere depends also on such physical factors as seating arrangement, decoration, e.g. posters, students’ work display, or even fresh air. Other elements contributing to a more relaxed atmosphere could be soft drinks, snacks or music.

The third condition is a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms. A cohesive group is one with a sense of being a unit where students support each other, make each other welcome in the group and work together on achieving mutual goals, making a learning experience enjoyable. Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) suggest a number of factors contributing to group cohesion. One of the factors is the extent to which group members can learn about each other. The teacher could achieve this by including ice-breaking activities at the beginning of the course or other games encouraging sharing personal information throughout the course. Another way is personalising language tasks. Further factors are proximity, contact and interaction. It is important that students sit next to each other, not in isolation, and that rigid seating arrangement is avoided. This could be achieved by moving students around for pair-work and group-work. Other ways to achieve group cohesion could be whole-group tasks, e.g. project work or intragroup competitions, e.g. quizzes. As for group norms, they could be formulated, discussed and accepted at the beginning of the course.

As it is generally believed that people achieve success when they expect it, a vital way to motivate learners is to increase their expectancies. One method, suggested by Dörnyei (2001), is consciously arranging the conditions in a way that they put the learner in a positive or optimistic mood. This may be achieved by giving tasks that are not too difficult. Another method is to provide sufficient preparation and well-thought off pre-task activities. The teacher could also offer assistance or let students help each other. Finally, it is also essential that students realise what success in the task involves, which could be achieved for example by demonstration.

Motivation could also be increased by using teaching materials that are relevant for the learners. That is why it is important to know the students’ needs and interests. If students do not feel that the material is worth learning, they will not be motivated. It seems to be a good idea to do needs analysis at the beginning of the course. It is worth asking students why they want to study a foreign language and what they want to achieve. If all students want is to get by when visiting a foreign country and have a chat with the people living there, for example, studying advanced grammar or giving few opportunities for communication may not be most relevant or welcome. It is also a good idea to find out what topics students are interested in or even what music they like, if a teacher wants to supplement the course with songs. Students could also be asked about their impressions. When the teacher is trying out a new activity, e.g. a game, it seems right to ask afterwards if students have enjoyed it and if they want to repeat it in the future. As course books are written with no particular audience in mind, some of the topics may not be very appealing for students, so it could be sensible to relate them to students’ experience and background.

Arousing students’ motivation is crucial in learning; however, maintaining and protecting motivation is equally important. As Pawlak’s recent study (2012) demonstrated, motivation has a dynamic nature and not only does its intensity fluctuate in the course of single classes, but also on a minute-to-minute basis. Probably the most obvious strategy aiming at nurturing motivation is making learning enjoyable. Dörnyei (2001) suggests several strategies for making learning more stimulating. One of them is breaking the monotony of lessons. Teachers can vary such aspects as presentation style, learning materials, seating arrangement, student involvement, order of activities, activities themselves. It is important from time to time to break from the routine and do the unexpected.

Learning is naturally enjoyable if tasks are interesting. This could be achieved by making them challenging, by connecting them with things that students already find interesting, e.g. current affairs, fashions, or celebrities. Including new, unexpected activities also arouse interest. The same is the case with intriguing, exotic, humorous or competitive elements. Another way of making activities stimulating is relating them to learners’ lives. Activities during which students can be creative and use their imagination are normally appealing as well. Students also tend to enjoy their learning when they get the chance to be involved in the lesson. For this reason, the teacher should design activities in such a way that learners are required to take an active part.

In addition, as Dörnyei (2001) observes, student motivation can be maintained by adequate task presentation. It is crucial to explain the purpose of the task. Obviously, justifying every single class activity would take too much time. However, it makes sense when the teacher feels that students may not feel convinced about the usefulness of a particular task. The teacher could try and make a connection between the purpose of the exercise and students’ personal daily life and explain how the skills learnt will be useful in achieving real-life tasks.

Good task introductions should whet students’ appetite or make them expect something exciting or important to come. This could be achieved by the teacher’s enthusiasm and expectations for students to succeed. Asking students to make predictions about the activity is another method. Focusing on important aspects of the target language to be learned could also be effective. Another idea is to make a change to routine activities, e.g. instead of asking students to answer comprehension questions in the course book, the questions could be written on slips of paper.

What is more, well introduced tasks provide students with suitable strategies to perform the task (Dörnyei, 2001) . First of all, task instructions could be accompanied by demonstration. Besides, any doubts concerning the target language should be clarified. Thirdly, and most importantly, the students could be provided with the strategies for task completion. For pair-work speaking activities, for example, the students could be provided with target language structures, necessary for achieving the task. This seems particularly important for lower levels, when fluency is still limited. Those target language structures could work as framework for students to hold on to.

#### SELF-EFFICACY

No matter how hard teachers try to use motivational strategies, if students do not believe in themselves, they will not become successful learners. The concept of self-efficacy[[1]](#footnote-1) was introduced by Bandura (1977a, 1977b, 1997). According to his theory, people’s sense of self-efficacy determines their choice of activities, amount of effort and determination. As Dörnyei (2001: 88) points out:

People with a low sense of self-efficacy in a given domain perceive difficult tasks as personal threats; they dwell on their own personal deficiencies and the obstacles they encounter rather than concentrating on how to perform the task successfully. Consequently, they easily lose faith in their capabilities and are likely to give up. In contrast, a strong sense of self-efficacy enhances people's achievement behaviour by helping them to approach threatening situations with confidence, to maintain a task- rather than self-diagnostic focus during task-involvement, and to heighten and sustain effort in the face of failure.

The foreign language is a subject in which saying even one sentence carries the risk of a serious mistake. No wonder many students prefer to withdraw rather than take risks. However, students’ confidence can grow if they feel that the foreign language classroom is a place where their self-worth is protected. Dörnyei (2001) suggests four confidence-building strategies.

The first one is providing experiences of success. This can be achieved by adjusting task difficulties to student abilities and providing students with the right balance of more and less challenging activities. When designing the tests, the teacher should make sure that they focus on what students can rather than cannot do. The second strategy is encouraging the learner. As self-esteem and self-confidence are said to be shaped by feedback we receive, the teacher’s opinion plays an important role in students’ self-image. This is why the teacher’s encouragement is invaluable. Deci (1971) has found that providing participants with positive feedback about performance leads to enhancements in intrinsic motivation relative to no feedback. Teachers can encourage students by focusing on their strengths and abilities and by indicating that they believe in their ability to learn and complete the tasks. It is also motivating to acknowledge students’ accomplishments or progress and to celebrate success. For example, the teacher could publically praise the author of the best composition or the best test result. However, teachers ought to be cautious when giving praise. According to Graham and Williams (2009: 16), some well-intentioned teacher behaviours can have unexpected or even negative effects on student motivation. As Meyer *et al*. (1979) and Barker and Graham (1987) have found, students who are praised for success at a relatively easy task are inferred to be lower in ability than their counterparts who receive neutral feedback. Jusim *et al.* (2009: 371) state that recognition refers to praising students for their effort, progress, behaviour in the classroom, but not necessarily high performance. They believe that by praising students for effort, teachers encourage them to engage in a behaviour that is crucial for maximizing their learning and achievement, e.g. allowing more study time or persisting at a task despite difficulties. The third strategy is reducing language anxiety. This issue will be described in more detail in Chapter 3 of the thesis. The fourth confidence-building strategy is teaching students various learning strategies to facilitate the intake of new material and to help learners overcome communication difficulties.

Students’ self-esteem can also be increased by maintaining a positive social image of learners. The teacher should be careful not to make any students lose face in front of the others. This is why he or she should not discipline, criticise or correct students in a way that might be perceived as humiliating. When dealing with more sensitive students, teachers should focus on their strengths, correct their mistakes with caution and if criticism is necessary, it should take place in private. The teacher should also avoid calling on such students open-class questions unexpectedly. Instead, cooperation between students should be encouraged.

There are a number of motivational benefits of student cooperation (Dörnyei, 2001: 100-102). One of them is the fact that while working together, learners tend to take a liking to each other despite their differences. Working together as a group to achieve common goals creates a feeling of solidarity and supportiveness. Group work has also a positive influence on expectancy of success and reducing stress because of students’ feeling that they can count on each other. Another advantage of group-work is a sense of responsibility to other group members, which motivates the individuals to make an effort. What makes student cooperation motivating as well is the feeling of independence, as in this type of activity there is less supervision of the teacher.

#### LEARNER AUTONOMY

Deci and Ryan (1985) put forward a self-determination theory according to which freedom to choose, rather than being made to do something, is a condition for motivation to take place. In a more recent study, Ryan and Deci (2009: 173-174) also argue that when people have the freedom to act and an absence of external pressure, they can maintain an internal, perceived locus of causality and maintain intrinsic motivation.

Originally, autonomy was seen as the capacity of a learner to take charge of his or her own learning (Holec, 1981). This view implies the rejection of the traditional classroom-based courses and seems to be suited to self-study situations. Jussim *et al.* (2009: 370) define autonomy as the degree of control students have in the classroom, which seems to be more relevant for regular instruction. Jussim *et al.* (2009) believe that teachers who support autonomy in the classroom, as opposed to controlling, give students choices with regard to tasks and other classroom activities and allow them to influence priorities in task completion, learning methods and pace of learning. The authors also state that as a result of such teacher practices, students are more likely to feel valued members of the classroom community, whose opinions matter. Students are also likely to be more engaged in classroom activities. Jussim *et al.* (2009) argue that not allowing students such freedom can have demotivating consequences:

When teachers fail to provide students with autonomy, it can be seriously demotivating for students. Under such circumstances, students may do what they are told, but when they engage in school activities because they are under duress, there is less reason for them to become psychologically engaged in or committed to classroom activities.

Dam (1995: 2) finds that involving students in decisions, for example about the choice of classroom activities and choice of materials, made them more involved, which resulted in better learning. More recently, Noels *et al*. (1999) discovered that the degree to which teachers support student autonomy has a positive influence on students’ sense of self-determination (or autonomy) and enjoyment. This, however, was only the case with intrinsically motivated students. The students who do not study a language of their own free will did not turn out to be as autonomy-conscious.

The main ingredient of autonomy-supportive teaching according to Dörnyei (2001: 104) is increasing learner involvement in organising the learning process. This could be achieved by sharing responsibility with the learners for their learning. It is important for learners to feel that they have some control over what is happening in the classroom. One of the things the teacher could do is to offer choices about various aspects of the lesson, such as activities, teaching materials, topics, homework, deadlines, the format and pace of learning, the arrangement of furniture or the partners they want to work with. This suggests that students could also have a choice about which words from a text studied in class they want to remember. During revision, the students could compare with their peers which words from the previous lesson they remember. Given the choice, the learners feel that they are in charge of their learning experience.

Autonomy can also be introduced into everyday teaching practice by encouraging student contributions and peer teaching. This could be combined with Nunan’s (2003: 201) step 7 out of his nine step program to learner training and autonomy, i.e. allow learners to generate their own tasks. Students could, for example, make their own gapped sentences and then test each other’s knowledge of target vocabulary. As an example of an autonomous lesson, students could select a text and/or a video on a topic of their choice, prepare a number of activities to go with it, for example, true/false questions, discussion etc., then finally teach a lesson, based on these materials to the rest of the class. Students can also experience autonomy while completing project work. The task will inevitably require students to organise themselves, decide who is responsible for what, and finally decide how to present their findings or ideas to the rest of the class.

In order to increase autonomy in teaching, Dörnyei (2001: 106) also suggests a change in the teacher’s role. The teacher ought to adopt a facilitating, less traditional teaching style. The teacher, acting as facilitator is a helper, leading students to discover and create their own meanings about the world. As Underhill (1999a: 140) points out:

The move from Lecturer to Teacher to Facilitator is characterised by a progressive reduction in the psychological distance between teacher and student, and by an attempt to take more account of the learner’s own agenda, even to be guided by it. Control becomes more decentralised, democratic, even autonomous, and what the Facilitator saves on controlling is spent fostering communication, curiosity, insight and relationship in the group.

An example of a highly autonomous way of teaching which seems to appeal to students is Dogme.Teaching in Dogme style should focus on the learner and not be driven by the resources available, including course books. It was started by Thornbury (2000), who was against over-dependency on manufactured materials, arguing that if learners are not interested, they will not learn, and therefore all material should be generated by the learners and lessons should be directed by them, rather than the teacher. As Thornbury (2005: 3) states:

Providing space for the learner’s voice means accepting that the learners’ beliefs, knowledge, experiences, concerns and desires are valid content in the language classroom.

In a typical Dogme lesson, learners come to class discussing something relevant to them, for example a piece of news. The teacher encourages and facilitates discussion and provides answers to questions about grammar and vocabulary as they arise. There are no resources, course books or lesson structures apart from those that learners bring. The teacher involves the learners in deciding on their priorities each lesson, and takes the role of facilitator of their objectives. Thornbury (2005: 5) suggests that the only extra components should be a non-linear homework book, which should focus on accurate manipulation of key grammar, vocabulary and text-types. The teacher’s job will be to encourage students to read extensively outside class, selecting resources in accordance with their own interests and needs.

Still, teaching solely in pure Dogme style seems to be unrealistic, as it is very demanding for the teacher. Particularly, less experienced teachers would find it very challenging to create their materials on the spot or to adapt the materials that students bring. Moreover, this kind of teaching could, in the long run, become boring for students. Published materials, if not overused, can liven up lessons and stimulate learning. It also seems beneficial for students to be exposed to various native speakers of the target language, apart from the teacher. However, it may be a good idea to incorporate Dogme into more conventional teaching, as it respects students’ needs, making teaching more relevant and, consequently, more motivating. Dogme serves as a warning that dependence on a course book and the abundance of available supplementary materials (photocopiable resource packs, CD-ROMs, classroom and home study CDs, grammar books, etc.) leave no room for real language use.

#### ENCOURAGING POSITIVE SELF-EVALUATION

The third phase in a process-oriented model of motivation developed by Dörnyei (2001) after generating initial motivation and maintaining existing motivation is the learners’ appraisal of their own performance. It is important to help learners look at their past performance in a way that it will encourage future efforts. One of the ways teachers can help students look at their achievement in a positive light is to show them how to explain their successes and failures in a constructive way and how to take more satisfaction in their successes and progress. Psychologists have constructed attribution theory which deals with past successes and failures (Weiner, 1992). According to this theory, students’ explanations of why they achieved success or failed have an influence on their motivation. The main causes are ability and effort. It has been found that a past failure attributed to low ability is more demotivating than a failure attributed to insufficient effort. It has also been demonstrated that attributing a success to ability is more motivating than attributing it to effort. The teacher’s role is, therefore, to ensure that students interpret failure in a way that promotes the will to learn. This can be achieved by promoting the importance of effort, rather than ability. If students believe that making an effort facilitates success, they will persevere despite failures. The best way to promote effort attributions is giving feedback that emphasises low effort as a strong reason for failure. In case of students’ attributions to low ability, the teacher should refuse to accept this explanation. He or she could suggest that either wrong strategies have been used or that the student has not been trying hard enough. The teacher could also point out that each of the students can meet the curriculum requirements if they work hard enough. Wlodkowski (1986) believes that teachers’ habit of commenting on students’ effort in a positive way can make it a classroom norm. According to Dweck and Master (2009: 127-128), when students believe that ability is fixed, they fail to recognize the importance of effort. They think that someone who has ability does not need effort, and effort will not help someone who is not able. However, when students believe that ability is changeable, they can make an effort in order to improve it. Teachers might be able to encourage students to work harder by explaining the power of effort to the students.

Motivational feedback can also help learners look at their performance in a positive way. Dörnyei (2001: 123) mentions three ingredients of motivational feedback. Firstly, positive feedback increases satisfaction and encourages to continue an effort. Secondly, it increases students’ self-confidence. Thirdly, it points out areas to be improved and gives suggestions for improvement. Motivational feedback should be informative, rather than judgemental and include students’ strengths, achievements, progress and attitudes. It is always a good idea to celebrate students’ success with praise. With written or project work a wall display is normally effective. Grades are discouraged by psychologists mainly due to the fact that they can become more important than learning, however, they are common practice in most educational institutions. Dörnyei suggests that in order to reduce the negative impact of grades, they should reflect effort and improvement and not only objective levels of achievement.

## ATTITUDES

Attitudes, particularly towards the target language or target language group, play an important role in student motivation and, thus, second language acquisition. Gardner (1985: 9) defines attitude as “an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual beliefs or opinions about the referent.” According to Gardner, levels of motivation are influenced and maintained by attitudes toward the learning situation and integrativeness, which he defined as “openness to the TL group, and other groups in general, linked to one’s sense of ethnic identity”. Dewaele (2010: 134) argues, however, that attitudes toward foreign languages are not as stable as some early studies have suggested. Dewaele believes that the misconception can be attributed to the fact that most of early SLA research into attitudes considered a single foreign language, i.e. French L2 in the Canadian context. More recently, researchers such as Gardner and Tremblay (1998) or Lasagabaster (2005) have demonstrated that learners can display wholly different attitudes toward the foreign languages they are studying.

Dewaele (2005), having analysed attitudes toward French L2 and English L3 among Flemish high school students, discovered that attitudes toward English were much more positive than those toward French, even though the participants had been instructed in French for longer and more formally. These, less favourable, attitudes towards French are the result of tense socio-political relations between Dutch and French speakers in Belgium. Higher levels of self-perceived competence and a higher frequency of using the target language correlated positively with attitudes toward French and English. Dörnyei (2001: 14) had a similar experience when learning Russian at school.

For example, in Hungary, where I grew up, every school child was exposed to several years of learning Russian, the language of Hungary's communist Big Brother, with hardly any effect. As far as I am concerned, after studying Russian for over a decade, I cannot even recall its alphabet, which was normal at that time (and which I regret today).

Another example, based on anecdotal evidence, is the fact that a number of people in Poland choose not to study German. They claim to dislike the sound of this language. This attitude might originate in World War II, being passed to subsequent generations. Younger people might develop negative associations from watching war films. In contrast, currently in Poland there seems to be an increase in the popularity of languages such as Italian or Spanish. This could be due to the fact that there seem to be no negative attitudes towards these languages. On the contrary, people tend to associate these languages with holidays, sunshine and exotic places, which makes the idea of studying them exciting.

Attitudes and perceptions are correlated with historical, social, political and geographical factors. As Dewaele (2010: 135) states:

While these attitudes are relatively stable within speech communities, they can suddenly shift as a consequence of political circumstances (war) or migration patterns, when a new language suddenly emerges in the local soundscape and becomes associated with a particular style of music or activity.

Dewaele (2010: 135) also wonders whether attitudes toward foreign languages are always shaped by the people who speak these languages, or whether some inherent characteristic of the language may affect the attitude of a group of people or individuals toward the language. An individual’s attitude toward a language may be determined by purely subjective factors. Dewaele (2010: 137) thinks that “one language may sound repulsive, while another one may sound sexy”. He claims that Francophone Belgians consider Dutch an ugly language. Pavlenko (2005: 67) quotes an American philosopher, Richard Watson, who contributed his affective obstacles to learning oral French to the fact that it sounded “syrupy”, “effeminate” and a language that “Real Men” would not speak. Williams *et al.* (2002), who researched language attitudes towards French and German among British schoolchildren, discovered that German was perceived more masculine and associated with “the war, Hitler and all that”, while French was considered more feminine and described as “language of love and stuff”. Piller (2002) came up with the term “language desire” to describe the attraction of language learners. In her study of bilingual couples she discovered that some participants were in love with an L2 before they met their future partners.

Bernaus and Gardner (2008) perceived a connection between student perception of teaching strategies (attitudes toward the learning situation) and their motivation and achievement. Similarly, Mattewie (2004) reported that the attitude toward the foreign language teacher affected the attitude toward the foreign language. Pavlenko (2003) gives her own example of walking away from an English language class in the former Soviet Union and choosing French instead. This was because her teacher announced during the first lesson that the objective of the course was to master English, the language of the enemy, so as to defeat him.

Brown (2007) states that second language learners benefit from positive attitudes, while negative attitudes decrease motivation and, as a result of decreased input and interaction, may lead to unsuccessful achievement of proficiency. Brown believes that negative attitudes typically result from indirect exposure to a culture or L2 group through movies, books, television, news media, etc. and can be unreliable. He suggests that teachers can help by replacing myths or stereotypes about other cultures with an accurate understanding. Students ought to realise that other cultures, despite being different from students’, deserve to be respected and valued.

Parents play a passive role in learning L2, as they communicate their attitudes towards L2 learning and the community (Gardner, 1985). As children normally know what their parents think of the second language and its speakers, if the parent’s attitudes are negative, the child is likely to pick them up, which will affect his or her motivation. Consequently, even if parents would like their children to master L2, this may not be possible because of the conflicting messages a child receives.

In early childhood, each individual develops a strong value system, consisting of attitudes, beliefs and feelings about the world and our position in it. This value system is the outcome of our upbringing and past experience. It plays an important role in our lives, as it determines our preferences and approaches to activities. Thus, as Dörnyei (2001: 51) argues, a teacher can play an invaluable role in motivating learners, by promoting language-related values and attitudes. As values and attitudes cannot be taught directly, Dörnyei suggests that they can be socialised through three processes:

. exposure to respected models who exhibit them;

. persuasive communication;

. participation in powerful learning experiences.

Dörnyei highlights the first process, i.e. modelling, as the most powerful way of teaching in general. An example of modelling, i.e. the process transmitting enthusiasm and commitment from teachers to students, has already been mentioned above, in the motivation section.

## LEARNER BELIEFS

Most learners, particularly older ones, will have certain beliefs about language learning. There is no doubt that these beliefs significantly affect learner behaviour, for example when someone believes in one method of learning, they may resist another. Buehl and Alexander (2009: 481) define beliefs as “psychologically held understandings, premises and propositions about the world that are felt to be true”. As Dörnyei (2005: 214) states, the main difference between the conception of attitudes and beliefs is that the latter have stronger factual support, whereas the former are more deeply embedded in our minds, being rooted in past experience, or in the influence of a significant person (the modelling example discussed earlier). A majority of language students show signs that they have been exposed to pervasive, often erroneous, beliefs about language learning, which they are likely to bring into the classroom. As Horwitz (1988: 283) points out:

Americans appear to hold strong beliefs about how languages are learned. Definite viewpoints on the best techniques for learning a language, the "right" age to begin language study, and the nature of the language learning process are the subject of airline magazine articles, Sunday supplement advertisements, and cocktail party small-talk. Many people apparently believe, for example, that second language fluency can be obtained with relatively little effort. In the course of a review of the time necessary to learn a foreign language, Acheson reports numerous instances of newspaper advertisements promising second language fluency in as little as three months of spare-time study. Although, at first glance, faith in these claims can be dismissed as naive, such expectations surely influence students when they enter conventional language classrooms and their own progress lags behind their preconceived timetables.

Other common student beliefs are that one can only learn the L2 in the host environment, or when one is taught by a native speaker, or that grammatical errors are to be avoided at all cost. In her detailed study of student beliefs about language learning, Horwitz (1988) found at least 30 % of students thought learning a foreign language primarily involved learning a lot of vocabulary, learning a lot grammar rules, or translating from English. As many as 72 % of Spanish and German students agreed with the statement on translation. Moreover, 37 % of the students believed that it would take them 1 to 2 years to become fluent in another language if they devoted one hour a day. It seems likely that the results of the study would be different if it was repeated now that a grammar-translation method is less frequently used. Nevertheless, they demonstrate clearly that students tend to have unrealistic expectations and incomplete ideas about the language-learning process.

Student beliefs about language learning are likely to influence their progress in the classroom. Students who believe that learning a second language principally involves learning vocabulary will concentrate on vocabulary acquisition, while adults who believe in the advantage of learning at a young age, will probably have low expectations of their own success. A negative language-learning experience could lead students to the conclusion that they do not possess the specific abilities required to learn a foreign language. Student beliefs can affect learning in a negative way, as well as a positive way. As Rifkin (2000: 405) points out, the belief that women are better language learners than men might give women the self-confidence necessary in language learning; however, the same belief held by men might produce a lack of self-confidence and, consequently, language-learning failure.

Young (1999: 241-242) states that certain types of role-related beliefs about language teaching can be sources of language anxiety:

* A little student intimidation is necessary
* The instructor’s role is to correct students constantly
* The instructor cannot have students working in pairs because the class may get out of control
* The instructor should be doing most of the talking and teaching in class
* The instructor’s role is parallel to a drill sergeant

Learner beliefs have traditionally been measured by the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory – BALLI (Figure 1.6) developed by Horwitz (1988). The questionnaire assesses student beliefs in five main areas: a) difficulty of language learning, b) foreign language aptitude, c) the nature of language learning, d) learning and communication strategies, and e) motivation and expectations. Furthermore, Cotterall (1995) has identified six major belief dimensions, such as the role of the teacher, the role of feedback, learner independence, learners’ confidence in their ability to study, experience of language learning, and the approach to study.

As students are influenced by their teachers, and the beliefs that teachers express may affect the beliefs that students hold, Buehl and Alexander (2009: 481) feel it is important to consider teachers’ beliefs as well as students’ beliefs. Horwitz (1988: 283) reports the results of a study by Champagne (1980) of fifty Anglophone Canadian students of French, who shared with their instructor the same belief in the hopelessness of achieving French phonetic accuracy. As one would expect, the students failed to develop native-like accents. This is consistent with a popular belief that adults are physiologically unable to speak a second language without an accent. More recently, Macaro (2010: 31) has produced a graphic representation of belief systems, which presents language teacher and learner beliefs in one diagram (Figure 1.7). Interestingly, student beliefs in Macaro’s diagram concentrate largely on unwillingness to communicate in the classroom. This concept will be analysed in more detail in section 2.1.

Even though teachers may have an influence on students’ views, there often seems to be a mismatch between students’ and teachers’ views - Yorio (1986) found high levels of dissatisfaction among students in his survey of adult international students in a communicative ESL programme. Instruction focused on communication in groups. The majority of students criticised the absence of attention to language form, corrections, or teacher-centred instruction. Similarly, Schulz (2001) discovered that almost all students wish to have their errors corrected, while very few teachers consider it beneficial. According to Dörnyei (2001: 67), incorrect student beliefs can become real barriers to the mastery of a foreign language. That is why it is important that teachers confront the most extreme views.

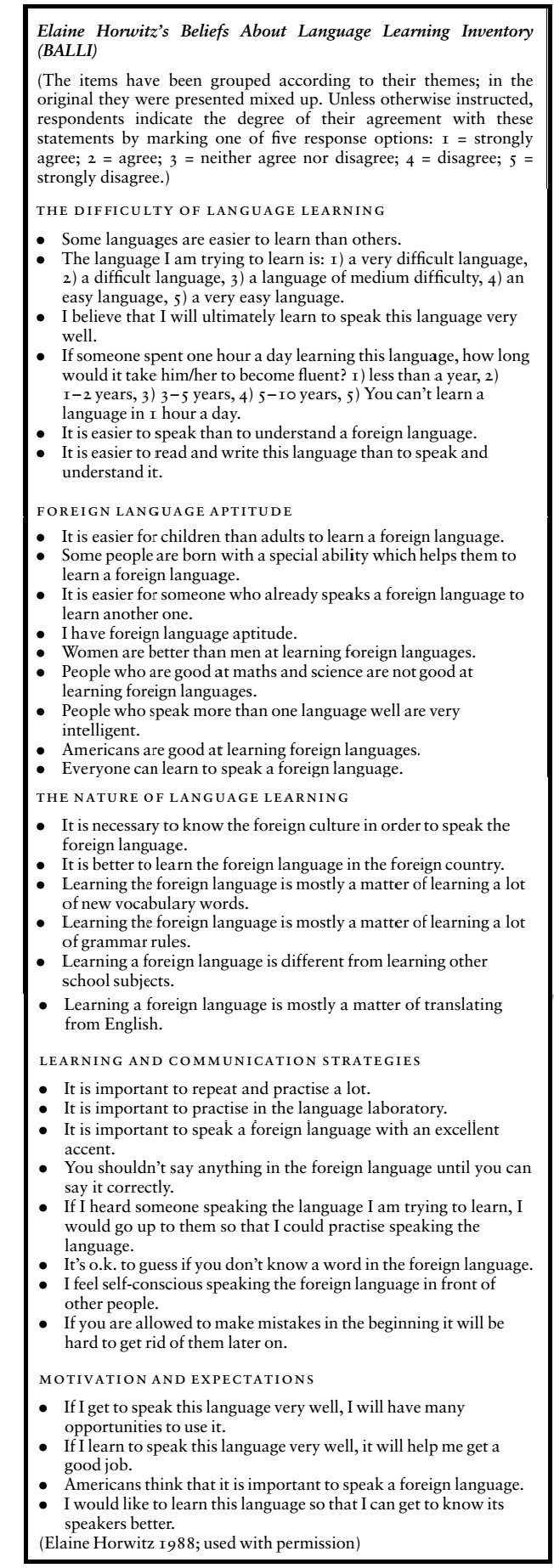


FIGURE 1.6 the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (after Horwitz, 1988)

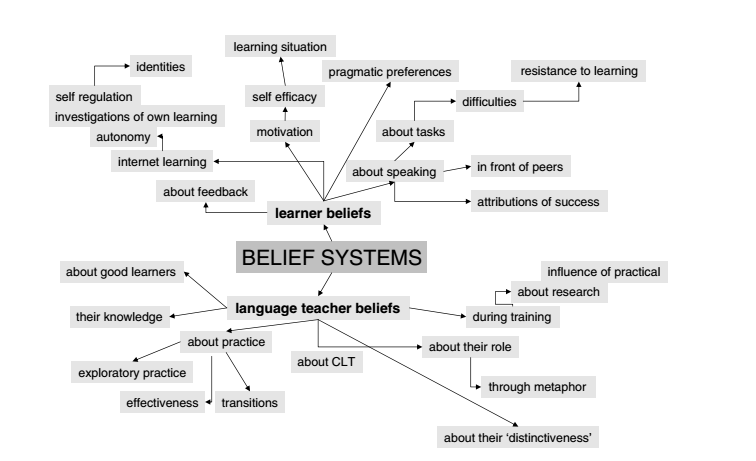


FIGURE 1.7 Belief Systems (after Macaro, 2010: 18)

Unrealistic beliefs about how much progress to expect and how fast, can function like `time bombs' at the beginning of a language course because of the inevitable disappointment that is to follow. Rigid convictions about what is important about a language and what's not, or what's the best way of learning, can clash with your teaching approach, thereby hindering progress.

The best way of dealing with false learner beliefs is to discuss the key issues with students. A discussion about the language-learning process could be initiated by asking students to complete Horwitz’s questionnaire on learner beliefs (BALLI), mentioned above. A BALLI survey will give teachers a clear picture of students’ beliefs about language learning. What is more, it will present teachers with an opportunity to inform students about the real nature of language learning. Dörnyei (2001: 68) suggests a list of recommended topics to be included in the discussion.

* The difficulty of language learning in general and learning the specific L2 they are studying in particular.
* The realistic rate of progress students can expect.
* What is required from the learner to be successful.
* How languages are best learned.

Regarding unrealistic student expectations, Philips (1999: 128) believes that teachers should state honestly that learning a foreign language, particularly in a non-target-language environment, is a lengthy process. Students’ expectations of becoming fluent in a year or two definitely need to be revised.

Dörnyei recommends that teachers acknowledge the effort required to learn the target language, nevertheless without making it sound like a tedious chore. He thinks it may encourage students if the teacher tells them that most people in the world are bilingual, many of whom learnt their second language later in life, without necessarily possessing a natural aptitude, through persistence and hard work. The teacher could also refute some students’ concern that they are too old to start learning a new language by giving examples of successful adult learners. Similarly, Mori (1999: 381) states that positive beliefs can compensate for limited ability, and that students who believe that intelligence can be increased, may ultimately outperform those who begin with equal, or even superior ability, but a belief in fixed intelligence.

Also Dweck and Master (2009: 127) emphasise student beliefs about the value of effort.

When students believe that ability is fixed, then they often devalue the importance of effort. They believe that ability is supreme. Someone who has ability does not need effort, and effort will not help someone who lacks it. After a setback, they may think: Why should I bother? Trying harder will not change how smart they are, and even worse, *having* to try hard may further confirm that they must not be very smart.

As for the last point on Dörnyei’s list, i.e. how languages are best learnt, he suggests it is important to tell students that there is no perfect method for learning foreign languages and that languages are learnt in a number of different ways. That is why learners should discover for themselves methods and techniques that work for them.

Even though the points suggested by Dörnyei are valid, it might be demoralising for students to begin a course with a lengthy discussion, most probably in L1. However, it does appear important that teachers are sensitive to the false beliefs that students may hold. If they perceive a mismatch that might produce student disappointment, it does seem proper that they react and try to explain the rationale behind their teaching practice. Horwitz (1988: 292) believes that the teacher should include discussions about the nature of language learning as a regular part of his or her instruction, in order to raise learner awareness of preconceived views about language learning and their possible consequences. However, she stresses that such information, by itself, may not be enough to counteract erroneous student beliefs. For example, no matter what explicit messages a teacher conveys, students will not believe that language learning is not just a matter of translation or vocabulary and rule acquisition, if those are the only kinds of learning outcome evaluated in the classroom.

## SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is the most pervasive aspect of human behaviour and no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without it or other similar variables, such as self-confidence, self-knowledge or self-efficacy, i.e. belief in one’s own capabilities to successfully perform that activity (Brown, 2007: 154).

Coopersmith (1967: 4) defined self-esteem as follows:

By self-esteem, we refer to the evaluation which individuals make and customarily maintain with regard to themselves; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which individuals believe themselves to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that individuals hold toward themselves. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behavior.

Self-esteem comes from people’s experience of themselves, of others, and from assessments of the surrounding external world. It can be global, situational or task-specific. The result of Heyde’s studies (1979) demonstrated a positive correlation between all three levels of self-esteem and performance on oral production measures. Self-esteem has been included in a number of studies of success in language learning over the years, e.g. Watkins *et al*. (1991), Brodkey and Shore (1976), Gardner and Lambert (1972). The results of these studies show that self-esteem is an important variable in second language acquisition. Raffini (1996) stated that students possessing high self-esteem are more likely to achieve success in learning, because they have clear priorities and goals. In the same vein, Dörnyei (2005: 212) argues that students with a positive view of themselves may try hard to live up to their own self-image and, hence, will be more likely to achieve highly at school, for example by applying self-regulatory mechanisms. A different conceptualisation of self-esteem as a resource for coping with failure was put forward by Baumeister (1999). Heyde (1979) points out the relationship between student self-esteem and teacher behaviour in the classroom. His findings suggest that a positive and influential effect on students’ self-esteem is exerted by teachers. Since it is generally accepted by researchers that conscious intervention can heighten self-esteem, boosting students’ sense of worth would appear to be a vital part of the teacher’s role.

Self-esteem has been recognised in Covington’s (2000: 181) self-worth theory of motivation. The theory argues that individuals strive to maintain a sense of value “in a society that values competency and doing well”, and in which ability is the most important attribute of all. Individuals who want to protect self-worth fear that lack of success will be attributed to low ability on their part. When they feel that failure is possible, they hold back effort, so that any lack of success can be blamed on not trying rather than on low ability.

Self-esteem tends to be correlated with success. Brown (2007: 155), however, wonders whether it is high self-esteem that causes language success or whether it is language success that causes high self-esteem. Nevertheless, some people have a negative opinion of themselves despite their obvious qualities or successes, while others display high self-esteem despite failures. This could be due to their possessing self-esteem as an individual/innate trait. A lot of research was done in the 1990, examining how people with low self-esteem differed from others with high self-esteem, as regards their behaviour and learning. It established that high self-esteem is generally associated with greater persistence when faced with failure, while individuals with low self-esteem are more vulnerable to the psychological impact of everyday events; they are more malleable and, consequently, affected by persuasion and influence. They tend to be sceptical about their chances of achieving success, even if they want to be successful.

Self-esteem can play an essential role in second language acquisition (Cheng *et al*., 1999: 437). In fact, students with a high level of self-esteem are expected to experience a lower degree of anxiety and, thus, to achieve more success in their language learning. The finding has important implications for language teachers. In particular, they should be aware of the important influence of self-esteem on language learning and, thus, take steps to improve student self-esteem. Improving one’s own self-esteem can result in a lower degree of anxiety and, thus, better performance. The obvious implication is that language teachers should take measures to boost learners’ self-esteem, thus helping them to achieve greater success in their language learning.

The role of self-esteem in language learning was the foundation of attribution and self-efficacy. Attribution theory, developed by Weiner (1986, 1992, 2000), concentrates on how people explain the cause of their success or failure. It is described in terms of four explanations for success or failure in achieving a personal objective: ability, effort, perceived difficulty of the task, and luck. Weiner believes that students normally attribute their success in a task to (one of) these four dimensions. For example, a failed exam might be explained as a consequence of someone’s poor ability or effort, difficulty of the exam, or bad luck. If a student feels that he or she is able to achieve a given task, i.e. has a high sense of self-efficacy, he or she may put in an appropriate amount of effort to achieve success. Failure to achieve the goal may be attributed to insufficient expenditure of effort or, very rarely, in the case of students with high self-efficacy, to bad luck. By contrast, a learner with low self-efficacy tends to attribute failure to external factors or lack of ability. The two latter attributions can create a self-fulfilling sense of failure. To sum up, students need to believe in themselves in order to succeed at a task. As Brown (2007) suggests, teachers should facilitate high levels of self-efficacy in their students, particularly since language learning is an overwhelming process, accompanied by several forms of self-doubt.

The construct of self-efficacy was introduced to psychological literature by Bandura (1977a, 1977b) and defined as perceived capabilities for learning or performing actions at designated levels (Bandura, 1997). In education, self-efficacy has been shown to affect students’ choice of activities, effort, interest, and achievement (Schunk and Pajares, 2009: 35). Bandura (1997) believes that, compared with students who doubt their abilities to learn or perform well, those with high self-efficacy participate more readily, work harder, persist longer, show greater interest in learning, and achieve more. They should also engage more in self-regulation (e.g. set goals, use effective learning strategies, monitor their comprehension, evaluate their goal progress) and create effective environments for learning (e.g. eliminate or minimise distractions). Self-efficacy, on the other hand, can be influenced by outcome behaviours (e.g. goal progress, achievement) and by input from the environment (e.g. teacher feedback, social comparisons with peers). Performances interpreted as successful will be expected to raise self-efficacy, whereas those interpreted as failures, will be expected to lower it.

Students can receive information about their capabilities from knowledge of how others perform. Observing peers can increase a student’s self-efficacy and motivate them to attempt at a task, because they are apt to believe that, if others can do it, then they can as well. By contrast, students who observe equivalent peers failing may believe they are not able to succeed and, hence, not attempt the task. Bandura (1997) also states that people can create and develop self-efficacy beliefs as a result of social persuasion, e.g. when others tell them: “I know you can do it”. Even though persuaders play an important role in developing an individual’s self-efficacy, Schunk (1995) discourages empty praise when success does not seem achievable. The increase in self-efficiency will only last for a short period of time if the individual faces likely imminent failure. Social persuasion can be positive as well as negative and, thus, negative comments can weaken self-efficacy.

An obvious factor in the development of positive self-efficacy beliefs is the achievement of success. Bandura (1995), however, argues that “easy success” does not count, as it will not lead to perseverance and a problem-solving approach. He also states that students need to be encouraged to “measure their success in terms of self-improvement, rather than triumphs over others” (Bandura, 1995: 4). Graham (2006: 302), who investigated the language learning self-efficacy beliefs of students of French in England, gave an example of one student who declared that “in his French class, everyone else but him understood, that he often felt demoralised because some of his classmates were completely fluent in French”.

Self-efficacy information can also be obtained from physiological and emotional states such as anxiety and stress (Bandura, 1997). Strong emotional reactions to a task are signs of anticipated success or failure. When people experience negative thoughts or fears about their capabilities, for example, when they feel nervous before speaking in front of a group, those feelings can decrease self-efficacy and cause even greater stress, which could contribute to the very unsuccessful performance they fear. Self-efficacy can be raised by improving physical and emotional well-being and reducing negative emotions.

There are many ways in which self-efficacy can improve people’s accomplishment and well-being. Self-efficacy has an influence on individual choices. Students tend to select tasks and activities in which they feel competent and confident, and avoid others to which they hold less positive beliefs. They have little motivation to engage with actions which they do not expect to produce a desired outcome.

Self-efficacy also has an influence on how much effort students will make, and how long they will persevere when faced with obstacles or adverse situations. As Schunk and Pajares (2009: 38) observe:

People with a strong sense of efficacy are apt to approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. They set challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them, heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure, and more quickly recover their sense of self-efficacy after setbacks. Conversely, people with low self-efficacy may believe that things are more difficult than they really are—a belief that can foster anxiety, stress, depression, and a narrow vision of how best to solve a problem. Self-efficacy can influence one’s ultimate accomplishments and lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy in which one accomplishes what one believes one can accomplish.

Even though students with higher skills and abilities are usually more self-efficacious, Schunk and Pajares believe that the relationship between self-efficacy and academic ability is not conditional. As Pajares and Kranzler (1995) demonstrated, although students possess the skills to solve problems, those with strong self-efficacy are more effective problem-solvers. As self-efficacy is a key determinant of student motivation, learning, self-regulation, and achievement (Schunk, 1995), teachers should aim to keep it at a high level. Some practical suggestions for teaching strategies were mentioned above, in section 1.1.4.1.

## INHIBITION

Inhibition is closely related to self-esteem and self-efficacy. It has been found that inhibition discourages risk-taking. Although risk-taking is necessary for progress in language learning, it tends to be a problem for adolescents, who are particularly self-conscious. As Brown (2007: 157) states, each individual builds their own set of defences to protect the ego. Babies are born with no concept of their own selves. Over time they identify themselves as being distinct from others. Later on, children create a system of affective traits that they identify with themselves. In adolescents, physical, emotional and cognitive changes give rise to escalating defensive inhibitions, serving to protect a fragile ego from ideas, experiences and feelings that threaten to ruin the system of values and beliefs on which their self-esteem is founded. This defence-building process continues until adulthood. Individuals with a stronger ego and higher self-esteem are better able to resist threats to their existence and, therefore, their defences are weaker. Conversely, individuals with lower self-esteem build strong walls of inhibition to protect a fragile ego, or lack of self-confidence. One part of human ego is what Guiora *et al*. (1972) labelled language ego, i.e. the very personal, egoistic nature of second language acquisition. Language acquisition involves identity conflict, as language learners take on a new identity together with the new competence. An adaptive language ego makes it possible for learners to decrease inhibitions which might hold back success.

Inhibition is a negative force, particularly for second-language pronunciation performance (Guiora *et al.,* 1972). Guiora’s study analysed the effects of small doses of alcohol, known for its ability to decrease inhibition, on pronunciation. The participants in the experiment who drank small amounts of alcohol turned out to have better pronunciation than those who drank none. Guiora *et al*. concluded that there was a direct correlation between empathy (a component of language ego, closely linked to inhibition) and pronunciation ability in a second language.

Guiora’s experiments demonstrated that inhibitions, i.e. the defences that people place between themselves and others, are important variables contributing to foreign language success. Further support for the importance of language ego was provided by Ehrman (1999, 1993). Her studies of learners with thin (i.e. permeable) versus thick (i.e. impervious) ego boundaries suggested that the openness, vulnerability, and ambiguity of tolerance of those with thin ego boundaries created different paths to success from those with hard-driving, systematic, perfectionist and, therefore, thick ego boundaries (Brown, 2007: 159).

In the light of Guiora and Ehrman’s findings about the role of inhibition in language learning, it is essential to create non-threatening learning contexts which eliminate inhibitions in the foreign language classroom. Students should be encouraged to take risks and to activate new language, without worrying about making mistakes. Teachers should inform students explicitly that no progress is possible without mistakes, and that they are part of testing one’s hypotheses about language and, hence, learning. Even though mistakes are threats to one’s ego, there will be no language learning without self-exposure.

# AFFECT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Chapter Two is related to the more emotional side of human nature and describes emotions experienced by students during the process of language learning. Positive emotions, facilitating SLA are addressed as well as negative ones that hinder foreign language attainment. In line with positive psychology, the chapter focuses on what can be done to increase strengths and attributes such as resilience, enjoyment or optimism, rather than concentrate on negative emotions. The first part of the chapter deals with the phenomenon of unwillingness to communicate and includes implications for encouraging communication in the target language.

## (UN)WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE

The concept of willingness to communicate (WTC) was introduced by McCroskey and Baer (1985) and defined as “the probability of engaging in communication when free to choose to do so”. Originally, it referred to first language communication. McCroskey and Baer demonstrated that WTC is related to such aspects of communication as apprehension, introversion-extraversion, self-esteem etc. and that it is a personality trait, rather than a situation-based variable.

MacIntyre *et al.* (2002) described WTC as “an underlying continuum representing the predisposition toward or away from communicating, given the choice” and also as “the probability of initiating communication, given choice and opportunity” (MacIntyre, 2007). They believe that WTC is to a large extent a situational variable and should not be limited to a trait-like variable. According to McIntyre (2007: 567), WTC integrates motivation with communication competence and perceived self-confidence. A number of variables, e.g. the degree of acquaintance between communicators, the number of people present, the formality of the situation, the topic of discussion have been proved to affect an individual’s WTC. McIntyre *et al*. (1998)believe, however, that the language of discourse is the most dramatic factor, as it has an influence on other variables that contribute to WTC. Additionally, they argue that it is unlikely that WTC in the second language is a simple manifestation of WTC in the first language, which was also proved in the study of Charos (1994). Therefore, MacIntyre *et al*. (1998: 567) extended the definition of WTC to: “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2”.

Since it has been agreed by researchers (Savignon, 2005; MacIntyre and Legatto, 2011) that communicating in L2 is crucial for second language acquisition, WTC seems to be a key variable determining success in L2 mastery. Therefore, students have to face the challenge of productively using not fully developed L2 skills even if it means losing face and shaking their self-confidence (Pawlak and Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2015).

MacIntyre *et al.* (1998) observed that a number of factors contribute to inclining learners either to seek or to avoid second language communication. The factors have been represented graphically as a pyramid model of WTC (Figure 2.1). Reaching the top of the pyramid, i.e. the moment one is about to communicate in the L2 is influenced by both immediate, situational factors (e.g. desire to speak to a specific person, knowledge of the topic) and more enduring influences (e.g. intergroup relations, learner personality). The situational factors are dependent on the specific context in which an individual functions at a particular moment, while the enduring influences represent stable characteristics of the environment or a person regardless of the situation. The pyramid consists of six layers, i.e. categories or variables. Layers I, II, and III represent situation-specific influences on WTC, whereas layers IV, V, and VI stand for stable, enduring factors.

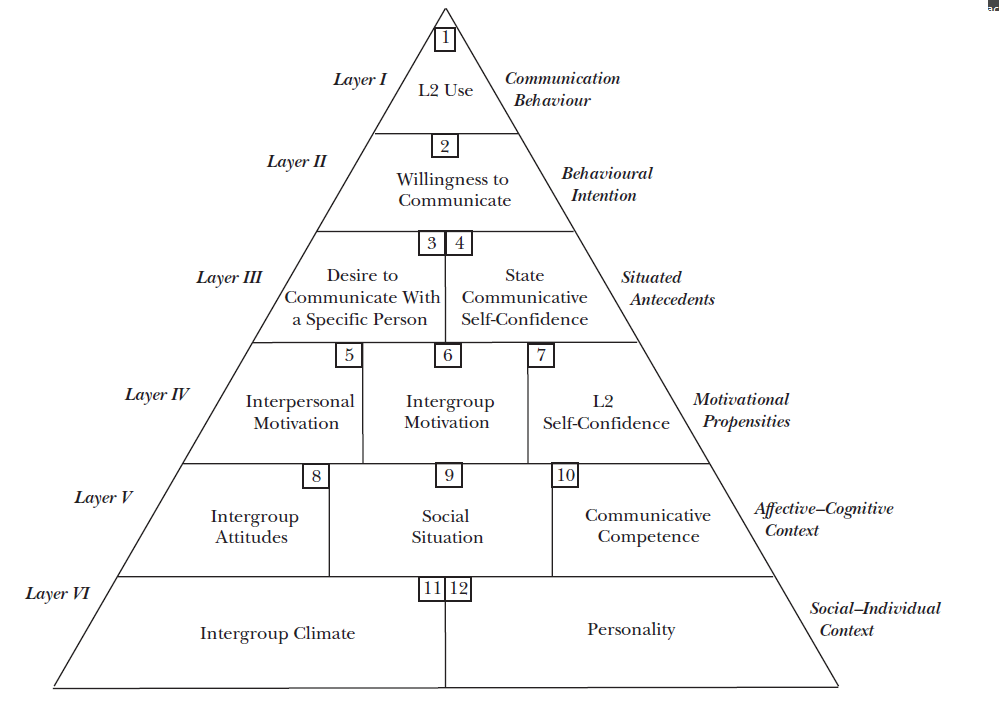


FIGURE 2.1 The Pyramid Model of Willingness to Communicate (after MacIntyre et al., 2011: 83)

Layer I, communication behaviour, is a result of a complex system of interrelated variables. MacIntyre *et al*. (1998) treat communication behaviour in a broad sense, including such activities as reading L2 newspapers or speaking L2 at work. However, if we want to consider the classroom situation, WTC is represented by the student communicating with the teacher or other students. Creating willingness to communicate in students is the ultimate goal of language instruction. As MacIntyre *et al*. (1998: 547) point out: “A program that fails to produce students who are willing to use the language is simply a failed program.” It is the teacher’s task, hence, to create opportunities for L2 communication in the classroom.

Layer II, willingness to communicate, is the final psychological step before communication in L2. This is the moment when the student has the choice whether to initiate communication or to remain silent. WTC is a state of readiness happening at a particular moment. This state is influenced immediately by a state of self-confidence, i.e. low anxiety and a perception of L2 competence and a wish to communicate with a particular person. MacIntyre (2007: 569) states that initiation of communication is a matter of choice, a decision made at a specific moment and that choosing to communicate in the L2 is an act of volition. Students raising their hands to answer the teacher’s question commit themselves to a course of action indicating that they are willing to speak if called upon, i.e. if given the opportunity. The pyramid model explains why the student may want to raise their hand. The main reason is that they feel confident about their answer and wish to say something to the teacher and other students. Additionally, they have enough self-confidence with L2 to understand the question and make an answer. They may also want to please the teacher and get good grades, i.e. feel motivated by the interpersonal motivation. Supposing that studying a language was the student’s choice, they have motivation for language learning. They are self-confident owing to their past language learning. Their self-confidence stems from lack of anxiety combined with communicative competence resulting from positive L2 experiences. MacIntyre *et al*. (1998) suggest that if these conditions had not been met, the student would not have volunteered answers in class. However, it seems possible that the student might still volunteer an answer, even if some of these conditions were not met. For example, when the student is highly motivated to learn a language, he or she might want to answer the teacher’s question despite insufficient self-confidence (see section 5.2.4).

Layer III, i.e. situated antecedents of communication, consists of the desire to communicate with a specific person and state self-confidence. The desire to communicate with a specific person stems from a combination of interindividual and intergroup motivations. MacIntyre *et al*. (1998) hypothesise that in both cases the desire to communicate is fostered by affiliation and control motives and that affiliation may be the most important motive in an informal situation with an attractive L2 interlocutor. According to Clément (1980), self-confidence includes two main constructs: perceived competence and a lack of anxiety, both representing enduring personal characteristics. Clément did not consider state self-confidence which can be experienced in a specific situation. State self-confidence consists of state anxiety and state perceived competence. State anxiety varies in intensity and fluctuates over time. It can be increased by many factors, e.g. unpleasant prior experiences, intergroup tension, an increased number of people listening. Increased anxiety reduces an individual’s self-confidence and consequently willingness to communicate. State perceived competence describes the feeling that one is able to communicate effectively in a particular moment. Perceived competence increases in a situation that one has experienced previously, provided that one has acquired sufficient language skills.

Motivational propensities, i.e. Layer IV, are usually stable individual differences. MacIntyre *et al*. (1998: 550) divide them into interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation and L2 confidence. The three clusters of variables lead to state self-confidence and a desire to interact with a specific person. Interpersonal motivation is linked to individual characteristics of the interlocutors, whereas intergroup motivation stems from their belonging to a group and thus such aspects as intergroup climate and attitudes. MacIntyre *et al*. (1998: 550) also suggest that motivation to initiate communication may also depend on orientations, mainly learning L2 for friendship or pragmatic reasons. L2 confidence refers to the relationship between the individual and L2. It reflects the general belief in being able to communicate efficiently in L2, as opposed to situation-specific, state-perceived competence. L2 confidence consists of two components: self-evaluation of L2 skills and language anxiety. Subsequent research (Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003; Yashima, 2002) has demonstrated that self-confidence is the most immediate antecedent of L2 WTC and that learners with higher perceptions of their communication competence and lower level of communication anxiety are more willing to initiate communication.

Layer V refers to the affective and cognitive context, i.e. variables representing an individual’s prior history, attitudes and motives. According to the social psychological approach (Gardner, 1985), integrative attitudes toward or intention to identify with the L2 community strongly influence motivation in L2 learning. Early L2 WTC studies, mostly conducted in Canada, were influenced by Gardner’s socio-educational model and identified considerable correlations between WTC and attitudes and motivation. In order to cater for EFL context, however, Yashima (2002: 54) suggested that integrativeness should be replaced with “international posture” to capture the general attitude toward the international community and foreign language learning in Japan. Yashima and associates (Yashima, 2002; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide & Shimizu, 2004, Yashima, 2009) found the direct influence of international posture on motivation and L2 WTC and the indirect effect of motivation on L2 WTC among Japanese students. This, however, is not in line with Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pietrzykowska’s findings (2011) which indicate that international posture does not have a bearing on student willingness to communicate in the Polish educational context. Furtermore, Yashima (2009) found that international posture may help students create English-using possible selves, and thus lead to more involvement in communication. Another component of Layer V of extreme importance is communicative competence. Student L2 proficiency has a significant impact on his or her WTC.

There is also a relationship between an individual’s WTC and social situation. This component seems mostly relevant to students using a foreign language outside the classroom, in real-life situations; however, some of its aspects can be related to the classroom situation as well. One part of social situation that affects L2 confidence is the type of communicative event. For example, a person may find it easy to use the L2 with his or her peers in a casual conversation, but become blocked in a more formal situation. In the classroom this could be reflected by students feeling more confident when speaking to other students rather than the teacher.

McIntyre *et al*. (1998: 553), following Hymes (1972) suggest five main factors that influence situational variation: the participants, the setting, the purpose, the topic and the channel of communication. Participant variables include the speakers’ age, gender, social class and various aspects of the relationship, e.g. the power relationship between the speakers, their level of intimacy, the extent of their shared knowledge, and the social distance between them. Other aspects particularly important in L2 communication are L2 proficiency level of the interlocutor in relation to the speaker, or whether the interlocutor is an L2 native speaker or not. When communicating with a person whose L2 proficiency is superior, one may be afraid whether the interlocutor is ready to make allowances for the speaker’s limited proficiency by grading their language. The setting represents the place and time of communication. It appears possible that some location domains, for example, business, legal or religious might stop a person from initiating a conversation for fear of insufficient knowledge of specialised vocabulary. Purpose refers to the goals or intentions of discourse. It seems that students are more likely to communicate when they see a clear purpose of the conversation. This is what teachers should bear in mind and provide students with meaningful communicative activities, as opposed to the artificial ones that do not contain information gap.

The topic of the conversation is a variable with a particularly strong influence on the ease of language use. When students feel they are expert or interested in a given topic, their self-confidence increases. Conversely, lack of knowledge of a given field may inhibit a speaker. As McIntyre *et al*. (1998) point out:

There is research evidence that superior content knowledge may result in being more verbally forthcoming and can override certain limitations the speaker may have in his or her overall oral proficiency.

This suggests that teachers can increase student WTC by providing topics that are relevant to them. In McIntyre’s study (2007: 571) the Francophones pointed out an unwillingness to communicate on topics that were unfamiliar or that required specialized vocabulary: “*Quand je dois parler de sujets trés précis où je ne suis pas certain de l’exactitude des termes”.* [[2]](#footnote-2)In a more recent study, Pawlak and Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2015: 8) observe that the choice of a suitable topic may not be easy and providing students with prompts instead of helping, may have the opposite effect. Instead, they suggest creating interest in a task or a positive attitude towards it.

The two main communication channels are speaking and writing; however, they can be divided further into sub-categories. The subcategory that tends to be the most difficult within the speaking channel is traditional telephone conversation, mainly due to the lack of nonverbal support.

The context of communication, as MacIntyre *et al*. (1998: 555) state, involves the interaction of the society and the individual. The societal context refers to the individual’s intergroup climate, while the individual context refers to stable personality characteristics. These two contexts constitute Layer VI of the pyramid model of WTC. As mentioned above, intergroup climate appears to be relevant to a specific L2 context and does not seem significant in the FL context. Individual differences may be more universal. MacIntyre *et al*. (1998: 557) looked at personality factors mainly from the point of view of how one reacts to members of another group, which again reflects the specific Canadian context. What seems more relevant to the FL context is personally trait theory. Five personality traits, i.e. “the Big Five”: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to new experiences have been proved to contribute to L2 WTC (MacIntyre and Charos, 1996). MacIntyre *et al*. (1998: 558) conclude, however, that both intergroup context and the personality of the learner set the stage for L2 communication, but are less significant for the learner’s WTC at a particular moment.

The pyramid model implies that WTC is a composite variable influenced by variables both internal and external to individual learners. Subsequent research has observed the correlation between L2 WTC and several other variables. WTC has been found to be related to such stable individual factors as age (MacIntyre *et al.,* 2002) and gender (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre *et al.,* 2002). More recently, researchers have been looking into the relationship between L2 WTC and classroom contextual factors, as these factors could be influenced by pedagogical methods. According to Wen and Clément (2003), group cohesiveness, teacher support, and attachment to group members are variables determining Chinese students’ WTC inside the classroom.Other studies, (e.g. Cao & Philp, 2006) stress the importance of such situational factors as topic, interlocutors, group size and cultural background. Peng (2007) identified eight themes categorised into two contexts that influence L2 WTC. The individual context includes communication competence, language anxiety, risk-taking and student beliefs, while the themes under the social context are classroom climate, group cohesiveness, teacher support and classroom organisation.

Peng and Woodrow (2010: 857) observed that students with positive experience in communicative classes tend to develop a communication-orientation belief system. This suggests that pleasant classroom environment contributes to developing rewarding feelings about speaking a foreign language. Similarly, Liu and Jackson (2008: 82) emphasise the role of the teacher in student WTC. They argue that teachers may have to encourage students to use English and gain more exposure to it in order to increase their willingness to communicate. They suggest that teachers discuss with their students in the very first lessons the importance of speech communication. Liu and Jackson (2008) believe that Chinese learners have little contact with English in their daily lives and thus practice is crucial. Students should speak English both in class and outside, with different people and in different situations. This practice should help students become more confident when using English. Additionally, Liu and Jackson believe that teachers should give the opportunity to speak even to the quietest students and build their confidence in a positive, supportive environment, e.g. by calling on students in a nonthreatening manner. As Liu and Jackson (2008: 82) state:

Feeling the concern of their teachers, the students should gradually become more willing to participate in and risk using English in speech communication. Meanwhile, continuous practice can gradually build up or enhance their self-confidence, which, in turn, may result in more use of the target language.

Liu and Jackson’s concerns about insufficient student exposure to English in China appear to be relevant in most foreign language contexts. One of the well-known methods to encourage learners to use L2 in class is pair-work or group-work. Teachers should, however, be careful about how they divide their students for such activities. MacIntyre (2011: 90) observed that WTC can be reduced by the perceived competence of the interlocutor. For example, the student may not want to communicate with other learners whose L2 is not as advanced. One student admitted:

*I am very unwilling to use French talking to my friends because I know a lot more French than some of my friends. I am more advanced because I [have] known French since grade 5.*

The reverse has also been found when conversing with a more advanced student:

*When talking to somebody at a higher level of French than me, it makes me feel stupid.*

MacIntyre (2011: 90) concluded that students’ ability to feel secure in the relationship with the interlocutor is a key influence on WTC.

Recent research in willingness to communicate has recognised its dynamic character and demonstrated that WTC may change from moment to moment during one conversation (MacIntyre and Legatto, 2011; Pawlak and Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2015).

The analysis showed that the participants’ WTC was indeed in a state of flux, being influenced by such variables as the topic, planning time, cooperation and familiarity with the interlocutor, the opportunity to express one’s ideas, the mastery of requisite lexis, the presence of the researcher, and a host of individual variables. (Pawlak and Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2015)

In one of the most recent studies, Munezane (2015) demonstrated that visualisation (based on Dörneyei’s (2005) concept of the ideal L2 self) combined with goal setting is an effective method of increasing WTC in the classroom. Lifetime goals can be narrowed down to goals in each class, and the immediate goals can be instruments to achieve distant goals.

Since it has been demonstrated that L2 learners need to communicate in order to master the language (MacIntyre and Legatto, 2011), it seems crucial that students are given ample opportunities to speak L2 in the classroom. Speaking in pairs or groups is much less threatening than teacher-student interaction and it gives students more possibilities to practise the target language within lesson time. This does not mean, however, that students will start talking automatically, once they are put in groups or pairs. Unwillingness to communicate during pair-work or group-work seems to be particularly strong among teenagers. As Spencer and Vaughan (1997: 12) observed:

When working in pairs or small groups, teenagers notoriously play about, chatter in their own language, make paper planes, or do anything but what they are supposed to be doing: speaking the target language.

This kind of unwillingness to communicate has also been labelled as TAB, i.e. Task Avoidance Behaviour. Many teachers, when faced with TAB resort to abandoning speaking activities and reducing oral work to safer, controlled, open-class utterances. This common teacher attitude deprives students of necessary speaking practice, and thus has a negative effect on their proficiency development. Instead of giving up pair-work or group-work teachers should understand the reasons why some students avoid getting involved in speaking activities and try to eliminate those reasons.

Using a foreign language to ask a friend about their last weekend seems highly unnatural. First of all, students are likely to have discussed these things in L1 before the lesson begins. Secondly, students may find it frustrating to be unable to express themselves clearly because of insufficient vocabulary or grammar. In addition, teenagers tend to be naturally shy and may want to avoid personal topics. Some general topics, e.g. ecology, may not encourage teenagers to speak either, as they may not have formed their opinion about it yet, and the fact that they do not talk about it may simply mean that they have nothing to say.

Spencer and Vaughan (1997: 12) observe that peer pressure is a common factor leading to TAB among teenagers:

Two students may want to work on a task but if the third student wants to ‘hijack’ the activity, the other two will be easily persuaded. Nobody wants to look like the ‘teacher’s pet’; the more the teacher angrily insists, ‘In English!’

The fact that some students feel reluctant to speaking in pairs or groups may also mean that they are not used to this type of interaction or even the noise that accompanies it. In most other subjects student-student interaction seems to be rare and, as Spencer and Vaughan pointed out, suddenly being asked to get together and chat may be interpreted as a licence for bad behaviour. This is why students need to be gradually accustomed to work in pairs and groups.

Students may also start using L1 when speaking in pairs or groups if the activity does not have a clear purpose, the instructions are unclear or the purpose is too general. Instead of asking students to talk about Christmas, for example, it seems more reasonable to ask them to find out three things their interlocutor enjoyed about last Christmas. This would give students a reason to exchange information. Information gap tasks are another example of speaking activities with a clear purpose. Students generally want to participate in activities that are related to their lives, e.g. school, town, family or interest. In these types of tasks they can draw on their experience and have something to say. It is also a good idea to explain to students the purpose of a particular activity. When bringing a song to the classroom, for example, the teacher could explain that the gaps to complete are connected with the subject of the lesson.

Some students are unwilling to communicate during pair-work or group-work because they feel that the teacher is not listening to them or correcting them. The teacher could point out that the purpose of this type of activities is fluency, rather than accuracy. He or she could also encourage peer-correction. Another method to reduce UWTC is monitoring, firstly because students see that the teacher is checking their work, and secondly, while monitoring, the teacher could feed in necessary vocabulary or help with the task. During the follow-up feedback session the teacher could praise students’ performance as well as discuss the mistakes that he or she noted while monitoring.

What is most important, if the teacher feels that TAB is a problem for a particular group of students, he or she should discuss the importance of student-student interaction at the beginning of the course. He or she should point out its advantages in comparison with teacher-speaking interaction, particularly the fact that pair-work and group-work will provide students with the most speaking practice.

Studies into WTC, especially inside the classroom context, are invaluable for language teaching, particularly in FL contexts. Students with high WTC tend to make good use of opportunities to practise communication using the target language. Hence, it is necessary to examine how various factors, both situational and personal, jointly lead to students’ volitional choice about crossing their individual “Rubicon,” a metaphor for committing oneself to L2 communication (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998; MacIntyre, 2007).

## EMOTIONS

Emotions play an important role in every aspect of an individual’s life. People’s affective experiences are regular topics of conversations. Interestingly, Fussell (2002) believes that interpersonal relationships and individual well-being depend on how emotions are expressed and understood. Emotions of language users are as significant as those of language learners. Emotions that students experience during language learning have a crucial effect on student motivation and thus on language acquisition.

### EXPRESSING EMOTIONS IN L2

Sharing emotions is a frequent and essential human activity and the inability to do so can be an unsettling and frustrating experience. For instance, Dewaele (2010: 1) described his own experience of studying Spanish and staying with a host family. As he was very little advanced in Spanish, he was not able to express himself the way he wanted. He looked forward to being back in a familiar environment where he could talk about his experiences with no effort.

*I could not tell jokes and I was unable to say anything that sounded remotely interesting, to my ears. I discovered that it is hard to socialise using emotionless textbook phrases.*

The communication of emotion in a foreign language can be difficult because students may not have linguistic means to express the full range of emotions in a way that would satisfy their needs and be regarded as suitable by their interlocutors. Dewaele (2010) states that as L1 users we are normally able to express our emotions precisely and we want to understand other people’s emotions correctly. He argues that knowledge of the degree of emotionality of a word and its affective power is as important as its grammatical class and a wrong or incomplete understanding of an emotion-laden word might have more embarrassing effects than grammar or pronunciation errors.

Using swearwords in L2, even in the right context, may be judged inappropriate by native speaker interlocutors. They seem to be reserved for native speakers and perceived as ‘funny’ when used by someone that sounds foreign (Dewaele, 2010: 7). Similar reactions can be met when an L2 user expresses sarcastic remarks.

The experience of learning a foreign language and a new culture is likely to open one’s mind and to adjust one’s view of the world and other cultures. According to Guiora (1975), this may be a scary experience during which one’s language ego in a first language is shattered (see subchapter 1.5.). Speaking a foreign language authentically means taking on a new identity. For instance Eva Hoffman, the autobiographical author of *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language* (1989), left Poland for Canada at the age of thirteen. She missed her Polish self, while speaking English made her anxious, frustrated and angry:

*It takes all my will to impose any control on the sounds that emerge from me. I have to form entire sentences before uttering them; otherwise I too easily get lost in the middle. My speech, I sense, sounds monotonous, deliberate, heavy – an aural mask that doesn’t become or express me at all. (...) I don’t try to tell jokes too often, I don’t know the slang, I have no cool repartee. I love language too much to maul its beats, and my pride is too quick to risk the incomprehension that greets such forays. I become a very serious young person (...). I am enraged at the false persona I’m being stuffed into, as into some clumsy and overblown astronaut suit. I am enraged at my adolescent friends because they can’t see through the guise, can’t recognize the light-footed dancer I really am.*

Jemma, a British participant in Dewaele and Pavlenko’s online questionnaire (2001-2003) went to Germany to study for a year after several years of instruction in German at university. She experienced similar feelings of fear and frustration:

*During my year in Germany I felt for the first few months that I had completely lost my identity. I was slow to understand, I could not express precisely what I meant and could not shape my verbal persona nor could I make jokes or entertaining remarks as I had no shared frame of context. I felt alienated and painfully frustrated and became very depressed. By the time I had finished my year however, I had sufficient command of the language to express myself and my character, to make jokes and even use comic catchphrases.*

Dewaele and Pavlenko (2001-2003) used the Bilingualism and Emotion Questionnaire to find out whether multilinguals feel that they become different people when they change languages. A majority, i.e. 65 % of the respondents reported feeling different when using another language, while only a quarter of participants reported not feeling different.

Taking on a new personality when speaking L2 can have positive effects as well as negative. Wilson (2008) studied the feedback from L2 users who declared feeling different in a foreign language. The most frequent response was that they feel more confident and are more outgoing when speaking in L2. The respondents admitted changes in body language, mannerism and voice. They declared that a foreign language served as disguise and referred to it as putting on a mask or playing another role. A typical comment was:

*It is kind of liberating. You can reinvent yourself and be what you want to be or who you really are.* (Wilson, 2008: 103)

Other comments emphasised differences in self-expression in different languages and having different identities in each language.

Koven (2006), who studied affective behaviours of Linda, a bilingual in French and Portuguese. She was perceived as an angrier person in French, while in Portuguese she seemed to be a calm and reserved person.

One of the emotions that are particularly difficult to express and recognise with limited L2 resources is love. Individuals do not normally want to be too obvious and use a repertoire of verbal and non-verbal means to create a positive impression. As Dewaele (2010: 12) put it:

What may be produced is an idiosyncratic blend of apologies, jokes, compliments, gazes, sighs and touches, but the word “love” itself might not be uttered.

Another emotion which can be a challenge to express in a non-native language is anger. Speakers often tend to be short of adequate words to channel angry feelings in another language. Nancy Huston, a Canadian from Calgary who went to Paris as an adult found it very unnatural to communicate angry feelings in French:

(...) there is always something ridiculous about getting carried away in a foreign language: the accent gets worse, the rhythm runs off and stumbles... you use the wrong swear words in the wrong way – and, as a result, you have to work at finding more refined ways to express your anger. (Dewaele, 2010: 12)

The quotations above illustrate the challenge of recognising and expressing positive and negative emotions in a foreign language. As Kinginger (2004) states, the L1 is preferred to communicate emotions, whereas the L2 is experienced as colder, more distant, and more detached from the L2 user and less appropriate for the expression of emotions. As emotions are a significant aspect of human mental and social life, Dewaele (2005) believes they should be included in foreign language teaching materials. Students should be instructed how to express and recognise anger, sadness, shame, happiness and a number of other feelings in L2. They should also realise that vocabulary of emotions tends to differ from language to language and focus on the differences and similarities between the native and the target language. Dewaele claims that most course books are emotion-free and thus do not prepare L2 learners to be proficient L2 users. He discovered that having studied Spanish at the university in Brussels, when he went to Spain, all he could produce was bland talk.

*I could say something about the weather (que calor ‘it’s hot’), I could order tapas, and ask for directions, but I was unable to impress Spanish girls with my sophistication and wit, which mattered a lot to me at the time. I felt like a terrible bore, acutely aware of my lack of sociocultural and sociopragmatic competence. I tried in vain to recall anything from my course books that could constitute the basis of an interesting conversation. There was nothing* (Dewaele, 2005, 375-376).

It would be a challenge to produce a course book providing appropriate language to express all sorts of emotional states. Whether swear words should be included in the course is an ethical issue. Dewaele (2005) believes that bringing authentic materials, e.g. films, to the classroom could be a helpful resource of emotion-laden vocabulary. A stay in a target language country could also play an important part in student education in perceiving and expressing emotions in L2.

### EMOTIONS IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

Emotions are omnipresent in school settings, particularly those connected with achievement such as enjoyment of learning, hope, pride, anger, shame, anxiety and boredom. Pekrun (2009: 575) states that the social nature of academic situations contributes to emotional character of school settings and thus emotions such as admiration, contempt or envy. In addition, emotions play an important role in student motivation and cognitive performance. Adaptive emotions like enjoyment of learning have a positive effect on goal achievement, problem-solving or self-regulation. Conversely, maladaptive emotions like anxiety, hopelessness or boredom hinder academic success, make students drop out academic situations and even have a negative influence on individuals’ mental and physical health.

A number of studies (Pekrun, 1992a; Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002; Spangler *et al*., 2002; Titz, 2001) have been conducted to analyse emotions experienced by school and university students while attending class, studying, taking tests and exams. The results proved that students experience all major human emotions apart from disgust. Anxiety turned out to be the most frequently reported emotion, accounting for 15-27 % of all emotions reported in these studies. Nevertheless, positive emotions such as enjoyment, satisfaction, hope, pride and relief were mentioned as frequently as negative ones such as anger, shame and boredom. Moreover, a large number of participants reported less frequently experienced emotions, including hopelessness, gratitude, admiration, contempt and envy. Positive emotions were generally prevailing in the classroom and during studying, while there were more negative emotions reported when taking tests and exams. This could be due to the fact that doing a test or exam involves more pressure for achievement than studying or attending a class.

Even though largely unexplored, classroom composition, classroom instruction and social environments have been proved to play an important role in the development of students’ emotions. Pekrun (2009: 585) states that anxiety is higher in high-ability classrooms. It seems, however, that when the level of instruction is perceived as too low by students, they may feel frustrated with the fact that they are not making progress. Thus, the optimal level of instruction would appear to be neither too high nor too low.

Classroom instruction may be a source of positive emotions in students. Student-centred lessons, support for student autonomy, teachers’ own enjoyment and enthusiasm have been found to result in students’ enjoyment (Frenzel *et al*., 2008). On the other hand, such

aspects of social environment as high achievement expectancies from significant others, negative feedback, or negative consequences of failure, together with competition in the classroom have been found to create negative emotions.

Despite little research into effects of students’ negative emotions other than anxiety, there have been some studies on student anger, shame, boredom and hopelessness. Anger is an activating, negative emotion resulting in physiological arousal. It has been found to correlate positively with task-irrelevant thinking, and negatively with self-efficacy, interest, self-regulation of learning and performance (Pekrun *et al*., 2004). However, Lane *et al*. (2005) discovered that anger may also be related to improved performance in students. Shame is related to negative feelings of self-worth and has a negative effect on student effort and academic achievement. Yet, Turner and Schallert (2001) observed that shame experienced after negative exam feedback increases motivation when students are committed to academic goals and have positive expectations about their goals.

Boredom and hopelessness are deactivating emotions and are characterised by reduced psychological activation. Pekrun (2009) assumed that these two emotions reduce intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and have a negative effect on cognitive performance. They have also been demonstrated to correlate negatively with study behaviour and achievement.

It has been traditionally believed that positive emotions reduce cognitive performance and motivation to achieve challenging goals, which is supported by experimental, laboratory-based evidence. Nevertheless teachers’ experiences contradict these views and more recent studies have demonstrated that a positive mood can improve divergent thinking and problem solving. Even though only scarce direct empirical evidence on students’ positive emotion exists so far, it supports the view that academic motivation and performance are enhanced by positive emotions. Pekrun *et al*. (2002a, b) found that enjoyment of learning, hope and pride correlate positively with student interests, effort, elaboration of learning material, self-regulation of learning and academic achievement, which demonstrates that these emotions can be beneficial for student academic motivation and agency.

According to The Broaden and Build Theory suggested by Fredrickson (2006), positive emotions such as joy, interest, contentment, pride or love have a beneficial effect on people as they broaden their attention and thinking. Moreover, they neutralise the effects of negative emotions. Positive emotions activate productive reactions to stressful situations, i.e. trigger feelings of happiness and interest while someone is experiencing anxiety. Positive emotions have also been found to support building personal bonds thanks to smiles. As Fredrickson (2006) also observes, positive emotions can be an element of an upward spiral. This is possible because resources created by positive emotions last long after an emotional reaction has taken place.

MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012: 207) describe beneficial effects of several specific positive emotions:

1. Joy creates the urge to play, expand boundaries, and creativity.
2. Interest generates an urge to explore, absorb new information, and develop the self.
3. Contentment allows one to savour positive events, relieve them, and integrate them into our worldview.
4. Pride is associated with an urge to share accomplishments with people who are important to us, and to imagine future achievements.
5. Love is an aggregation of positive emotions (e.g., joy, interest, contentment) that leads us to deeply meaningful relationships with others, and relationships with loved ones predict all of the
6. specific tendencies for joy, interest, contentment and pride.

As MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) point out, the tendencies predicted by positive emotions have their place in the language classroom, rather than being simply the absence of negative emotions. Not only do they appear to facilitate learning but they have an additional benefit of building resources that help to handle future negative experiences. Resilient individuals have the advantage of using humour, creative exploration, relaxation, and optimistic thinking to decrease tension and get over difficulties. MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) emphasize that these strengths can be taught in the second language classroom.

One way of achieving this is to ask students to find the positive meaning within their daily experiences (Fredrickson, 2004). Positive emotion coping strategies can also be taught by asking students to think how to deal with a problem and to take a step back from the negative stimulus by becoming more objective. In addition, positive emotions can be triggered in the classroom by teacher immediacy. According to Gabryś-Barker (2014), immediacy seems to centre on instructor-student interaction and closeness. As MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) observe, immediacy decreases the physical and psychological distance and thus encourages affiliation. Other nonverbal teacher behaviours that can stimulate positive emotions include relaxed postures and movements, gestures, smiling, vocal diversity, or eye contact. Linguistic teacher behaviours that can have a positive effect on student emotions include personal examples, asking questions, using humour, using students’ first names, praising, encouraging discussion (Gorham, 1988).

The development of resiliency has a positive effect on individuals as well as the group, as resilient individuals can bring out positive emotions in others. Fredrickson (2004: 1372) believes that this creates a supportive social context which has a positive effect on coping. Teacher immediacy helps to create interpersonal closeness with students. What is more, it facilitates team-building and positive group emotion. As MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012: 210) observe, teachers can play a significant role in creating well-functioning groups by using supportive, encouraging and appreciative language as well as avoiding negativity, criticism, sarcasm and cynicism.

MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012: 208) remind us that positive emotion is not the same as feeling happy in a hedonistic way, but is more like the state of flow, described above in section 1.1.2.

A mathematician solving equations, a composer working hard on the notes in a melody, a scholar pouring over reams of data, an exhausted marathon runner approaching the finish line are all experiencing a form of happiness, even though they might not seem particularly cheery at the moment.

Environmental factors have been shown to play a significant role in shaping student emotions. According to Pekrun (2009: 596), educators have a major impact on student emotions and can attempt to foster their development. This is of critical importance, as emotions have been proved to affect learning.

## EMOTIONS OF LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Not only do emotions play an important part in L2 communication, but they also lie behind language learning. By the 1980s emotional part of learning was practically ignored. In the 1980s brain scholars came to the conclusion that cognitive research explains only one part of how mind works, i.e. the part related to reasoning and thinking. Stevick (1980: 4) pointed out that success in language learning “depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom”. The *inside* is related to the personality factors such as self-concept/self-esteem, anxiety, inhibition, attitudes, motivation, learning styles. The *between,* on the other hand, stands for the relationship between students or teacher and students.

Many years later, Le Doux (1996: 25) similarly observed that:

Minds without emotions are not really minds at all. They are souls on ice-cold, lifeless creatures devoid of any desires, fears, sorrows, pain or pleasure.

The theory behind humanistic methods was explained by Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982), which states that emotions act as a filter that controls whether language is allowed to flow into the language-learning system in the brain. According to this hypothesis, if anxiety is high, the filter is up and the information cannot get into the brain’s processing system. If the filter is down, on the other hand, the brain can process the foreign language input. This is why the humanistic approaches, mentioned above, stressed the significance of creating a positive, relaxed atmosphere in the foreign language classroom.

In 1984, Zajonc demonstrated that affect has primacy over cognition. Brain scientists discovered that emotions could exist before cognition and be independent of it. Consequently, emotions stopped being seen as the result of cognition and became part of brain research. Finally emotion has gained the same status as cognition. Brain research on emotions had a significant effect on language-learning researchers’ studies of the mind during a foreign language acquisition. Emotion was scientifically approved as subject of research.

### THE INSIDE

Student competence and confidence have been found to depend on each other (Rubio, 2007; de Andrés and Arnold, 2009; Arnold and de Andrés, 2010). The more competent students become, the more confidence they build. Confidence, at the same time, facilitates competence development. Therefore teachers could create a supportive atmosphere which will encourage learners to work hard and learn as much as possible. Teachers could also address any negative self-beliefs that learners may hold and encourage positive ones. As Arnold (2011: 6) points out, negative beliefs can severely inhibit student progress. In her opinion, the most effective way to boost students’ self-esteem is to let them experience achievement in using the target language in meaningful communication.

Learners with low self-esteem find it harder to concentrate on their task (Arnold, 2011: 7). They tend to divide their attention between learning and worrying about their ability. Consequently, they are likely to have less energy for their tasks. Moreover, their negative feelings turn the learning into an unpleasant, less motivating and thus, less effective experience.

The concept of *possible selves* (see section 5.1), i.e. what individuals might become, would like to become and are afraid of becoming (Markus and Nurius, 1986: 954) presents teachers with an option for arousing emotional reactions in students and shifting them in a positive direction. As Dörnyei (2005: 99) states, possible selves are student manifestations of their goals, aspirations and fears. They must be a present reality for individuals and set future goals by means of creating vivid self-images.

...possible selves give form, meaning, structure, and direction to one’s hopes and threats, thereby inciting and directing purposeful behaviour. The more vivid and elaborate the possible self, the more motivationally effective it is expected to be. (Dörnyei, 2005: 100).

Markus and Ruvolo (1989) believe that efficacy grows when the positive images are accompanied by potential negative outcomes if the goal fails to be reached, which creates a balance between what one hopes and fears. Markus and Ruvolo (1989), describe the notion of ideal selves. They argue that imagining possible selves achieving desired goals may lead to intentions, followed by actions. In language learning, if our ideal self (the person we would like to be) is a person who is able to use the L2 in meaningful communication, we want to make an effort to achieve this goal, which facilitates the learning process. Teachers can play an important role in developing students’ self-image by making it seem appealing, and yet achievable. It could be done by communicating the message that if one is prepared to work hard in order to learn the target language, he or she will succeed in doing so.

The L2 self system (Dörnyei, 2005), developed from the possible selves model, consists of the ideal L2 self (the person the learner wishes to become), the ought-to self (the person that will meet expectations of others and avoid negative outcomes), and the L2 learning experience (the teacher, peer group, curriculum, successful previous experience). As Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) explain, the idea behind the L2 self system is that students want to learn a language due to their psychological desire to decrease the discrepancy between present and possible future selves.

There are several strategies to be used when practically applying the L2 self system (Dörnyei, 2009). First of all, student awareness of the ideal L2 self should be raised and the vision created. Students should be encouraged to make this vision as vivid as possible, and yet their expectations need to be realistic. Teachers could help learners achieve their goals by developing an action plan. Learners should also be encouraged to create their “dreaded” selves to counterbalance their positive images. One might, for example, visualise studying at a university in the L2 country, but at the same time consider the possibility of not being able to achieve this. As MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012: 204) observe, students who use their imagination to see the discrepancy between their dreaded and ideal selves experience emotions that can act as positive motivators.

### THE BETWEEN

The foreign language classroom is a typical environment of sociostatic regulation (Schumann, 1997: 8). Relations between the teacher and students as well as between students have an effect on their well-being. If an individual enjoys a classroom atmosphere, he or she will want to preserve these social bonds. A negatively assessed atmosphere, on the other hand, may be perceived as threatening and consequently may result in the student abandoning the classroom community.

A positive learning environment is thus essential in creating positive emotion and consequently a well-functioning classroom community. Foreign language acquisition depends, thus, on the relationship between the learner, the group of learners and the teacher. As Piechurska-Kuciel (2011:87) pointed out:

In general teachers provide knowledge, but also a positive classroom climate. Teachers who provide help, befriend and trust, which altogether leads to achievement, as when students feel the teacher cares about them it encourages investment in school. In such favourable circumstances the student also demonstrates a desire to comply with the teacher’s wishes and pays less attention to school concerns that distract them from thinking about tasks and learning. In this way students can be more engaged in the learning process, and successfully manage their negative emotions.

The teacher’s personality, ideology and pedagogical approach can also have a big influence on learning environment. Borg (2006) believes that the most significant teacher traits are an ability to communicate freely, to radiate positive feelings and to develop a good relationship with students.

Teacher confirmation, i.e. “the process by which a teacher communicates to students that they are valuable, significant individuals” (Ellis, 2000: 265) is directly related to the *between* aspect of the classroom. Teacher confirmation has been proved to have a strong influence on motivation and on both affective and cognitive learning (Arnold, 2011: 8). Leon’s study (2005) demonstrated teacher behaviours that make students experience a feeling of confirmation. The most significant ones are: raising the feeling of confidence among students, giving constructive feedback and praise, paying attention to and listening to students, smiling, making eye-contact, expressing interest in answering students’ questions, taking personal interest in students. The subsequent study by Piñol (2007) has demonstrated that incorporating confirmation provoking teacher behaviours made more students comfortable speaking English, feeling themselves in class, and interested in English.

### AFFECT VERSUS COGNITION

Attention to affect has gained great significance for language teaching research and practice. As Stern (1983: 386) states, “the affective component contributes at least as much and often more to language learning than the cognitive skills”. This does not mean, however, that teachers should be paying less attention to cognition. Research demonstrates that affective learning and cognitive learning are not separate. For example, Bless and Fiedler (2006) believe that affect influences cognition.

According to neurobiological research (e.g. Damasio, 1994; LeDoux, 1996), reason and emotion are inseparable in the brain and thus, emotions, thinking and learning are linked with each other. Attention and the creation of meaning are parts of learning that are particularly affected by emotions (LeDoux, 1996). The brain receives too many stimuli to be processed. Thus, it filters out less significant ones. Learning can take place if the brain connects to meaningful experience. This could be done through emotions. Emotions release neurochemicals which engage the brain and activate memory.

Even though learning cannot occur without a cognitive aspect, emotions can facilitate thinking processes. Damasio’s research (1994) has proved that the brain works most efficiently when it is free from threat or stress. In a similar vein, Caine and Caine (1994) state that for the learning to take place the brain must be engaged with the material. Similarly, Bolitho *et al.* (2003) believe that when learners are affectively engaged and willing to invest energy and attention in the learning process, there are better conditions for learning to take place. Consequently, they highlight the importance of language teachers paying attention to affect.

Sensitivity to affect in teachers may influence lesson and course design in a profound way through choice of texts and activities, and may help them to ‘unblock’ failing learners by encouraging them to respond affectively as well as cognitively to language inputs of various kinds. Affective engagement with language in use also has the considerable advantage of stimulating a fuller use of the resources of the brain. Positive attitudes, self-esteem, and emotive involvement help to fire neural paths between many areas of the brain, and to achieve the multi-dimensional representation needed for deep processing of language.

In conclusion, teachers should focus on affect in order to provide the best learning conditions. As Arnold (2011: 4) puts it, teachers who do not consider “what goes on inside and between their learners” part of their job “are not placing learning on the firmest foundation”.

### EMOTIONS IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Researchers have focused mainly so far on specific emotions that lead to successful language acquisition. The concepts that have been given the most attention are attitudes toward the target language, motivation to study L2 and communicative anxiety. There are a number of reasons why learners vary in degree of passion, dedication, motivation and fear of using a foreign language. The most obvious reason is the learning situation. If students dislike their teacher, they are not likely to develop a passion for a given language. Conversely, positive attitudes towards the instructor and the course facilitate language attainment (Gardner, 2010). Other reasons include socio-political climate, historical events and the direct contact with L2 speakers.

Attitudes are not sufficient to support motivation, and so emotions that students experience during language learning could explain the differences between dedicated and not dedicated learners. As MacIntyre (2002: 63) points out:

...a better understanding of emotion has the capacity to explain cases where students endorse orientations but might not be energized to take action, and also cases where action is prevented by emotional arousal, either present or anticipated.

According to Schumann (1997), each person’s unique experience results in a highly variable neural preference system. Hence, affective appraisal is at the core of cognition and it affects the decision-making process. Therefore, emotion underlies any learning or absence of learning. When an individual positively evaluates a stimulus in a learning situation, it has a positive effect on the student’s attention and effort devoted. The individual will also be likely to approach similar stimuli in the future. Conversely, a negatively evaluated stimulus leads to less attention and effort devoted and avoidance in the future. As Arnold (2011: 1) points out, positive affect can facilitate learning, while, negative affect can “close down the mind” and prevent learning. Therefore, it is as important to avoid negative emotions as to create a positive classroom atmosphere.

The relationship between learning and affect is particularly significant for language learning because “our self image is more vulnerable when we do not have mastery of our vehicle for expression – language” (Arnold, 2011: 1). Williams (1994: 77) highlights the social nature of foreign language learning, as opposed to other school subjects. She reminds us that language belongs to an individual’s whole social being and is part of one’s identity. Thus, if the teacher overlooks the affective side of language learning, the cognitive aspect of the learning process may become more difficult due to conflicts on identity level (Arnold, 2011:1).

It is essential for teachers to have a good relationship with students on both an academic and a personal level. As Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) state, teachers who interact with students in a warm, personal way and establish relationships of mutual trust and respect are more likely to inspire their learners in academic matters than teachers who have not succeeded to form any emotional bonds with students. The most important element in rapport building is making students feel that the teacher is genuinely interested in them and pays personal attention to them. According to Hook and Vass (2000), building rapport with students is of major importance:

By establishing rapport, you are making an essential connection with someone at an emotional level. You are willing to share part of you and they are prepared to invest themselves into the dynamic.

Attention to affect in the classroom plays an important role in addressing learner diversity. Arnold (2011: 4) has pointed out that if students are treated as individuals, each having a distinctive identity, they feel accepted and respected. This has a positive effect on creating an encouraging classroom atmosphere and a well-functioning group in which learning takes place. For example, if teachers consider student learning styles and use a variety of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities, they provide all individuals with the opportunity to achieve success in ways that are most suitable for them.

The teacher can address student emotions by becoming more autonomous. As Wajnryb (1996) points out, teachers should occasionally abandon their course book, and instead use materials more suitable to diversity and more relevant to a particular group of learners and their experience. Also Moskowitz (1978) stresses the importance of supplementing prefabricated materials with humanistic ones, which are more personally meaningful. More recently, the same author writes:

humanistic exercises deal with enhancing self-esteem, becoming aware of one’s strengths, seeing the good in others, gaining insights into oneself, developing closer and more satisfying relationships, becoming conscious of one’s feelings and values and having a positive outlook on life. All of these outcomes are highly relevant to learning, for the better students feel about themselves and others, the more likely they are to achieve. It should be noted that using humanistic activities is not to the *neglect* of the target language, but to the *enhancement* of it. (Moskowitz 1999, 178)

As teachers know their students’ needs better than course book writers, they are able to bring materials and use activities more appropriate and stimulating for them. In order to address student emotions, teachers should use materials and activities that students will find appealing and love doing. Instructors could also encourage students to bring their own materials and thus to be more autonomous.

Another way to deal with student diversity and motivate learners at the same time is to give students choice (Arnolds, 2011: 5). People are not intrinsically motivated if they are forced to do something. Arnold suggests that teachers use group projects that require various skills or give a range of homework tasks for students to choose from. According to Dörnyei and Murphey (2003), learners could gradually be given choices about as many aspects of the learning process as possible. Students could be free to select activities, teaching materials, topics, assignments, deadlines, the seating arrangement or the partners to work with as well as the format and the pace of learning. As Dörnyei & Murphey (2003: 105) have put it,

Choice is the essence of responsibility as it permits learners to see that they are in charge of the learning experience.

Learner autonomy could also be achieved by student contributions and peer teaching. Learners tend to be both enthusiastic and imaginative about presenting new material to their peers. In addition, they can learn more from teaching each other, which has been labelled as “reciprocal teaching” (Palincsar and Brown, 1984).

Another way of addressing student diversity and making teaching more student-centred is implementing self-assessment and peer-assessment. As Dörnyei & Murphey (2003: 106) state,

Self-assessment raises the learners’ awareness about the mistakes and successes of their own learning, and gives them a concrete sense of participation in the learning process.

Affective responses to a language learning process were analysed by Garrett and Young (2009). Garrett reported her own feelings about a Portuguese course for beginners over eight weeks of instruction. Garrett’s affective responses mainly referred to a social relationship with the teacher and other students, followed by her own professional teacher’s voice, her knowledge of Portuguese, and her reactions to Brazilian culture. The study revealed that while Garrett’s feelings about cultural aspects were clearly positive, her affective responses to the other aspects were balanced. The study also demonstrated that emotion is dynamic and variable across categories. Garrett’s interest in the Portuguese language decreased shortly after the course started, while her involvement in cultural issues increased. Garrett noticed the importance of sociostatic development and its influence on her feeling of general well-being.

Additionally, Garrett reported feeling anxious because of perceiving other students as more proficient than her. At the beginning of the course Garrett felt frustrated as a result of her inability to ask for help in Portuguese. Her frustrations lessened with time as she became more proficient. However, towards the end of the course she feared falling behind. What is more, Garrett reported negative feelings connected with the fact that the course focused on grammar, while she was expecting to develop communicative competence. In general she felt anxious throughout the course and her affective responses related to language awareness were mostly negative. Garrett felt negative towards her non-native speaking teacher who mixed Portuguese and English. Nevertheless her feeling changed later on, as the teacher stopped mixing the languages. The outcome of Garrett & Young’s experiment (2009: 221) was that “emotional responses to the language learning experience (mostly in the classroom but occasionally outside of it) were the most salient features of her learning endeavour”.

The regulation of emotion was also investigated by Bown (2009) in his study of learners of Russian. His study was in line with social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2002) and intelligent processing of emotions (Goetz *et al*., 2005). Bown (2009) stresses the importance of individual and social sources of emotions and the relationship between emotion and cognition in language acquisition. Bown’s study (2009) demonstrated a significance of emotion in students’ social relationships, thoughts, actions and decision-making as well as their cognitive evaluation of tasks, teachers, learning environment and themselves. Students’ relationships with teachers proved to be prominent features of the learning environment. Bown (2009) discovered that students’ cognitive evaluation of situations mediated their emotions and that students applied their cognitive abilities to regulate their own emotions while learning a language. His conclusion was that intelligent processing of emotions can facilitate language learning.

As MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012: 210) observe, understanding emotions in the language classroom is of great importance:

By seeking clarity and concreteness concerning the abstract principles surrounding emotion, we strive to understand it better in the hopes that we become happier, healthier and more productive, on both sides of the language classroom door. It is our contention that our lack of understanding of how emotion works holds us back, and although we may have a better handle on cognition, we may often be ambivalent or refuse to use this knowledge.

To sum up, in order to understand why some learners have more difficulty than others in learning a language, one needs to look at both cognitive and affective learner characteristics. Teachers can make their instruction more effective by paying more attention to emotions. As Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) observed, the affective variables comprise motivation, attitude, personality, learning styles, and language anxiety. The main objective of this thesis is to study the last variable, i.e. language anxiety and its significance in a foreign language classroom.

# LANGUAGE ANXIETY

Language anxiety is very common in a language classroom, as it affects over a third of language learners (Horwitz *et al.*, 1991: 31). In the late 1980s researchers, e.g. Horwitz *et al.*, Young, Scovel, Price, MacIntyre) observed that language learning may be a traumatic experience for some of the learners and drew teachers’ attention to what is happening inside learners during their foreign language class. Since then the student, together with a range of his or her emotions has become the centre of attention and everything that takes place in a foreign language classroom has been considered from the student’s, rather than the teacher’s point of view.

## DEFINING LANGUAGE ANXIETY

The best way to understand language anxiety seems to be to listen to anxious students describing their feelings. The following quotations come from Horwitz *et al*.’s (1991) and Horwitz and Young’s (1991) studies of student apprehension related to foreign language instruction. The emotions expressed by those students are very strong and reflect the most serious language anxiety cases. However, presenting these most extreme cases seems to be the most effective way of illustrating the discomfort that many students experience when studying a foreign language.

*I just know I have some kind of disability: I can't learn a foreign language no matter how hard I try.*

*I feel like my French teacher is some kind of Martian death ray. I never know when he'll point at me!*

*It's about time someone studied why some people can't learn languages.* (Horwitz et al., 1986)

*Sometimes when I speak English in class, I am so afraid I feel like hiding behind my chair.*

*I put off taking French because I knew it was going to be hard for me. It is the most difficult course I am taking. I don’t sound like I think I am supposed to and I make so many mistakes it’s not even funny. But I study a lot for this class. My family doesn’t even see me anymore.* (Horwitz and Young, 1991: xiii)

Spielberger (1983) defined anxiety as a feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system. A more up to date, MacIntyre and Gregersen’s (2012: 195) definition is not much different:

...language anxiety can be understood as an emergent, coordinated emotion with feeling, arousal, purposive and expressive phenomena. The feelings associated with language anxiety, well described in qualitative research, include tension, nervousness, worry, dread, upset, and similar terms.

Researchers have defined language anxiety in a number of different ways. Horwitz *et al*. (1986) see anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”. Over a decade later, Arnold and Brown (1999:27) use the term to describe lack of confidence in oneself as a learner, uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension and tension. According to Gardner and MacIntyre (1993: 15), language anxiety is “the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient, characterised by derogatory self-related cognitions..., feeling of apprehension, and physiological responses such as increased heart rate.” MacIntyre (1999) defined language anxiety as “the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language”. Many people experience these feelings in a foreign language classroom, which prevents them from being successful. Even if such students feel strongly motivated, they “claim to have a mental block against learning a foreign language” (Horwitz *et al*., 1986). More recently, Horwitz (2010: 154) characterised foreign language anxiety (FLA) as “a situation-specific anxiety, similar in type to other familiar manifestations of anxiety such as stage fright or test anxiety”.

## TYPES OF ANXIETY

Anxiety has been classified in various ways. The most general anxiety types are: trait, situation specific and state anxiety. Anxiety that is relevant to language learning has been divided into communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety, Horwitz *et al*, 1991. From a performance point of view, anxiety can be classified into facilitating and debilitating types.

### TRAIT, SITUATION SPECIFIC AND STATE ANXIETY

As MacIntyre (1999: 28) points out, it is useful to distinguish between three broad perspectives on the nature of anxiety, i.e. trait, situation specific and state anxiety. Some people are generally anxious in most areas of life. Goldberg (1993) observed that they are nervous people, who lack emotional stability. This aspect of an individual’s personality, which is stable over time and applicable to a wide range of situations, has been described as trait anxiety.

Situation-specific anxiety, as MacIntyre (1999) states, is the type of anxiety which refers only to a single context or situation. It is stable over time, though may vary across situations. Language anxiety belongs to this category, as it occurs exclusively with attempts to learn a language and communicate in it. Other examples of situation-specific anxieties are stage fright, test anxiety or maths anxiety. Since each situation is different, students may feel stressed only in one of them.

State anxiety, on the other hand, refers to anxiety experienced in a particular moment. As MacIntyre (1999: 28) put it, “it is the transient emotional state of feeling nervous that can fluctuate over time and vary in intensity”. The same researcher stresses that state anxiety is fundamentally the same experience regardless of whether it was caused by public speaking, meeting the fiancé’s parents or communicating in a second language. He points out that both trait and situation-specific anxieties refer to the likelihood of becoming nervous in a certain situation, but they do not refer to the experience of anxiety itself. The experience of anxiety, labelled as state anxiety affects human emotions, cognition and behaviour. The effect of state anxiety on emotions results in heightened levels of arousal and a more sensitive automatic nervous system; individuals with state anxiety feel energized or “keyed-up”, but anything above a minimal level of anxiety is perceived as unpleasant arousal. In terms of its effect on cognition, when people experience state anxiety they are more sensitive to what other people are thinking of them (Carver and Scheier 1986).

With regard to behaviour, people with state anxiety evaluate their behaviour, ruminate over real and imagined failures, and often try to plan ways escape from the situation. The behaviour effects include physical manifestations of anxiety (wringing hands, sweaty palms, faster heartbeat) and attempts to physically withdraw from the situation. (MacIntyre, 1999: 28-29)

A person with a high level of language anxiety, as MacIntyre (1999) observes, will experience state anxiety frequently. Conversely, state anxiety will not be experienced in the foreign language classroom by a person with a low level of language anxiety.

It is not easily predictable which student will experience language anxiety, because as MacIntyre (1999) states, types of anxiety are relatively separate. Students who experience anxiety in other courses may not feel anxious in language courses. On the contrary, students who have never experienced anxiety in other subjects may suffer from language anxiety. Language anxiety and its negative debilitating effects can be experienced by all kinds students, including those with high intelligence.

### COMMUNICATIVE APPREHENSION, FEAR OF NEGATIVE EVALUATION AND TEST ANXIETY

Horwitz *et al*. (1986) examined the role of related types of anxiety in language learning, i.e. communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. They believed that the construct of communication apprehension is relevant to the conceptualization of language anxiety because of its emphasis on interpersonal interactions. Communication apprehension is a kind of shyness or fear of communicating with people and can be manifested by difficulty in speaking in pairs or groups (i.e. oral communication anxiety) or in public (i.e. stage fright) or in listening to a spoken message (i.e. receiver anxiety). McCroskey (1984) believes that the phenomenon is directly connected with communication avoidance, as people who are afraid of communication, usually prefer to avoid it.

There are five possible explanations for the development of communication apprehension (Daly, 1991: 5-6). The first one, genetic explanation, suggests that communication apprehension is inherited. A person’s genetics establishes a predisposition which can be ameliorated or intensified by other environmental variables. The second explanation refers to an individual’s personal history. People who, from early childhood, receive negative responses to their attempts to communicate learn that it is better to stay silent. Being consistently punished for communication attempts may lead to creating communication apprehension. The third explanation is the phenomenon of learned helplessness. In the absence of rewarding patterns for verbal communication behaviours, the child may develop behavioural verbal regression. As the child does not know what to expect when attempting to speak, this situation may cause the preference for apprehension over communication. The fourth explanation for the development of communication apprehension concerns people’s early communication skills acquisition. Children who are not given the opportunity to gather adequate communication skills are more probable to be apprehensive than those who are provided with ample experience in communication. In addition, children who receive early training in communication may become less apprehensive than those exposed to communication opportunities later. The role of appropriate models of communicating also plays an important role in the development of communication apprehension. Exposure to adequate communication models results in less apprehensive individuals than exposure to inadequate ones.

People who experience communication apprehension tend to avoid opportunities for practice that could improve their communication skills. As Daly (1999) states, after a long period of avoidance, when they finally are required to communicate, they are likely to do less well than their counterparts who avoid regularly and thus get enough practice. This negative judgement of performance confirms their expectation of an unsatisfactory performance and consequently causes even more anxiety and avoidance.

Communication apprehension plays an important part in language anxiety. According to Horwitz *et al.* (1986), students who find speaking in groups challenging are likely to find it even more challenging in a foreign language class where they have insufficient control of the communicative situation and their performance is continuously examined. However, what contributes most to the challenge is the fact that in the foreign language classroom the student is required to communicate via a medium of which he or she does not have sufficient command. Consequently, the student knows that he or she is very likely to have difficulty in understanding others as well as being understood. Due to this knowledge, people who are normally talkative, may be silent in a foreign language class.

As students’ performance tends to be constantly evaluated in the foreign language classroom, Horwitz *et al*. (1986: 127) believe that equally relevant to a discussion of foreign language anxiety is test anxiety. This anxiety is a type of performance anxiety resulting from fear of failure. Students who are test-anxious frequently have unrealistic demands of themselves and they have a feeling of failure if they perform in a test less than perfectly. Tests are an integral feature of a foreign language class and thus they make test-anxious students experience a substantial dose of difficulty. Oral tests are even more challenging, as they may induce both test and oral communication anxiety at the same time.

Testing triggers a wide range of feelings of anxiety, from moderate levels leading to alertness to elevated anxiety causing disorganisation. Students may be unsure of their ability or afraid of being unprepared, which induces unease, apprehension, distress or depression. Lazarus (1993) states that the degree of threat or challenge depends on student personality and one’s cognitive appraisal of the threat, such as a necessity to complete the test in a certain amount of time. More recently, Zohar (1998: 330) defined test anxiety as a situation-specific form of trait anxiety which makes an individual react to threatening situations with psychological, physiological and behavioural responses that may be debilitating. Students with a high level of test anxiety have difficulties in learning as well as retrieving material during the test. They develop less effective study habits, process information less successfully and display reduced test performance (Naveh-Benjamin *et al*., 1981)

A number of researchers, e.g. Campbell (1986), relate test anxiety to low self-esteem, academic failure, passivity, dependency and school refusal. What is more, Gierl & Rogers (1996) claim that females are more sensitive to test apprehension than males. According to Bandura (1989), test anxiety is negatively correlated with self-efficacy. In a more recent study, Piechurska-Kuciel (2008: 64) suggests that test anxiety increases with age, since the growing experience with testing may lead to more hostile reactions to tests.

In the field of second language acquisition test anxiety has been negatively correlated with grades, proficiency test performance, performance in speaking and writing tasks, as well as self-confidence in language learning (Oxford, 1999a). Additionally, various test forms have been found to produce different anxiety levels, e.g. tests involving translation are highly anxiety-provoking. Less anxiety seems to be produced when learners are familiar and used to a given test format, when they have been given ample opportunities for revision and when they know exactly what language items are to be tested.

Anxiety experienced by students during testing can have a negative influence on their performance. In order to judge accurately what students really know, Arnold (2011) suggested a number of ways in which teachers can make testing less stress-provoking. The most basic thing the instructors can do is to create a positive, supportive classroom atmosphere in general and during the test in particular. They can also try to include student input for test construction. In addition, teachers can take into consideration students’ reactions to tests. Moreover, the purpose of tests should be to find out what students know and not what they don’t know.

Arnold (2011) also points out that assessment does not have to be limited to testing. Continuous assessment, i.e. the teacher’s regular evaluation of students’ class work or progress in speaking seems to be a good alternative. The teacher could evaluate students while monitoring pair or group work without learners knowing that they are being assessed and thus without extra stress. Evaluating students’ speaking skills will be addressed below, in section 3.6.5 on speaking anxiety.

A third type of anxiety related to foreign language learning is fear of negative evaluation. Watson and Friend (1969: 450) defined it as “apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively”. Fear of negative evaluation is similar to test anxiety, but it can be experienced in any social, evaluative situation, e.g. speaking a foreign language in class, not just in a test-taking situation. Studying a foreign language involves constant evaluation by the teacher. In addition, sensitive students may fear evaluation of their peers. Due to fear of making a negative impression foreign language students have been observed to be afraid of making errors in pronunciation (Price, 1991) and of saying the wrong thing. Thus, students who fear negative evaluation are probable to experience high levels of language anxiety, particularly in respect to their self-perception of speaking abilities (Kitano, 2001). Piechurska-Kuciel (2008: 65) believes that students’ increased concern with their foreign language competence, particularly performance, results in their attempts to diminish the possibility of negative evaluations, such as minimal interactions or passivity and withdrawal. Hortensja, one of this authors’ students said in her journal:

*Czasami unikam wypowiedzi, ponieważ boję się, że zrobię w zdaniu błąd gramatyczny lub nie będę umiała wytłumaczyć po angielsku o co mi chodzi.*

*(Sometimes I avoid speaking because I’m afraid I will make a grammar mistake or I won’t be able to say what I mean in English.)*

As Horwitz *et al*. (1991: 31) point out, communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation serve as “building blocks for a description of foreign language anxiety, but foreign language anxiety is not simply the combination of these fears transferred to foreign language learning”. They see foreign language anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”. This is largely related to the fact that communicating in a foreign language is a personal process which may put the speaker’s self-concept at risk.

### FACILITATING VS DEBILITATING ANXIETY

Some researchers have defined anxiety in terms of its effect on performance. There is a curvilinear relationship between anxiety and performance (Figure 3.1.). A good performance in language learning, particularly speaking in L2, depends on a certain amount of anxiety to arouse the neuromuscular system to optimal levels of performance. However, too much anxiety can disrupt the complex neuromuscular systems underlying this skill (Scovel, 1991).

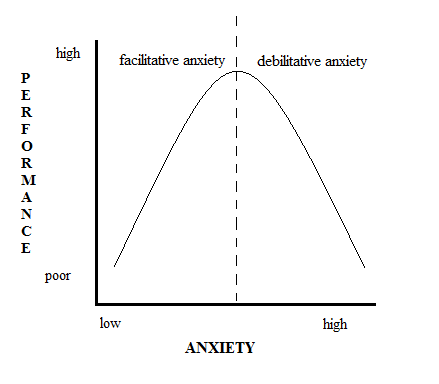


FIGURE 3.1 The Relationship Between Anxiety and Performance (after Piechurska-Kuciel, 2008: 39)

MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) claim that lower levels of anxiety facilitate performance and learning and call this type of anxiety “facilitative” or “an asset to performance”. *Facilitative* or *facilitating* anxiety motivates the student to face or fight the challenge of a task through approach behaviour which requires the use of problem-solving strategies.

Similarly, in a more recent study, Piniel and Csizér (2013) found that facilitating anxiety enhances motivated language behaviour. The colleagues state that this is consistent with Kleinmann’s finding (1977) that students who experience high levels of facilitating anxiety experiment with more complex language structures. What is more, they claim that facilitative anxiety is analogous to Csíkszentmihályi’s (1997) concept of the flow (see section 1.1.2.). This seems to be a little exaggerated, since flow has been described as arousal or excitement, experienced when one is fully engaged in a task, rather than anxiety (Egbert, 2003).

In contrast with facilitating anxiety, higher levels of anxiety have a hampering effect on learning and performance. Hence, this anxiety type is called *debilitative* or *debilitating* (Alpert & Haber, 1960). When anxiety becomes an obstacle, an individual decides that the situation is beyond his or her control and flees from the task. Through the adoption of avoidance strategies, an individual diverts his or her attention from the problem in order to improve the emotional state. As Piechurska-Kuciel observes, the border between facilitating and debilitating anxiety is difficult to assess, which is illustrated by the broken line in the graph (see Figure 3.1. above). Each person has different abilities to deal with stress or anxiety. Consequently, there is no uniform estimate of the critical amount of anxiety at which point facilitating anxiety turns into debilitating anxiety.

Alpert and Haber (1960) created the Achievement Anxiety Test in order to find out how much facilitating and debilitating anxiety an individual possesses. They explain that these constructs are independent of each other, rather than being extremes on a continuum.

In fact, these two constructs of debilitating and facilitating anxiety may be uncorrelated. Thus, an individual may possess a large amount of both anxieties, or of one, but not the other, or none of either. The nature of this correlation can be determined empirically following the construction of two such independent measures of anxiety... (p.213)

Emotional triggers, e.g. a racing heart, are imbedded in the appraisal system and may be impossible to avoid. Nevertheless, Gregersen *et al.* (2014: 585) argue that teachers can guide students to interpret them in a positive way. For example, they can explain student accelerated heartbeat in the following way:

That’s not negative anxiety! You are probably just eager to get started!

Their argument may be a bit unrealistic. Firstly, it seems that most students would feel too embarrassed to discuss such a personal thing as heartbeat with the teacher in front of other students, particularly if they are anxious. Secondly, most teachers would find it uncomfortable to talk about heartbeat during their language class. Thirdly, students, especially adult ones, should normally be able to tell when their increased heartbeat means anxiety and when it signifies excitement. Moreover, it has been suggested that facilitating anxiety does not really exist (Horwitz, 2013) and there are no benefits of experiencing even a little apprehension.

Schumann (1997) has stressed the importance of the appraisal process in student affective reactions. Language learners who appraise arousal as a positive rather than negative sign are more likely to transform debilitating anxiety into facilitating effort and consequently approach the task, rather than avoid it. As Gregersen *et al.* (2014: 586) have observed,

Everyone experiences vibes and / or emotions, along with an increasing or decreasing heart rate, but neither is itself stimulating or debilitating- how the emotion is interpreted or appraised forms the basis of action.

Increased heartbeat can be interpreted as a debilitating symptom of anxiety, but it can also be perceived as positive energy, which could be converted into enthusiasm.

Appraisal theory (Lazarus *et al.,*1970; Schumann, 1997) deals with interpretation of vibes and suggests that emotions are closely connected with an individual’s explanations of circumstances. If a language learner interprets talking to a native speaker, for example, as an opportunity to improve language proficiency, he or she is likely to feel excited and willing to interact. On the other hand, if one regards a conversation with a native speaker as risky, one is likely to perceive fear or apprehension.

## SOURCES OF LANGUAGE ANXIETY

Many teachers and students agree that anxiety is a major obstacle in language learning. Thus, it is of great importance to consider its sources. Horwitz (1999: xii) claims that some amount of anxiety is an inherent part of language learning and will be experienced by some people regardless of what happens in their language classrooms. She attributes anxiety to “uniquely vulnerable” an “disingenuous” position of language learners.

The essence of foreign language learning is the communication of personally meaningful and conversationally appropriate messages through unfamiliar and unmastered phonological, syntactic, semantic, and sociolinguistic systems. Thus, the learner is put in the position of communicating something that is meaningful to him or her without having sufficient command of the language to do so. In this way, “adult language learners’ self-perceptions of genuineness in presenting themselves to others may be threatened by the limited range of meaning and affect that can be deliberately communicated” (Horwitz *et al.* 1986). Therefore, self-aware language learners are confronted with the probability that the “world” will perceive them differently from the way they perceive themselves.

Horwitz (2000: 258) compares the difficulties that foreign language learners experience to the uneasiness of wearing unflattering clothing or having a “bad hair day”. Dressed in an outfit that does not suit us, not only do we feel that the clothing does not represent us, but we know that we present a less attractive image of ourselves. Similarly, when speaking a foreign language, it is highly unlikely for an individual to appear as intelligent, sensitive or witty as when speaking L1. Horwitz (2000) points out that the discrepancy between how we see ourselves (the true self) and how we think other people see us (the more limited self) is the explanation for language anxiety. Any performance in a foreign language is likely to challenge the speaker’s self-concept as a competent communicator and cause reticence, self-consciousness, fear or panic. What distinguishes language anxiety from other academic anxieties is that it affects self-concept and self-expression to a large degree (Horwitz *et al*., 1986).

At the beginning of a language course many students encounter difficulties in learning, comprehension, grammar, etc. If they feel anxious about these aspects of language acquisition or if they feel uncomfortable making mistakes, then they experience state anxiety. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) believe that after repeated experiences of state anxiety, students come to associate anxiety with the second language. Consequently, they expect to feel anxious in L2 contexts, which leads to the development of language anxiety.

Some anxiety reactions may not be true anxiety reactions but a response to learning difficulties stemming from native language learning skills. As Sparks and Ganschow (1999: 183) state, an individual’s native language skills directly influence his or her aptitude for foreign language learning. Students with weak language skills find it hard to learn a foreign language and are likely to experience language anxiety. Individuals with greater than average difficulties in language learning due to individual cognitive processing differences may feel anxious even in non-stressful language learning environment. Anxiety causes resulting from learning difficulties have been labelled as “fallacious” causes (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2008: 67) as opposed to true language anxiety causes, based on an unrealistic reaction to one’s ability in foreign language learning. Anxious students perceive discomfort using a foreign language even if they have good abilities.

Origins of language anxiety can also be divided into two different groups. As Turula (2006) suggests, the first group of anxiety-creating factors can be identified on the basis of how one perceives oneself as a language learner. They include unfavourable self-attitudes, difficulties in getting out of thick ego boundaries, worry over potential failure, the discrepancy between rich personality and intellect and poor foreign language repertoire. The second group of anxiety-breeding factors are based on the learners’ perceptions of the learning environment. Oxford (1999: 63) calls this fear of interpersonal evaluation *social* *anxiety* and observes that it consists of speech anxiety, shyness, stage fright, embarrassment, and consequently communication apprehension.

Language anxiety can be caused by a number of other classroom-related attitudes, e.g. comparison with other, seemingly more proficient students or an unsatisfactory relationship with the teacher. Anxiety that comes from social self-awareness has been labelled by Heron (1999) as existential anxiety. The components of existential anxiety are: acceptance anxiety: “Will I be accepted, liked, wanted?”, orientation anxiety: “Will I understand what is going on?” and performance anxiety: “Will I be able to do what I have come to learn?”.

Many researchers, e.g. Clément *et al*. (1994), attribute anxiety to specific teachers, sets of classmates or intercultural settings. Price (1991: 105) observed that students feel most apprehensive when they speak in front of their peers. They tend to be afraid of being laughed at, embarrassment or appearing stupid. This seems to be the case particularly when one uses a language one is not proficient in.

For this reason, language learning has more potential for students to feel embarrassed, to frustrate their self-expression, and to challenge their self-esteem and sense of identity than almost any other learning activity. Cohen and Norst (1989) describe the concern well when they say, “there is something fundamentally different about learning a language, compared to learning another skill or gaining other knowledge, namely, that language and self are closely bound, if not identical, that an attack on one is an attack on other” (p. 61). (MacIntyre, 1999: 33)

Fears about communicating and social evaluation stem from students’ relationship with their teacher and other students (MacIntyre, 1999). Dvorak and her associates (1995) interviewed foreign language students from various learning situations (e.g. traditional classroom learners, study abroad programmes) in order to understand their perceptions of learning. A number of consistent themes were discovered. One of them was foreign language classroom environment. The interviewees mentioned the role of the teacher in creating or hampering students’ excitement and ability to learn. The following quote comes from a student, who felt very anxious because of the teacher’s style:

*The professor. . . the way he comes across is very bad. And he would make you feel like you were so stupid to the point that you’re almost ready to leave his class, and one day a girl left in tears because he made her read something and she had a problem with stuttering when she got nervous. And he made her finish ten lines of something that he should have let her stop on one line and he saw what was happening and he didn’t care.* (Kelly Hall & Davies, 1995: 10)

Student perceptions about the significance of the teacher in the language learning process were also common in the present author’s student journals. The following quote comes from Krzesimir, who does not feel anxious in his English class:

*I very like people from my group and my teacher who always understand our feelings and personality problems. Nobody is speaking very well yet, so I think we shouldn’t feel bad of that reason.[[3]](#footnote-3)*

Jędrzej, a student who seems to be more tense than other students, admitted that the teacher’s personality and style has helped him reduce his anxiety.

*I feel much better than at the beginning. The classroom atmosphere is great and I think it is because the teacher is friendly and helpfull.*

The influence of classroom atmosphere on students’ anxiety level has been stressed by Wilga Rivers (1995: 199-200):

I’ve had experience with other subjects, and learning a language is very different from other subjects because you are putting people in a very vulnerable situation, you are asking them to reveal themselves in a way which is very threatening because when they don’t know the language very well and they don’t have the means to express themselves, they are unsure of what kind of expression they are giving and they feel threatened. They feel they’re making a fool of themselves and they probably are. They feel, people, peers might laugh at them. . . The classroom atmosphere must be an atmosphere of acceptance and mutual respect, where students know how to appreciate other students, teachers appreciate students, and students appreciate the teacher. When you’ve got that kind of relaxed atmosphere, then students can try to reveal themselves through another language in a genuine kind of way.

Classroom atmosphere does not depend solely on the teacher’s style, but also on the relationships among students. Comments about positive effects of good relationships with other students within the classroom context on language anxiety were very common in the present author’s student journals:

*Oczywiście na moje samopoczucie ma również wpływ grupa, w jakiej się znajduję. Osoby, z którymi pracuję są bardzo sympatyczne i nie oceniają negatywnie moich prób działania w języku angielskim.*

*(Obviously, the group of students I study with has also an influence on my frame of mind. The people I work with are friendly and don’t negatively judge my attempts in English language.)*

*Czuję się mniej zestresowany ze względu na lepszy kontakt z osobami z grupy.*

*(As the course progressed, I started to feel less anxious due to better relationships with people from my group)*

*Yes, I feel less anxious. I know people from this group and they know me, so I feel more outgoing.*

*Lepiej znamy się jako grupa i wiemy, że każdy popełnia błędy.*

*(We have got to know one another better and see that everybody makes mistakes.)*

*I feel better than at the beginning of the course because I’ve known my classmate well and I feel relaxed.*

Davies and Rinvolucri (1990) suggest that language anxiety be looked at from the perspective of classroom interaction. They recognise three main classroom sources of student tension, i.e. being judged, being isolated and feeling out of control. Classroom judgement comes mostly from the teacher and can be expressed by assessing students, showing approval or disapproval verbally as well as by body language. Teacher judgement can affect student emotional reactions greatly. Stevick (1999: 54) described an experiment in which two students were asked to perform the same speaking task. With the first student the teacher acted as a conversational partner, while with the second one he evaluated the student’s performance. The first student turned out to be more fluent, spoke for a longer time and created a richer, more interesting and personal image.

The most common form of teacher judgement is error correction. If it is done too frequently or not in a sensitive manner, it can be a major source of student apprehension. As Oxford (1999: 65) points out:

Harsh error correction, ridicule and uncomfortable handling of mistakes in front of a class are among the most important instructor-learner interaction issues related to language anxiety.

Another source of judgement in the classroom are fellow students. It can be expressed both verbally and non-verbally. While positive student judgement, e.g. applause, can be encouraging, negative judgement, e.g. expressing disapproval, impatience or mockery may give rise to anxiety. Angelika, one of the present author’s subjects, described her past negative experience of studying English when she was made fun of by peer students:

*I think I may feel anxious because of my previous negative experience – my last extra English lessons were about three years ago. Students there were laughing at me sometimes and I didn’t like them.*

Students can also be judged by peers by means of error correction. This method of error correction seems to be regarded as superior by many teacher trainers and recommended to teachers, as it is supposed to be less threatening (Wajnryb, 1992). Even though this form of correction seems to have some advantages (e.g. it is more student-centred as it allows the instructor to elicit correct forms from students), it can lead to creating hostile and competitive atmosphere in the classroom. Morris and Tarone (2003) studied the effectiveness of learners correcting each other using recasts (i.e. communicating with the student, using a question to confirm what the student had said, while at the same time making a correction). The results of the study demonstrated that some learners interpret recasts not as helpful corrective feedback, but as criticism or even mockery, which led to interpersonal conflict in the classroom.

Feeling isolated in the classroom comes first of all from the fact that teachers tend to prefer some students to others and show it by their behaviour. They tend to pay more attention to the students they like better, get involved more often in conversations with them and spend more time listening to them while monitoring. They also seem to be less harsh when correcting their errors. As Turula 2006: 44) points out, teachers’ favourite students usually belong to the group of high achievers and are given more challenging tasks and more verbal support. Low achievers, on the other hand, get easier tasks, less support as well as signals of impatience. Consequently, students who already have an advantage of knowledge or aptitude get more support and special treatment, which makes low achievers feel even more isolated. The feeling of isolation arising from belonging to a group of low achievers is well illustrated in the following quotation coming from Morris and Tarone’s (2003: 350) stimulated recall:

*We try but it is hard and we sometimes just get lost so it is better to let the other like Pete you know do the work and keep the class going. And because they are so good they can just do that and the teacher is happy. I figure I can try catching up later when I get home and do the work there.*

Sometimes, less confident, introvert students, choose a seat in the classroom away from the rest of the group. If the teacher ignores this fact and does not encourage the rest of the group to cooperate with such a student, for example by allocating him or her partners for group work, the student seems to become very isolated and does not benefit from participating in his or her language course.

The feeling of isolation may also arise when the teacher deserts the students in wrong understanding of autonomy. Underhill (1999b) believes that abdicated classroom, instead of boosting students’ morale, causes anxiety, since students may not be prepared to take on full responsibility for their own learning.

Students may also feel isolated in the classroom if the teacher does not make an effort to learn their names and use them. Using students’ names has a positive effect on the rapport between the teacher and students and consequently alleviates student anxiety. Knowing and using each other’s names is also important for community building, and thus decreasing anxiety (see sections 3.10.2. and 6.2.9.). Another source of isolation in the classroom are fellow students. As Turula (2006: 46) points out, the division into low-achievers and high-achievers mentioned above may be strongly reinforced by students themselves. The following quotation coming from Morris and Tarone’s study (2003: 350) is an example of a student isolated by his peers:

*People like Pete and his friends in this class are mean to us and it bothers me always when I speak and they make fun of me.*

Turula (2006: 46) observes that isolation tends to occur in a territorial classroom, where everybody is attached to a seat and never changes it. This seems particularly frustrating for students who do not get on well with a person sitting next to them. With this kind of arrangement they have no access to other students, working with whom they might find enjoyable. The way that desks in the classroom are arranged may be another source of isolation. The feeling of not belonging will grow if students do not face each other or if the student has no eye-contact with the teacher (Turula, 2006). It seems that the seating arrangement that causes most isolation are traditional rows of desks.

As far as feeling out of control in the classroom is concerned, the most important role is played by management of classroom discourse, particularly turn stealing (Turula, 2006). The student who hesitates so much when asked a question that someone else answers it, has very little control over classroom interaction. Feeling of being out of control may also appear if students are not interested in listening to one another and interrupt the speaker.

Another source of student apprehension can be teacher talk, particularly if the instructor’s explanations are unclear. Students may also feel out of control if there is too much teacher talking time, if the teacher digresses too frequently, or if he or she does not grade his or her language. Students may also feel anxious when faced with authoritarian teaching style, leaving no room for students’ needs or preferences.

As Young (1999: 6) observes, learners’ frustration and apprehension can result from teacher-student interactions as well as unappealing language activities, ineffective instruction and weak materials. Students may perceive anxiety if there are not enough communicative activities and they do not feel the course is preparing them for real communication. Kelly Hall and Davis (1995:11) report that many FL learners described the activities as boring, hideous and awful. The following quotation comes from a Spanish major who found his Spanish course dreadful:

*They spend 45 minutes discussing, you know, two phrases and you have people talk about it for two minutes and then you go the next day and no one remembers any of it. It’s just a nightmare. . .*

In Spielmann and Radnofsky’s study (2001: 273) student tension was usually expressed as frustration with the way of teaching. Typically, students were frustrated with not being taught in the expected way, not having enough grammar included in the course, or not being able to speak as well as in L1. Spielmann and Radnofsky came to the conclusion that less emphasis should be placed on neutralising or counteracting anxiety-provoking events or situations, and more attention should be paid to promoting euphoric tension. Spielmann and Radnofsky’s data demonstrated that students are motivated and stimulated particularly by the quality of materials and activities that challenge them and contribute to the satisfactory development of their L2 personalities. Even though it seems understandable that students may feel anxious due to poor quality of instruction, teaching style may be a source of debilitating anxiety as well. Teachers’ threatening manner or lack of sensitivity to student anxiety may hinder language acquisition or contribute to students dropping out of language courses.

Language anxiety has also been found to stem from students’ negative experiences inside and outside the language classroom (Aida, 1994; Clément *et al*., 1994). This suggests that one instructor who intimidates students into learning may trigger student anxiety which will show when an individual is taught by other teachers in the future. This kind of apprehension or repressed distress of the past has been labelled by Heron (1989) as *archaic anxiety*.

All students interviewed in Price’s study (1991: 105) mentioned the fear of being laughed at by their peers. Some of them had traumatic experience of being ridiculed in their language class.

They all spoke of their fears of being laughed at by the others, of making a fool of themselves in public. Several had painful memories of being ridiculed by other students, particularly in secondary school language classes.

Language anxiety can also develop due to unrealistic student beliefs (MacIntyre, 1999; Horwitz *et al*., 1991). The beliefs that may cause the most frustration are about the speed of language learning and about teaching/studying techniques. As Horwitz *et al*. (1991: 29) point out, a common student belief that “nothing should be said in the foreign language until it can be said correctly and that it is not okay to guess an unknown foreign word” may contribute to the student’s tension:

Beliefs such as these must produce anxiety since students are expected to communicate in the second tongue before fluency is attained and even excellent language students make mistakes or forget words and need to guess more than occasionally. (Horwitz *et al*., 1991: 29)

Student erroneous beliefs that Turula (2006: 38) considers most crucial for language anxiety development are those about “unrivalled linguistic abilities of young learners” and “the special predisposition for learning a foreign language some people have and others lack”. Obviously language aptitude is an essential factor in foreign language acquisition; however, students entering the classroom with the prejudice that they are not able to learn a language are bound to experience anxiety and make slower progress in language learning. Student beliefs have been described in more detail above, in section 1.3.

Language anxiety has also been found to originate from the conflict between effort and reward (Price, 1991; Speiller, 1988). In language learning, ability and effort are not usually rewarded as quickly or in the same manner as in other academic domains. Students may find it frustrating that there is a difference between what one knows and what one is able to use. The discrepancy between effort and results is particularly stressful for high achievers. They find it hard to accept that long hours of revising do not necessarily make a student a successful language user.

A number of studies have been devoted to find the correlations between learner personality and development of language anxiety. Among the most discussed and cited anxiety sources are the learner’s personal issues (e.g. low self-esteem) and interpersonal problems (e.g. competitiveness and fear of losing one’s sense of identity). Krashen in Young (1992) suggests that self-esteem is highly related to language anxiety:

…the more I think about self-esteem, the more impressed I am with its impact. This is what causes anxiety in a lot of people. People with low self-esteem worry about what their peers think; they are concerned with pleasing others. And that I think has to do a great degree with anxiety.

Price (1991) reports that the majority of her subjects thought their language skills were not as good as other students’ in their class. According to Bailay (1983), competitiveness can cause anxiety when students compare themselves to others or to an idealized self-image.

MacIntyre and Charos (1996) discovered that language anxiety is more related to introversion than to a personality trait of nervousness, which would prove that generally anxious students do not necessarily perceive language anxiety. However, the data suggests that shy and introverted people tend to perceive apprehension during the language learning process. This is due to their being less willing to interact with other students. Price (1991: 106) concludes on the basis of her interviews that perfectionism and fear of public speaking are the most important personality variables that may be related to language anxiety. Several of her subjects admitted feeling very anxious about public speaking and several considered themselves overtly perfectionist. The fact that they were very concerned about making errors in pronunciation and wished to develop a native speaker-like accent seems to prove their wish for perfection. FL anxiety was also linked to perfectionism by Gregersen and Horwitz (2002). What is more, Dewaele’s study (2002) demonstrated that psychotism, extraversion and, to a smaller degree, neurotism significantly predicted language anxiety in foreign language production. Students with high levels of extraversion and psychotism showed lower anxiety levels in English.

Language anxiety can also stem from clashes between student learning styles and the instructor’s teaching style. These clashes have been labelled by Oxford (1999b) as “style wars”.[[4]](#footnote-4) Style has been defined as the individual’s general, preferred approach for dealing with the environment, situations, or problems (Cornett, 1983; Oxford, 1990). A person’s learning style is his or favoured approach for learning, whereas a person’s teaching style is his or her favoured approach for teaching. Before describing the most frequent types of conflicts, the main learning/teaching styles will be outlined. Oxford (1999b, 218-220) presents five most significant dimensions of style.

Introverted students/teachers are animated by their own ideas, feelings and thoughts. They work most effectively when alone or people they know well. Extroverted students/teachers, on the other hand, are energized by other people and events. They are usually keen to take part in conversation and work in groups. If they become anxious, it is by having to work on their own, rather than by social situations.

Students/teachers with intuitive-random style think in an abstract, nonsequential way. They can get anxious by concrete, step-by-step approaches. Conversely, concrete-sequential students/teachers focus on concrete facts in an organized manner. They dislike multitasking and tend to be slow and steady. Concrete-sequential individuals become anxious when faced with randomness and lack of consistency in planning.

Moreover, Oxford (1999b) points out that students or teachers whose style is closure-oriented or judging are serious, goal-oriented, intolerant of ambiguity and wish for rapid decision-making, i.e. closure. Closure-oriented people experience anxiety in open-ended situations in which decisions are not made or when their excessive workload does not give them a sense of closure. Individuals whose style is open are light-hearted, not concerned with finishing tasks and easily distracted from goals. They tolerate ambiguity and often postpone their decisions. Open-style people get anxious when they are made to make quick decisions, face deadlines, or do not have much time to relax.

Analytic versus global dimension deals with the way individuals receive and process information. Analytic students/teachers prefer logical thinking, complexity, multiple details, precision and objectivity. They enjoy studying grammar. Analytic people feel apprehensive when they have to communicate spontaneously, since they prefer to focus on accuracy. Global students/teachers, on the other hand, are interested in the big picture, try to avoid details, simplify data instead of analysing it, take a subjective or personal approach and are more feeling-oriented than analytic students. Global students/teachers pay more attention to fluency than to accuracy. They are anxious when they have to remember or present many small pieces of information.

The fifth dimension of style, according to Oxford’s classification (1999b: 220), concerns sensory preferences such as visual, auditory and hands-on. Visual students and teachers concentrate on the written form and process information through visual aids such as pictures, video or photos. In contrast, auditory students/teachers do not need visual input and like lectures, conversations and role plays. They may feel anxious about purely visual tasks. Hands-on students/teachers enjoy moving around the classroom and working with objects, e.g. Cuisinaire rods. They dislike conventional academic seating arrangement and prefer sitting on the floor or tables instead.

Oxford (1999b) analysed over 300 students’ written narratives, in which they described their experiences with teacher/student style conflicts. She identified four most frequently occurring types of style conflicts. The first type of conflict concerns students who dislike ambiguity and whose closure needs are ignored. The following quotation comes from a student who felt frustrated about the ambiguity of her language class. She disliked the lack of structure and wished for some closure and clarity.

*The conflict centered on methodology – no textbook, no syllabus, no expectations explained, no grading procedures detailed, no structure whatsoever, very, very laissez-faire and open. I am myself quite open, but this was too much even for me. At first it seemed good. We choose the topic to discuss and we create the “book” or “text” as we go along. I was at the beginning of the semester excited by this freedom, but then it seemed to get harder and harder to continue talking like this. I did not feel “open” enough to disclose myself to the teacher. . . I clammed up and wilted emotionally.* (Oxford, 1999b: 222-223)

Introverted students coping with extroverted teachers who like to entertain the class is another common style conflict. The following quotation comes from an introverted student whose style clashed with her professor’s entertaining way of teaching. She felt the professor’s extroversion distracted the students from learning.

*I learned very little in the class. It was more of an atmosphere of fun and games. She [the professor] was the star performer. The students were an audience. We often felt it was time to get down to work, but it never quite came.* ( Oxford, 1999: 223)

Anxiety may also arise when global, intuitive students are faced with analytic, concrete-sequential details from the teacher. Melissa experienced difficulties in her language course because she was expected to provide small details, while she preferred theories and major ideas.

*There’s one professor I’ve had in Spanish where there was some overlap in styles but also some conflict. I’m not quite sure in what areas, but I think she was reflective and analytical whereas I am impulsive and global. Her tests asked for exactness, not only on definition questions but also on theories and ideas. When I learned these, I learned the main idea and translated it into my own words and expressions. She expected exact wording or expression. This difference really hurt me on theoretical or essay questions.* (Oxford, 1999: 224)

The situation when students’ sensory preferences are thwarted is a common anxiety source in the classroom. Michael, a student of language and culture, learns most effectively in a visual way, however, he was mostly provided with auditory input, which he found very frustrating.

*I presently have a professor who does not fulfil my stylistic needs. I am a very visual learner. This teacher almost never writes on the board, which is, in my opinion, a vital practice to the study of phonetic structure. He does not provide the class with adequate visual examples of the art about which we are studying.* (Oxford, 1999b: 225)

It has been demonstrated that instructors usually teach in the same style as they study, which could lead to frustrations described above. Teachers should be made aware of dangers of “style wars” and be sensitive to their students’ learning styles and try to accommodate their needs.

## LANGUAGE ANXIETY MANIFESTATIONS

Anxious students are common in foreign language classrooms. Language anxiety has been reported to be experienced by a third of foreign language learners (Horwitz, 2013). In order to alleviate student apprehension, teachers must firstly realise its existence and secondly learn how to recognise its symptoms. As Horwitz *et al*. (1986) observed, very anxious students may appear unprepared or indifferent, as they are highly motivated to avoid engaging in classroom activities of which they are afraid the most. They tend to give short answer responses, cut class, crouch in the last row, and avoid speaking in the foreign language in class (Young, 1992). Teachers often put student poor performance down to their lack of ability or motivation. However, they should always bear in mind the possibility that it is language anxiety that may be responsible.

A number of researchers, e.g. Horwitz *et al.* (1986); Young (1991); MacIntyre (1999), and Gregersen (2007) have described physical manifestations of extreme language anxiety such as *tenseness, trembling, perspiring, palpitations* or *sleep disturbances* (Horwitz *et al.*;1991:32). In the same vein Young (1991: 430) writes about *sweaty palms, nervous stomachs, accelerated heartbeat and pulse rates*. MacIntyre (1999: 39) quoted the following student reports of physiological FL anxiety symptoms:

*...my heart starts pumping really fast, and the adrenaline running. Then I feel myself start to go red . . . and by the end of the ordeal – for it is – I am totally red, my hands shake, and my heart pounds . . .* (Cohen and Norst, 1989: 68-69)

More recently, MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012: 195) give such examples of anxiety symptoms as racing heart sweating, shaking hands or a “sinking feeling in the stomach”.

Gregersen (2005, 2007) studied nonverbal behaviour of anxious students. She discovered the following differences between anxious and non-anxious students regarding facial expressions, gazing behaviour and body movements:

Anxious learners manifested limited facial activity including brow behaviour and smiling, maintained less eye contact with the teacher, were more rigid and closed with the posture, and although they self-touched and manipulated objects more than the non-anxious, they used fewer illustrative and regulatory gestures. (Gregersen, 2007: 211)

According to Gregersen (2007), accurate assessment of student non-verbal behaviour could help instructors detect learners affected by FL anxiety. It seems that once teachers recognise anxious individuals, they should approach them with extra care and take measures to alleviate their apprehension.

Three categories of behaviour stemming from social anxiety have been identified by Leary (1982), i.e. arousal-mediated responses, disaffiliative behaviour and image-protection behaviour. Arousal-mediated responses are typically manifested by students wriggling in their seats, fidgeting, playing with their hair, clothes or other objects, stuttering, stammering, and appearing jumpy and nervous. Disaffiliative behaviours are demonstrated by reducing social interaction. Individuals may initiate fewer conversations, participate less in conversations, have more silent periods in conversations and short speaking periods when in front of an audience. Image-protection behaviour is manifested by frequent smiling, nodding, and saying “uh-huh” as well interrupting others rarely. The purpose of this behaviour is preserving an image of being friendly, pleasant, polite, interested and sociable.

More noticeable anxiety symptoms in the language classroom are sound distortion, inability to repeat phrases with correct intonation, “freezing up” when asked to perform, failing to recall the words or expressions just learned or refusing to speak. One effect of language anxiety may be resistance to learn the target language. Language anxiety may also be manifested by talking about the language and analyzing it instead of using.

Other FL classroom anxiety symptoms may include avoidance of difficult or personal messages in L2, freezing up in role-play activities, or difficulties in discriminating the sounds and structures of messages in a foreign language (Horwitz *et al*., 1986: 29). One of the students reported by Horwitz *et al.* says he hears only a loud buzz when his teacher speaks in the target language. Anxious students often claim they know a certain grammar point, but fail to remember it during a test or an oral exam or that they give wrong answers on tests because of nervousness or carelessness rather than lack of knowledge. Horwitz *et al*., (1986) believe that once students become aware of making preventable errors during the test, their anxiety and errors may escalate. Another manifestation of language anxiety is making little progress despite overstudying. Students who worry profusely about making errors sometimes try to compensate by studying more. The following quotation comes from a student who revises too much as a result of feeling anxious:

*I don’t sound like I think I am supposed to and I make so many mistakes it’s not even funny. But I study a lot for this class. My family doesn’t even see me anymore.* (Horwitz, 1991: xiii)

Language anxiety may also be manifested by nervous laughter, avoiding eye contact, joking (Young, 1992), as well as giving more concrete, rather than interpretative information in the target language (Steinberg & Horwitz, 1986). Oxford (1999a) observes that anxiety can also be manifested by excessive competitiveness, excessive self-effacement and self-criticism. As Bailey (1983) points out, behaviours such as self-comparison to other students and personal expectations, hostile attitude toward classmates based on comparison, an aspiration to do better than other students, emphasis on tests and grades with reference to the performance of classmates, a wish to gain the teacher’s approval and a mental or physical withdrawal from learning the language are signs of competitiveness.

## LANGUAGE ANXIETY EFFECTS

Language anxiety effects can been divided into academic, cognitive, social, and personal (MacIntyre, 1999: 34). Academic effects are related to the educational sphere of the individual’s life. High levels of language anxiety are correlated with low levels of academic achievement in language courses. Language anxiety has been demonstrated to have negative effects on language learning and performance (Horwitz *et al*., 1986; Gardner, 1991) as well as course grades, proficiency tests and communicative competence (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a; Philips, 1991). Anxious students tend to either avoid studying, skip lessons or overstudy. Oxford and Ehrman (1995) explained this behaviour by *hypervigilance*, i.e. excessive alertness to a stressful situation, resulting in panic. Hypervigilant students often use such learning strategies as rote learning, mnemonics or repetitive rehearsal.

In order to examine the origins of low levels of academic achievement caused by anxiety, specific cognitive processes required for language learning have been investigated, as well as the way in which anxiety can interfere with cognition. The studies are based on a model of the effects of anxiety arousal on learning in the classroom situation (MacIntyre, 1999). The model shows three stages, i.e. input, processing and output. At the stage of language, anxiety acts like a filter not letting some information get into the processing system. The idea is the same as in Krashen’s “affective filter” theory. For example, anxious students may not be able to understand a spoken dialogue, because anxiety prevents them from processing information, while relaxed students do not experience this kind of interference. According to Wheelers (1975), this problem of “receiver apprehension” has many negative effects on communication. Input anxious students typically have problems with attention, concentration and encoding. They fear language spoken too quickly and exceedingly complex sentences. They frequently ask for repetition and take more time reading.

When anxiety is experienced during the processing stage, it affects both the speed and accuracy of learning. Processing anxiety occurs at the stage of organisation, assimilation and storage of knowledge. Since anxiety is a distraction, individuals may have difficulties in learning new words, grammar, etc. when they are feeling apprehensive. Anxious students need more time to understand, they rely heavily on memory, are unwilling to hypothesise and appear disorganised. Consequently, their processing is less effective.

Anxiety experienced during the output stage is a disruption to the retrieval of information and therefore affects communication in the foreign language. Many students know the correct word, but they are not able to recall it, no matter how much effort they make. If they feel embarrassed by their inability, their anxiety may increase, making communication even more problematic. Typical anxious student’s production at the output stage tends to be disorganised, hesitant and discontinuous. Horwitz & Young (1991: 56) observe that anxiety about speaking a foreign language may affect the quality of production, making students seem less fluent that they really are. Similarly, Piechurska Kuciel (2012) points out the relationship between a high level of communication apprehension and poor performance in public speaking situations.

The social effects of language anxiety are reflected in learner unwillingness to communicate in the foreign language classroom and in the natural settings. As MacIntyre (1999: 38) states, anxious students do not communicate as frequently as more relaxed ones and “the prospect of communicating in a second language appears to be the major source of language anxiety”. Horwitz (2001: 116) made a similar observation that language classrooms which require oral communication provoke more anxiety than traditional classrooms. When foreign language classes involve social interaction and communicative activities, anxious students do not get enough language practice and thus do not develop essential skills for the authentic L2 context. In a more recent study, Piechurska-Kuciel (2012: 230) similarly pointed out that anxious students “select inconspicuous seats in the classroom or within small groups in order to make communication less likely”.

Personal effects of language anxiety can be very severe. Some students experience overwhelming fear: “Sometimes when I speak English in class, I am so afraid I feel like hiding behind my chair”(Horwitz & Young 1991: xiii), or self-deprecating thoughts. Others are afraid of being regarded as stupid, because they struggle with using simple vocabulary or grammar:

*You’re sitting there thinking, “I’m a smart person. I should be able to do this and I can’t do it. “ It’s frustrating. I want to speak. I want to tell her things and I know that I don’t have the words. Try as I might, I cannot get a coherent sentence out of my mouth. I wouldn’t be surprised if my teacher thinks I’m a total dingbat. I wouldn’t blame her.* (Price, 1991: 105)

As Crookall and Oxford (1991: 141) state, language anxiety decreases a student’s classroom-related self-esteem, their confidence in themselves as language learners, willingness to take risks (crucial for learning to communicate in a foreign language) and the probability of becoming highly proficient in L2. On the other hand, it increases student inhibition.

Many students mention strong physical reactions:

*I am totally red, my hands shake, and my heart pounds. . . It’s pure trauma for me.* (Cohen & Norst, 1989: 69)

To sum up so far, language anxiety causes various types of effects. In comparison with relaxed learners, anxious ones achieve worse results, spend more time studying, have more difficulties taking in and processing the information as well as performing.

## THE ROLE OF ANXIETY IN VARIOUS ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

At the beginning, foreign language anxiety was mainly associated with oral aspects of language use, i.e. speaking and listening, and most of the studies concentrated on the influence of anxiety on oral performance in the foreign language classroom. Language anxiety has now been proved to accompany most aspects of language learning, i.e. speaking, writing, listening, reading, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Nevertheless, it is mostly grounded in speaking and listening skills.

### VOCABULARY ANXIETY

Vocabulary anxiety does not seem to be a well-established term. There have been studies, however, investigating the relationship between anxiety and vocabulary learning or retrieval. As MacIntyre (1999: 36) states, anxiety at the output stage affects communication. Many anxious students say they know the correct word or phrase but are unable to retrieve it in a stressful situation. This problem may occur when speaking as well as writing. MacIntyre (1999: 36) points out that communication becomes even more difficult if the learner feels embarrassed by his or her inability to retrieve the word.

*When I'm in my Spanish class I just freeze! I can't think of a thing when my teacher calls on me. My mind goes blank.* (Horwitz et al., 1986)

Similarly, in a recent study, Pawlak and Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2015: 8) have demonstrated that language anxiety increases when student encounter problems at the lexical level.

The inability to find the necessary vocabulary on a moment-by moment basis led to a loss of focus and growth of anxiety, which adversely affected willingness to speak.

Furthermore, significant correlations have been found between language anxiety and time required to recognize words, ability to hold words in short-term memory, length of time required to study new lexical items, memory for new words, length of time required to complete a vocabulary test, retrieval of vocabulary from long-term memory, ability to repeat lexical items (MacIntyre, 1999: 36). Nevertheless, there have been few studies so far providing specific teaching implications to reduce vocabulary anxiety. In their recent study, Pawlak and Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2015: 8) suggest that providing students with ample planning time may have a considerable influence on decreasing student vocabulary anxiety. Moreover, they point out the significance of such factors as the cooperation of the interlocutor, the knowledge of the conversation structure in the target language, as well as familiarity with the speaker. It seems that familiarising students with strategies how to deal with the inability to find the suitable word might also be helpful. Moreover, it might be a good idea to elicit the adequate word from other students. Not only would that be good language practice for them, but it would also encourage attentive listening.

A lot of students are unwilling to communicate in L2 because of their inability to take part in a natural conversation. They feel that their repertoire of L2 expressions showing interest, surprise and other conversational language is not satisfactory to exchange ideas in the target language in a natural way. Such communicative gambits could be included in their instruction (Philips, 1999: 129). These expressions could be taught explicitly, as they are likely to make students more comfortable when engaging in partner work. Philips (1999) suggests grouping conversation gambits according to their function, e.g. starting a conversation, involving a partner, expressing indecisions, etc. In addition, it is a good idea to provide students with classroom management phrases for interaction with the teacher and other students. Phrases such as “I don’t know”, or “What does\_\_\_\_ mean?” help students get involved in natural L2 classroom conversations. Moreover, Philips (1999: 131) suggests that students produce their own classroom vocabulary list when they resort to their L1 during pair or group work. Teachers could then translate the list of essential conversational vocabulary into the target language and get students to activate the target expressions during speaking activities.

### PRONUNCIATION ANXIETY

There has been little research so far concerning the relationship between language anxiety and pronunciation. However, student apprehension about their pronunciation has been frequently expressed in qualitative studies of language anxiety.

*I don’t sound like I think I am supposed to and I make so many mistakes it’s not even funny.*

*And my pronunciation is terrible. Sometimes I think people don’t even understand what I am saying.* (Horwitz and Young, 1991: xiii)

*French were very, very stressful for me, because I didn’t speak well. Everything came out in a Texas accent, which was horrible, because the professor would stop me and make me go over and over it and I still couldn’t get it right! The more they made me do it, the more frightened I became!* (Price, 1991: 104)

Subjects in Price’s study (1991) were asked to indicate what bothered them the most in their foreign language classes. They answered the question highly consistently. One of the most common concerns was about making pronunciation errors. Some of the subjects were embarrassed because of their Texan accents. They were ashamed they did not pronounce words like native speakers of French.

The reason that some people with average language and learning abilities feel anxious when learning and using a foreign language is the vulnerable position of language learners (Horwitz, 1999: xii).

The essence of foreign language learning is the communication of personally meaningful and conversationally appropriate messages through unfamiliar and unmastered phonological, syntactic, semantic, and sociolinguistic systems.

Similarly, Stevick (1980; after Young and Kimball, 1995: 199) believes that language learning, particularly pronunciation may be an uncomfortable experience . This is because speaking a language is a very personal matter.

One’s speech is part of one’s self. One’s ability to interpret or remember history or to do mathematical gymnastics and so forth is a skill, but it’s not part of one’s self. This is particularly true with pronunciation. I think there’s a strong social element to skill or lack of skill in pronunciation, although I certainly wouldn’t claim that’s all there is to it.

Moreover, for the same reason, many foreign language learners, particularly adult ones, feel very self-conscious when pronouncing sounds that do not exist in L1. They often find it embarrassing as they seem to believe that they sound funny. This has been labelled as identity-based anxiety (Stroud and Wee, 2006). In addition, some students are afraid of being laughed at by their peers because of pronunciation errors. This seems to be the case in beginner learners, rather than advanced ones. As one’s proficiency level increases, one gets used to the sound of the foreign language. According to Young (1992), fear of mispronunciation is a frequent cause of language anxiety. Baran-Łucarz (2014) has suggested a definition of pronunciation anxiety:

Pronunciation anxiety is a feeling of apprehension experienced by FL learners either in the FL classroom or natural setting, deriving from negative FL pronunciation self-perceptions, fear of negative evaluation, and beliefs about the importance of pronunciation, difficulty of learning and the sound of the FL pronunciation, evidenced by typical cognitive, physiological/somatic and behavioural symptoms of being anxious.

The key components of pronunciation anxiety, as Baran-Łucarz (2014) states, are fear of embarrassing oneself and pronunciation self-perceptions. Self perceptions, on the other hand, are subdivided into pronunciation self-image, pronunciation self-efficacy and pronunciation self-assessment. Baran-Łucarz’s study (2014) demonstrated that students who feel insecure about their pronunciation are apprehensive about communicating as they are afraid of endangering their ego. This was particularly the case when students participated in a communicative task with friends or acquaintances, as opposed to strangers, which suggests that the fear of face losing plays a significant role in pronunciation anxiety.

Baran-Łucarz (2014: 46) concludes that “improving FL students’ perceptions of their own pronunciation and their actual pronunciation should be a crucial concern of all FL teachers”. She also argues that pronunciation is the aspect of language that causes the highest levels of apprehension among FL learners. Regular pronunciation practice does appear to be beneficial, as an improved pronunciation level is likely to increase student confidence. However, Baran-Łucarz’s arguments mentioned above seem to be exaggerated. Firstly, all of the researchers in language anxiety agree that speaking, not pronunciation, is the most anxiety-provoking aspect of language. Secondly, as long as it does not impede communication, pronunciation does not seem as crucial an aspect of language as speaking. Moreover, the subjects taking part in the present research have no opinion about whether it is important to practise in the language laboratory or to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent (see section 4.6.4. on BALLI results). Concerns about not having native-like accents appear to be more significant at higher proficiency levels when learners may be, for example, preparing for exams at which pronunciation is evaluated. The way to deal with anxiety stemming from student disappointment when they compare their pronunciation to native speakers’ could be to explain to learners that such an expectation is highly unrealistic and that having a foreign accent is a natural thing one should not be ashamed of.

Pronunciation anxiety could also be addressed by a gentle way of pronunciation error correction. Instead of singling students out, it seems to be a good idea to use chorus repetition of the corrected word or phrase. This appears to be particularly beneficial in monolingual classes, as students of the same L1 tend to mispronounce the same words.

Furthermore, there seems to be a link between foreign language pronunciation and anxiety of a physiological nature (Szyszka 2011: 287). Pronunciation involves activating respiratory, phonatory and articulatory speech organs. Articulation of phonological features may be physically affected when one is under stress. Physical changes or tensions in the muscles may have a negative effect on foreign language pronunciation. Articulation may require more effort and some sounds may be deformed. Providing a supportive, friendly atmosphere and making sure that nobody laughs at anyone’s mistakes could be helpful for alleviating pronunciation anxiety of this origin.

### GRAMMAR ANXIETY

19% of the students participating in the present study (see section 4.6.5.) considered grammar exercises as either quite stressful or very stressful. Grammar has even been mentioned in this author’s students’ journals as the main anxiety source:

*Najbardziej stresujące są dla mnie lekcje z gramatyki, ale pewnie dlatego, że zbyt mało czasu jej poświęcam.*

*(The most stressful for me are grammar lessons, but this may be because I devote too little time to it.)*

This would suggest that grammar learning may be anxiety-provoking for some L2 students. VanPatten and Glass (1999) offer a number of reasons why grammar learning may cause apprehension. Students are likely to feel frustrated when the language course is grammar heavy and there is too much material to learn. Some language courses are constructed in such a way that there is a new, complex grammar point introduced every week and before the previous structure gets acquired, there is a new one to learn. This is often accompanied by lack of speaking activities, particularly those that would activate the target language. Such a density of grammar material makes it difficult for students to learn. What is more, students whose main purpose of L2 studies is to communicate, may feel discouraged.

Making errors is a major source of frustration for many learners. They may get particularly anxious when teachers correct every mistake during every activity, including communicative tasks. Some students, however, tend to get apprehensive about their mistakes despite the teacher’s friendly attitude and a sensitive approach to error correction. This is the case when they are either perfectionists or when they do not understand that making mistakes is a natural part of language-learning process. Anxiety may also be evoked by testing and evaluation, particularly if grammatical performance is their focus.

There’s often a conflict between communicative language teaching and testing emphasising grammar (VanPatten and Glass, 1999). Some instructors use predominantly communicative activities while they teach; however, they concentrate on grammar on tests. Students may become anxious if there is a discrepancy between teaching and testing practices. They may even feel that their lessons are a waste of time, because they do not prepare them for tests or exams.

Student anxiety may also originate from instruction which minimises grammar. Many learners believe that the main purpose of their language course is grammar learning. If grammar is absent or not taught explicitly, they get frustrated and suspect that they are taught in a wrong way. They think they cannot learn a language without thorough knowledge of grammar.

Most of the issues that concern anxiety accompanying grammar learning are related to students’ beliefs and expectations. In order to address their erroneous beliefs, teachers could inform students about the nature of second language acquisition. Armed with this knowledge, learners could gain self-confidence, which in turn would decrease their anxiety. First of all, students should accept the fact that grammar acquisition is slow. If it takes up to 7 years for a child to learn L1 grammar, foreign language students should not expect to become proficient language users in a shorter time, particularly if they have lessons once or twice a week (VanPatten and Glass, 1999).

Moreover, teachers should explain to students that errors are natural and unavoidable. Just like children acquire their L1 while making errors, so do foreign language learners. Students should understand that a certain part of language acquisition is beyond their control and that improvement happens over time. Learners would also benefit from the awareness that there is a difference between underlying competence and the ability to perform (VanPatten and Glass, 1999).

Many students (and teachers) believe that once they have learnt a grammar rule, they should be able to put it in practice when they speak. Instructors frequently correct students’ errors if they are related to structures that have already been taught, even during spontaneous communication. This makes students wrongly believe that once the rule has been taught, it should have been acquired. Unless teachers explain to students that learning does not equal acquisition, they are likely to become frustrated. Once learners realise that grammar acquisition is largely beyond their control, they may start feeling more positive about learning grammar, particularly since much of anxiety results from a sense of loss of control (VanPatten and Glass, 1999).

### READING ANXIETY

There has been relatively little research concerning the relationship between reading in L2 and language anxiety. It has been argued that reading is not as anxiety evoking as speaking, listening or writing. Lee (1999) suggests that it is difficult to examine reading anxiety, because learners are not provided sufficient opportunity to read. While there is little reading material in elementary level course books, in the subsequent years, it is often set for homework. Reading is considered less stressful than other language skills mainly because of its specificity: it is a private act, leaving ample time for reflection and clarification. People involved in the reading process are not engaged in the dynamic construction of meaning and hence, no performance anxiety operates.

However, this view has now been proved to be a misconception. Thus, Saito *et al.*’s study (1999) demonstrated a .6 correlation between general classroom foreign language anxiety (measured by FLCAS) and reading anxiety (measured by a specific reading anxiety measure) in American learners of French, Russian and Japanese. A negative, but smaller relationship between FLCAS, the reading anxiety measure and final grades was also found. This suggests that reading in the foreign language may be anxiety-provoking. Moreover, Sellers’s study (2000) showed a negative impact of reading anxiety on students’ recall of texts in Spanish. A more recent study by Wu (2011) similarly indicated that learners with lower reading anxiety performed better in a reading comprehension task. Even though reading anxiety has not been found to affect students as strongly as anxiety related to other skills, recently a study by Lu and Liu (2015) demonstrated that almost half of the participants felt anxious and insecure about reading in English, which suggests that reading anxiety needs researchers’ and practitioners’ attention.

According to Lee (1999), the individualised nature of reading, connected with the view of reading as a private act, isolates the learner from the group. Consequently, the learner feels lonely and abandoned, which gives rise to anxiety. Even if it is assumed that reading does not involve any performance demands, it is still a complex process requiring letter and word recognition as well as decision making about meaning and strategy use.

Reading may also cause anxiety for several other reasons. Foreign language learning may involve studying unfamiliar scripts and writing systems. Ganschow & Sparks (2000) observe that this particularly concerns non-transparent languages, e.g. English, with inconsistentgrapheme- phoneme representations. Piechurska-Kuciel (2008) points out that reading anxiety may beexperienced due to unfamiliar cultural material. Despite successful decoding of words, unknown cultural concepts may prevent the reader from obtaining logical message. It seems that this type of anxiety may also occur with any type of text whose topic is unfamiliar to an individual. This could especially be the case with specialised, academic texts requiring knowledge in the particular field.

The relationship between foreign language reading and anxiety can be looked at from two different perspectives: cognitive and pedagogical. Lee (1999: 50) believes that language anxiety takes up processing capacity, which results in diminishing language learners’ reading performance. Increased anxiety levels may distract student attention and slow down the process of letter and word recognition. Moreover, they may affect the reader’s decisions about meaning and strategy use. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991, 1994a, 1994b) also examined reading anxiety from a cognitive perspective. They discovered highly anxious readers take in few digits, i.e. letters or symbols, which makes reading inefficient and difficult. In other words, their research demonstrated that high anxiety affects foreign language reading comprehension.

When looking at the relationship between second language reading and language anxiety, what must be considered is misconceptions about the reading process. Lee (1999) hypothesises that reading anxiety stems from four main misconceptions: that successful reading equals answering comprehension questions; that reading is a private act; that reading is a linear process; and that comprehension is an absolute. Educators who believe that reading equals answering comprehension questions make students associate successful reading with answering questions about a short passage. When faced with a longer piece of text, e.g. a short story or a passage without comprehension questions, students who are not used to discussing the content of a text are very likely to experience anxiety. In order to address this misconception, reading activities could be divided into phases, e.g. from skimming to scanning to checking comprehension (Philips, 1984).

When reading is treated as a private act, students who experience difficulty may feel apprehensive because they cannot express their frustration. They may think that they are the only ones who are having difficulties with the text since they have no point of reference. In response to this misconception, reading should either be done in class or assigned for homework to be done in specially formed groups as a collaborative project. The reading materials would have to be suitable for group work. The activities should give students the opportunity to interact both with the text and with each other.

Treating reading as a linear process is another common misconception. Many readers want to start at the first word and continue word by word until the last word. Such students rarely reread more complicated fragments and tend to try to look up every unknown word instead of guessing the meaning from the context. Lee (1999: 53) points out that approaching the text linearly does not lead to comprehension, which may lead to anxiety.

One of the ways to address this misconception is beginning the process of reading not at the first word of the text but with reading-readiness activities. According to schema theory, comprehension results from the interaction of a reader’s knowledge base and the textual characteristics and content. This is why pre-reading activities play the crucial role of activating the appropriate background knowledge in the readers (Lee & VanPatten, 1995). It has been agreed by second language educators that reading activities should begin with student knowledge about the topic of the text, rather than with the text. Typical reading-readiness activities include brainstorming, using of titles, headings, illustrations, applying word knowledge, scanning for specific information or pre-tests/post-test format.

The misconception that reading is a linear process can also be addressed by shifting the readers’ goal from reaching the last word to organising the information in the text. Lee (1999) suggests that students be given an activity which makes them go back into a text in order to organise, synthesise and assimilate the information. Synthesis activities allow students to organise their thoughts and integrate the text content. These activities give students a specific goal, different from traditional comprehension questions.

Another misconception about reading which can lead to anxiety is the erroneous belief that comprehension is an absolute. Students are likely to feel frustrated because they do not understand every word and idea in the text. Some learners become so anxious that they say they understand absolutely nothing, while in fact they have comprehended some parts of the text. This is because they believe that successful reading means understanding everything. This kind of repeated apprehension may make students anxious about reading in general. Instructors should explain to students that the purpose of reading is not understanding every word and that their reading is successful if they do the task required of them. The teacher could discuss with the students what they read in L1 and in what context in order to illustrate that we read differently depending on the place and the situation and that people often do not read linearly even in their native language (Lee, 1999).

Unknown words may be a source of anxiety for many learners. Sometimes anxious readers feel that these words block them from understanding a text. Instead of trying to understand the global meaning of the passage, they waste their time and energy looking words up. Lee (1999: 58) suggests an activity where students highlight unknown words in blue and the words they know in yellow. This activity should boost student confidence before approaching the text and prevent them from feeling that they understand nothing.

Students who treat comprehension as an absolute tend to read inefficiently. Lee (1999) believes that inefficiency requires attentional capacity to be applied, which may cause anxiety. Anxiety, in turn, would use up some attentional capacity. In order to deal with limited attention capacity as well as the misconception of comprehension as an absolute, reading could be divided into smaller, thematic units, each accompanied by a task. For example, the students could be asked to write a one-sentence summary of each unit.

Reading anxiety seems to stem also from short time limits given by instructors. Teachers tend to restrict reading time for two main reasons: to keep the lesson pace suitably fast and to prepare students for exams, where students have to deal with long passages in a very short period of time. While faster or more confident students appear to benefit from such an approach, others may feel very frustrated. Instead of concentrating on the task, they may concentrate on the time passing. Additionally, they are slowed down or even paralysed by their anxiety. If they do not succeed at their tasks regularly, they may lose confidence, which may make them even more anxious and less successful. Students who panic when faced with time limits, would benefit from individual training in reading under time restrictions. Students could also be demonstrated such techniques as scanning or skimming as well as reading strategies, for example for deducing meaning of words from the context.

Foreign language reading anxiety has been found to be distinguishable from general foreign language classroom anxiety (Saito *et al.*, 1999). Unlike with general foreign language anxiety, which is independent of the target language, students experience different levels of reading anxiety based on their particular target language. In Saito et al.’s (1999) study, Japanese students were the most anxious about reading, followed by French students. This ranking of anxiety levels was unexpected to the researchers who had predicted that reading Japanese would be anxiety-provoking but had anticipated that reading Russian would be more anxiety-provoking than reading French because of the use of the Cyrillic alphabet. In addition, higher levels of overall foreign language anxiety have been found to be connected with higher levels of reading anxiety (Young, 2000). Brantmeier (2005) claims that at higher proficiency levels reading anxiety does not play an important role. This does not appear to be the case, as some advanced learners when given complex, specialised texts accompanied by tasks with time limits, seem to be as anxious as lower proficiency readers.

### WRITING ANXIETY

Writing may seem to be the least anxiety-producing of the language skills. As Leki (1999: 65) observed:

Unlike when listening and reading, when writing one controls the language and content of the message. Unlike speaking, writing allows time to think about the message, and to change the content and language after the first attempt is written down. Yet, many people find writing difficult even in the native language (L1).

Writing anxiety, also called writing apprehension, has been defined as a language-skill-specific form of anxiety, unique to the language-particular skill of writing (Bline *et al.*, 2001). As Thompson (1980: 121) pointed out, some students’ fear of the writing process outweighs the anticipated gain from the ability to write. Daly (1985: 44) observes that students anxious about writing demonstrate tendencies to dislike, avoid or fear this activity. Writing anxiety has been proved to be negatively associated with the quality of the message encoded, writing behaviour, and performance. Individuals anxious about writing have also been found to display unwillingness to write or take advanced writing courses (Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert, 1999). Students often deal with writing anxiety by completing writing assignments as quickly as possible without exerting much effort, in order to minimize uncomfortable feelings caused by writing anxiety.

Writing apprehension may even be experienced by professional writers (Leki, 1999: 65). They often resist the beginning of the writing process and put it off until the night before the deadline. Another common problem is “writer’s block”, i.e. either no words come to mind, or every thought written down does not sound right and gets crossed out. No wonder that students frequently experience similar frustrations, particularly those writing in their second or foreign language.

Most of the anxiety research so far has been conducted with writing in the native language. To date, L2 writing anxiety is associated with the tendency to avoid writing situations, as they give rise to apprehension (Faigley *et al*., 1981). This, in turn, leads to neglecting opportunities to develop writing skills (Leki, 1999). Pajares & Johnson (1994) and Smith (1984) have found that writing anxiety has a clear negative correlation with writing performance. Anxious L2 writers have also been found to write shorter compositions (Steinberg & Horwitz, 1986) and use less intense language (Daly & Miller, 1985). They take fewer risks in their writing, are less straightforward and clear, compose longer sentences, use more jargon and nominalisation (Smith, 1984). Schweiker-Marra & Marra (2000) have discovered that anxious students experience difficulties in producing effective and coherent pieces of writing. They have problems with simple letters as well as complex reports. Writing anxiety has been also found to be negatively correlated with performance on standardised writing tests (Faigley *et al*., 1981). What is more, Leki (1999) observed such anxiety-related behaviours as procrastination, apprehension, tension, low self-esteem and lack of motivation. Procrastination has been found to be connected with perfectionism (Brownlow and Reasinger, 2000; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002; Hamachek, 1978). For perfectionists, the idea of starting an activity is tormenting due their need to achieve the task perfectly. Consequently, avoiding starting is a way to avoid the torment as well as avoiding failure and appearing incompetent. As Gregersen an Horwitz (2002: 566) observe:

Perfectionist students often demonstrate long delays in completing assignments or repeatedly restart them because they believe that their work must be perfect from beginning to end. Thus, low productivity is strongly associated with perfectionism...

Similar issues have been evident in this writer’s students journals:

*Tak, nieraz zdarzyło mi się uniknąć pracy pisemnej (z powodu stresu). Pisanie jak i mówienie jest dla mnie trudne i zawsze odkładam tą pracę, myśląc, że zrobię później.*

*(Yes, it has happened to me more than once that I avoided written work (because of stress). Writing as well as speaking is difficult for me and I always put it off, thinking I will deal with it later.)*

*Nie, innych ćwiczeń nie unikam (z powodu stresu), oprócz prac pisemnych, do których długo muszę się zmuszać, żeby napisać.*

*(I don’t avoid any other activities (due to stress) apart from written assignments, which take me a long time to get down to.)*

As Hamachek (1978) explains, procrastination is related to neurotic, rather than normal perfectionism. While normal perfectionists concentrate on their strengths and how to do things right, neurotic perfectionists worry about their shortcomings and focus on how to avoid doing things wrong. Consequently, neurotic perfectionists demonstrate a tense and deliberate attitude, whereas normal perfectionists work in a relaxed and careful manner. Furthermore, the two types experience different emotions before they approach a task.

The neurotic perfectionist, for example, commonly reports feeling anxious, confused, and emotionally drained before a new task is even begun. The normal perfectionist, on the other hand, is more likely to report feeling excited, clear about what needs to be done, and emotionally charged. (Hamachek, 1978)

Learning to write in the foreign language involves as much anxiety as learning other skills, because writing is product-oriented (Tsui, 1996). Moreover, Tsui believes that additional stress comes from the fact that writing requires individual work, and thus learners are not provided with support or encouragement. This issue could be addressed by introducing writing in pairs or groups. Negative feelings produced by writing may lead to resentment of this activity. Leki (1999: 65) believes that dislike of writing stems mostly from educational experiences and the main causes of writing anxiety are writing ability, the degree of preparation to complete a writing task, wrong beliefs about writing, fear of evaluation and mixed messages that writers receive in their instruction. Writing anxiety can also originate from perfectionism (Newkirk, 1979).

As writing anxiety may originate from poor writing skills, one method to reduce it is to provide learners with instruction that aims at developing writing skills and maximising successful writing. Fox (1980) believes that writing apprehension may be reduced by preparing students gradually for their writing tasks. Moreover, students are more likely to achieve success in writing if their writing process is divided into manageable pieces. To address the issue of perfectionism, Newkirk (1979) suggests that students should realise that creating various drafts of work is a natural process and it is not realistic to expect the first draft to be impeccable. Consequently, one way to reduce writing anxiety is to introduce a process approach to writing, as opposed to a product-oriented approach (Leki, 1999). Nevertheless, producing several drafts of the same piece of writing seems to be a highly tedious and time-consuming process, which may lead to frustration in some students.

Even if the classic process approach may not be appealing to some students, it should be explained to learners that writing does not have to be done alone or at one sitting. Instead of expecting to write a perfect piece straightaway, which often goes with resisting the beginning of the writing process, students could use strategies to help them prepare for writing. Leki (1999) presents several preparation strategies. One of the techniques for generating ideas and helping students to start a writing task is brainstorming. This activity works most effectively as group work. Students write down any ideas they associate with a given topic. Working in a group and thus relying on other students’ ideas as well as their own, makes the learner less anxious about what to write about.

Similar to brainstorming are branching and clustering, but instead of simply listing ideas associated with a topic, students put them in a special graph. The topic is usually placed in a circle in the middle of a piece of paper and the ideas related to it are grouped together and put in circles around the central one. The outcome of a branching activity is a number of thoughts associated with the topic of the writing project grouped together in clusters (Leki, 1999).

In addition to brainstorming, Leki (1999) also suggests the freewriting technique. Freewriting is producing a text on a given topic without worrying about its structure, accuracy or chronological order. It usually lasts for 10-15 minutes and produces a large amount of material. This technique is very helpful for students who believe that they must begin at the beginning and have the right ideas straightaway.

If most of the students in a particular group seem confident enough about writing, repeating preparation strategies in class may not seem relevant. However, it may be sensible to demonstrate these strategies to students so more anxious learners can use them at home when they have trouble beginning their writing assignments or at any part of their project when they get stuck and are short of ideas. Learners should also be explained that it does not matter where they start their writing process because they can always return to the beginning. This could be reassuring for the students who find beginnings difficult and anxiety-evoking (Leki, 1999).

Fear of being evaluated on the basis of writing ability is one of the main sources of writing anxiety. Writers are judged by a number of factors, such as the sophistication of the ideas, the cleverness of the arguments, the range of vocabulary and structures. On top of these, students are judged by the errors they make, which they find most terrifying. Fox (1980) suggests that to address the anxiety stemming from being evaluated and judged by the teacher, peer evaluation can be introduced. Peer responses can give valuable input if they are guided by the teacher. This could be achieved by providing peer-response guide questions concentrating on the writing content. Even though peer correction seems less threatening than teacher correction and may be an interesting alternative, if not overdone, it does not appear possible to be able to replace teacher evaluation. While students can express their opinion on a piece of writing, they are often incapable of giving quality feedback that would give students constructive suggestions on how to develop their skills. It seems a better option to occasionally judge students by the ideas or opinions expressed rather than by their language.

In the present writer’s view, it does not appear to be a sensible solution if teachers concentrate solely on content and stop paying attention to language. Many students expect teachers to evaluate their language and giving it up may also lead to frustration, particularly when students are preparing for written exams. While too much error correction may discourage students, sensitive, constructive teacher feedback can be invaluable. Therefore, instead of pointing out every single mistake in red ink, teachers could focus more on what the student can do and comment more on the range of vocabulary and structures. Teachers should include practical suggestions for improvement, rather than critical remarks. Penalising experiments with language may stop students from taking risk, and thus, inhibit their language development.

Teachers often send mixed messages to students, claiming that they value their ideas, and yet, when the papers are returned, most teachers’ comments address grammar, vocabulary and organisation and students’ ideas tend to be ignored. Many learners feel frustrated because they know what to write, but cannot find suitable forms in L2 to express it. As Leki (1999: 67) observed:

Even relatively advanced L2 learners experience the realization that the sophistication, complexity, and subtlety of their thought are destroyed by their limited knowledge and capacity in their second language, suitable only to reflect simplistic, flat, bald understandings on the level of a child. Expression of thought is so constrained by this limited language capability that L2 writers may never experience the feeling that what they have written truly expresses their ideas.

Even though writing in a foreign language may cause distress to some students, teachers still tend to evaluate them by accuracy of language. It has now been found, however, that learners become proficient in a language activity only by engaging in it. Therefore, if writing is a means of expressing thought, students can master this skill not by concentrating on correctness of language, but by expressing thought (Leki, 1999). This reasoning comes from research on first language acquisition which has found that we learn the rules of L1 because we engage in conversation, not that we engage in conversation because we have learned the rules.

One way of letting students express their thoughts without worrying about accuracy is asking them to write a journal (Leki, 1999: 80). L2 journals develop learners fluency and allow writers to experiment with language. If students complain about being short of ideas, the teacher could provide specific topics for writing or even a list of questions. What is most important is that students write regularly for about 10-15 minutes without interruption, letting ideas flow freely. If the questions provided by the teacher are related to future assignments, students may be able to use their journey entries as their first drafts for writing. Some students are happy writing even if nobody reads or corrects their journals. Others may not be comfortable with writing without an audience. To address this concern, it seems that the teacher could introduce journal reading sessions during which students read each other’s entries and comment on them. This could give students an interesting and useful insight into their peers’ ideas, as well as foster a sense of community.

To sum up, writing anxiety can be alleviated by taking a nonjudgmental approach to L2 writing instruction, where writing is treated as a means of expressing ideas and opinions. It is also important to include pre-writing activities in order to increase students’ chance of successful outcomes. Students could also write in pairs or groups and be encouraged to respond to their peers’ writing focusing on content. Moreover, journal writing could be introduced to develop fluency. Constructive, sensitive teacher feedback could have a positive effect on decreasing writing anxiety as well.

### LISTENING ANXIETY

Language anxiety refers primarily to speaking and listening (Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert, 1999) and listening has been considered second most anxiety-provoking foreign language skill. Campbell (1999) discovered that students are more anxious about listening than the other skills both before the beginning of a course and after 60 hours of instruction. Similarly, Vogely (1999) observes that anxiety accompanying listening comprehension tasks may be one of the most debilitating anxiety types. While with reading and writing students can always stop to think of what they are reading or writing, there is no time to stop while listening. Listening tasks usually involve rapid delivery of information and quick student response. Many teachers are unaware of the gravity of listening anxiety. They regard it as a passive skill that students will eventually acquire due to regular practice. Vogely (1999: 107) finds this teacher belief erroneous. She believes that in order to make progress, students need to participate in listening actively and strategically.

Listening anxiety, also called receiver apprehension, has been conceptualised as subjects’ predisposition to respond anxiously in listening situations (Beatty *et al*., 1980) or “ the fear of misinterpreting, inadequately processing and/or not being able to adjust psychologically to messages sent by others” (Wheeless, 1975: 263). Even though receiver apprehension is related to communication apprehension, it has been demonstrated to differ from the fear accompanying sending information.

Receiver apprehension has a negative influence on listening and information processing effectiveness. It affects listening comprehension by giving way to lower recall in short- and long-term listening (Preiss *et al*., 1990). Kim (2005) has observed that processing anxiety, connected with anticipating and encountering messages, induces the inhibition of proper information processing, resulting in more mistakes or difficulties in critical evaluation. Anxious students strive to recover the input they have missed and ask for the material to be played again. Moreover, apprehensive receivers do not seem to understand the rhetorical purposes or intricacies of messages (Daly *et al*., 1988).

The listening skill is fundamental in foreign language learning (Vogely, 1999). It is the most frequently used skill in the classroom. In addition, it has been shown to contribute to academic success more than reading or aptitude (Conway, 1982). Furthermore, listening secures comprehensible aural input, and influences effective language processing from input to output, generating the necessity to interact with the speaker in order to get a clear meaning of the message (Hasan, 2000). Finally, listening is also believed to provide the right conditions for the development of other language skills (Krashen, 1995).

Listening anxiety may originate from a number of factors. While Scarella and Oxford (1992) found that tasks that are too difficult or unfamiliar may make students anxious, Joiner (1986) believes that anxiety experienced during the listening process often results from a negative listening self-concept, i.e. low self-esteem in the area of listening. Furthermore, Vogely (1997) reported what students considered to be the most salient sources of listening comprehension anxiety. According to her study, the nature of speaking (speed, voice clarity and enunciation, and variation in pronunciation) was the most anxiety-provoking factor. It was followed by inappropriate strategy use, level of difficulty of the material and fear of failure. Additionally, Vogely found less common listening anxiety sources such as lack of visual support, lack of repetition of input, lack of time to process input and lack of practice in listening comprehension.

A little over half the students in the Vogely study (1997) reported the nature of speaking to be the most salient language anxiety source. Many participants in her study thought that their anxiety level would be lower if the teacher spoke more slowly. This would, however, support the erroneous belief that listening comprehension is equivalent to word-for-word translation (Vogely, 1999). It appears that simplifying teacher talk could be a good solution at lower proficiency levels. Nevertheless, Lee and VanPatten (1995) suggest that breaking the discourse down into natural segments, representing an idea or unit, is a more effective technique than speaking more slowly. Teachers could also develop an awareness of their nature of speaking and try to adapt it, if necessary. If anxiety comes from the teacher’s regional accent, dialectal variations could be overtly demonstrated to students (Vogely, 1999).

In order to deal with listening anxiety originating from the level of difficulty of the passage, the teacher could use special techniques to make material comprehensible. Using students’ background knowledge can be very effective in alleviating student anxiety accompanying listening. As Ausubel (1968: vi) pointed out:

The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach accordingly.

This is why pre-listening schemata building is invaluable. The task become much easier and less threatening if students are introduced to its topic beforehand and have a chance to talk about it, using their own knowledge or experience. This sets their mind on the topic, which facilitates subsequent listening comprehension. Vogely (1999) gives several example activities, suitable for the pre-listening stage. The simplest one is providing a summary or the outline of the listening passage. Students could also look at the comprehension questions or other elements of the task and try to predict the answers. In addition, the teacher could find out what students know about a particular topic. If the material contains unfamiliar, cultural information, Shook (1997) suggests using analogies to help develop schemata. Using listening materials with familiar content is another method of incorporating students’ knowledge.

Using clearly and concisely constructed tasks may also help students become less anxious when faced with listening comprehension. Vogely (1999) believes that it is a good idea to begin a listening comprehension activity with a task that allows learners to achieve success and to increase the difficulty level through a sequenced structure. This method is likely to make students more confident and hence less anxious. As Cohen (1990) has pointed out, learners feel overwhelmed if they are expected to listen for several pieces of information simultaneously. He believes that student anxiety can be decreased if the listening task is divided into smaller units, which also leads to the feeling of success.

Encouraging students to apply listening strategies is another effective way of reducing listening anxiety which stems from the level of difficulty of the passage (Vogely, 1999). The strategies that appear to be particularly useful are activating background knowledge, guessing the meaning of words through context, listening for gist and listening for specific information. Furthermore, anxiety originating from listening may be lightened by making use of visual stimulus. This is why video materials may be less anxiety-provoking than audio materials. Listening tasks could be accompanied by photographs, drawings, paintings, or any kinds of objects connected with the recording, e.g. tickets. Visual aids are particularly beneficial for students with visual learning styles. Nevertheless, they help all listeners relate personally to the material and thus alleviate anxiety which arises when students do not know what the subject of the discussion is.

One of the findings in Vogely’s study (1997) was that student anxiety may be relieved by more practice in listening comprehension. In the same vein, Elkhafaifi (2005: 215) states that more opportunities for listening exercises familiarise students with the tasks. Therefore, appropriately conducted listening activities should be a regular part of foreign language instruction. To increase the frequency of practice, listening tasks could also be set for homework. Apart from materials that accompany the course book, students should listen to authentic materials. It seems a good idea to expose learners to a variety of accents, and both native and non-native speakers. This way, they can get accustomed to different types of pronunciation and avoid anxiety related to unfamiliar ways of speaking.

One of the most common listening anxiety sources is fear of failure (Vogely, 1997). It is particularly frustrating for beginners to come to terms with the fact that their foreign language listening skills are in a state of infancy. Therefore, as McKeachie (1994) points out, teachers should have a sympathetic attitude towards students’ fears and try to create a supportive, nonthreatening classroom atmosphere. Teachers could, for example, make learners feel less anxious by checking listening comprehension answers in a sensitive manner. Instead of calling on particular students to give their answers once the recording stops, it seems reasonable to allow listeners some time to compare the answers in pairs or groups. This way learners can avoid public shame accompanying giving wrong answers in front of others or admitting to not knowing the answers. Furthermore, as Elkhafaifi (2005) points out, learners should be informed that mistakes are a normal ingredient of FL acquisition, rather than a sign of failure.

Students’ fears about listening could also be a subject of class discussion. Realising that other students experience listening anxiety as well can be reassuring for every anxious individual. Furthermore, it is beneficial for learners to realise that it is unrealistic to expect to understand everything they hear (Elkhafaifi, 2005). In addition, listening for a message, rather than to understand every word boosts students’ sense of achievement and consequently decreases fear of failure. When teachers give students opportunities to experience success, they build their confidence and are less concerned about being wrong. They feel more relaxed, which makes listening in L2 a more enjoyable experience.

### SPEAKING ANXIETY

Speaking in the foreign language has been proved to generate the most anxiety among language learners. Horwitz *et al*. (1986) found that the main foreign language students’ concern was related to speaking in L2. In addition, Young (1990) discovered that students that took part in her survey felt most anxious when they had to speak in front of her peers. Anxiety resulting from speaking in front of others has also been most frequently reported in this author’s study.

Since the communicative approach, involving a lot of speaking, is the most common teaching approach, speaking anxiety and its negative impact on student attitudes seem to be a significant problem in most foreign language classrooms. This is why teachers should take steps to relieve this type of student apprehension in particular. Teaching implications concerning other aspects of language learning have already been looked into above. This section will concentrate on alleviating speaking anxiety. Nevertheless, many of the suggested ideas are relevant to other anxiety types as well. Therefore, instead of using the term *speaking anxiety*, the term *language anxiety* will be used.

In order to create a low anxiety classroom atmosphere teachers should implement specific in-class practices and activities as well as adopt specific kind of behaviour. According to Price's subjects (1991: 107), instructors could relieve students’ tension mainly by being “more like a friend helping them to learn and less like an authority figure making them perform". Price’s study also demonstrated that teachers could decrease language anxiety by giving students more positive support and encouragement. Young's (1990) language learners reported that teachers who had a good sense of humour, were friendly, relaxed and patient, and encouraged students to speak were helpful in alleviating foreign language anxiety. As Crookall and Oxford (1991: 142) state:

Teachers can make a point of being warm and personable, and of rewarding effort, risk-taking, and successful communication.

Language anxiety related to classroom procedures could be alleviated if practitioners did more pair work, played more games and adapted the activities to the learner’s affective needs (Young, 1991). As Price (1991: 107) states, students’ fears of public embarrassment must be given special consideration when preparing lessons. She suggests that including a number of small group activities or pair work could reduce anxiety because students would be able to practice L2 without having the whole class as an audience.

The fact that including pair work and small group activities has a positive effect on alleviating language anxiety has also been observed by Kitano (2001: 558) and more recently by Pawlak *et al.* (2009). Kitano’s study demonstrates that students feel more anxious in the L2 classroom when they consider their own speaking ability poorer than their peers’. She highlights the fact that foreign language instruction displays the performance of every student in the classroom more than other subjects and consequently most FL learners are aware of the quality of their performance in comparison with their peers’. Kitano points out that in order to reduce language anxiety, teachers should structure their classroom practices in such a way that students will not have to compete and that individual differences in performance will not be so obvious.

In line with Kitano’s observation, it seems to be a good idea to let learners compare their answers in pairs or small groups before calling on them individually. Students generally feel more confident to report to the teacher what they have been discussing with their peers than to be forced to perform in front of the whole class without a warning or preparation. Allowing students to compare their answers in pairs or small groups also seems to have a beneficial effect on reducing reading and listening anxiety. The possibility to discuss answers before presenting them in front of their peers reduces the fear of appearing inadequate.

Adapting classroom procedures may improve classroom climate, lessen students’ anxiety and thus strengthen language-learning efficiency. As Crookall and Oxford (1991) observe:

As the classroom structure and communication patterns change, we can expect debilitating anxiety to lower and students to begin to relax. Learners then usually become more concerned with trying to communicate their viewpoint than with avoiding public humiliation, saving face, or impressing the teacher with the ability to parrot “correct” answers.

Furthermore, Price (1991) points out that during whole-class activities, errors should be corrected as tactfully as possible and students should never be laughed at. If students are to feel at ease speaking in the target language in class, Price believes that the classroom should be perceived as a place for learning and communicating, rather than a place where students perform for the instructor. Even though some evaluation is needed, students should not have the feeling that whenever they speak the foreign language they are performing.

The best way to make students feel relaxed according to Stephen D Krashen (as interviewed in Young, 1992: 22) is to make the instruction so interesting that students forget that it is in the foreign language. He observes that once the teacher puts the book aside and starts talking about something more relevant, learners pay attention. Saunders and Crookall (1985: 169) state that using games for language learning can make students feel less anxious:

If the learning of a new language provokes inhibition and caution in the part of the adult who fears ridicule because of incompetence in a real situation, the activity of play within game scenarios has great potential. In effect the person at play can be more easily forgiven for errors of judgment and poor communication. There is always the excuse of unfamiliarity with the social rules, roles and norms of a game for novice players.

Apart from reducing language anxiety, language games are an effective way of creating interest, motivating students and fostering participation. Games often provide repeated use of a language form during a limited period of time and thus they offer a great deal of practice. However, unlike drills, they “provide the opportunity to sense the working of language as living communication” (Wright *et al*., 1983). In addition, as Philips (1999) points out, while playing language games students feel comfortable because their errors are not corrected in front of others. It is important, however, that learners understand the purpose of games and do not feel overloaded with them. Dalia, the present writer’s student, mentioned games in her journal as a source of frustration in her previous experience of language learning:

*Na moim wcześniejszym kursie zamiast uczyć się ciągle graliśmy w gry. To nie było może bardzo stresujące, ale za to bardzo denerwujące.*

*(During my previous language course, instead of studying, we player games all the time. Perhaps that was not very stressful, but it was very annoying.)*

Moreover, as Crookall and Oxford (1991: 143) point out, games and simulations, which often require some boldness, may feel embarrassing to introverted learners, “who prefer to hide themselves behind academic rule-learning”.

In order to address students’ affective needs, Daly (1991) suggests that some typical classroom procedures be rejected. He advises teachers not to make students present orally in front of others, not to call on students at random, and not to punish classroom talk. As Daly (1991: 11) states, oral presentations can be traumatic for communicatively anxious individuals. Moreover, highly apprehensive students are likely to seem incompetent when asked to speak in L2 despite being very competent in understanding the grammar, syntax, and the vocabulary of the foreign language.

Calling on students in a random fashion is in Daly’s opinion very anxiety-provoking for highly apprehensive students. This is because a failure in a speaking activity is a “nightmare experience” for an anxious individual. According to Koch and Terrell’s study (1991), calling on students is one of the most anxiety-producing techniques. The following quotation is a reflection of student fear of being nominated to speak:

*I feel so dumb in my German class. I want to sit in the back of the room so maybe I won’t get called on to speak. When I know I am going to say something, I spend what seems like eternity thinking how it should be said and when I say it, it still doesn’t come out right.* (Horwitz & Young, 1991: xiii)

The randomness and hence unpredictability of the talk makes the student more nervous, which makes performance fears even worse. Daly (1991: 11) believes that a much more considerate policy is to let learners volunteer or to provide participation patterns, e.g. seat by seat. It seems possible, however, that anxious students may never want to volunteer despite wishing to contribute. Some of the apprehensive students would rather be called on than volunteer. In the case of such students participation patterns appear to be a compromise. This technique, however, may not be very appealing for students, particularly when overused. Therefore, it seems sensible if the teacher is sensitive to individual students’ reactions and uses his or her own judgement whether calling on a particular student is a distressing experience or not.

As Price (1991: 108) points out:

...students can provide valuable information to the language instructor, not only about anxiety, but also about other aspects of language classroom. As we design courses and plan classroom activities, it is important that we keep our students in mind and use their insights and impressions to help us in the decision-making process.

According to Price’s findings (1991), 57% of learners consider being called on anxiety-provoking; however, 40% claim that this technique makes them secure. This shows that calling on students is perceived differently by different individuals and should not be abandoned when students judge it to be comfortable and beneficial in the acquisition process.

Many teachers react negatively to learners whispering to each other or talking out of turn. Apprehensive individuals gather that talking is not desirable in class as it leads to punishment. This may make them feel even more anxious, because students may be turning to a peer for clarification or to make a comment on what the teacher is discussing. It may be relevant to the lesson and not necessarily be indicative of lack of discipline. If generally a particular group of students does not cause problems with discipline, task relevant classroom talk seems to be a natural part of learning and thus it may not be reasonable to discourage it.

Anxiety can be decreased when students do communicative activities which promote speaking practice in a nonthreatening manner. Furthermore, learners feel more at ease when they are asked to talk about familiar things, e.g. their feelings, opinions, interests or habits. Student responses in Koch and Terrell’s study (1991) show that activities and techniques that are perceived as most comfortable are those that relate to students on a personal level. As Young (1990) points out, learners are less apprehensive when they know the answers and thus can concentrate on producing them in the foreign language. Besides, students usually find it more appealing to talk about themselves than about characters created by course book writers, to whom they cannot relate. In addition, Young (1991: 433) gives such examples of personalising instruction as exploiting pictures for vocabulary presentation, associating vocabulary with students and objects in class and personalising grammar.

Other ways to make students more relaxed are introducing humour (a natural tension reliever) and encouraging creativity. Philips (1999) suggests that this could be achieved, for example, by making use of role plays and cartoon stories. Each group member could receive one or two panels of a picture sequence. The group’s task is to arrange the panels in the correct order. So as to do this, each student talks about his or her panel without showing it. After all panels have been described, learners try to recreate the original sequence.

Even though role plays may seem stressful to some students, others do not find them anxiety-evoking, because acting another person’s role may make one stop feeling self-conscious. Role plays seem to be beneficial for learners since they involve creativity, humour and shared responsibility. Once teachers allow the right amount of preparation time, even the most apprehensive students should feel comfortable taking part in them.

As speaking the target language is the most anxiety-provoking aspect of language learning, oral evaluation is the most anxiety-inducing situation that takes place in the L2 classrooms. This is because during oral testing several types of anxiety occur: language anxiety, test anxiety, communication anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation anxiety (Philips, 1999). Because many students’ fears come into play at the same time, reducing anxiety related to speaking exams may not be possible in some cases. Instructors can, however, take some steps to alleviate students’ tension.

Philips (1999: 139) suggests that it is crucial to give students sufficient oral practice and to use the same activities for testing as the ones they have done in class. Learners should also take their oral tests in pairs, if this type of interaction prevails in their instruction. What seems to be crucial as well is the examiner’s manner and the atmosphere he or she creates. If they appear friendly and encouraging, they are much more likely to put students at ease than if they seem severe, impersonal and patronising.

Furthermore, what should be considered is an evaluation instrument. Philips (1999) believes that if the course objective is communicative competence, then students should be evaluated primarily for communicative competence and not just for accuracy. The main criterion should be whether they achieve the task or not. If students are informed in advance that their ability to communicate will be rewarded, their fear of the evaluation process may be decreased. This should be particularly reassuring for students at lower proficiency levels, who are mostly unable to speak accurately, but find it easier to get their meaning across.

## DISCUSSING STUDENTS’ FEARS

An effective way of lowering language anxiety can be discussing students’ fears. Since the vast majority of students experience at least some degree of apprehension, teachers could say openly at the beginning of the course that language learning makes many people nervous. Once learners have an opportunity to express their feelings, they will realise that other members of their class have the same fears as them. Philips (1999) believes that this is a much more effective way of reducing student anxiety than telling learners that they should not be nervous about speaking in the foreign language. In order to identify students’ concerns related to speaking the target language, teachers could ask students to complete the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, 1984; Appendix 1). The FLCAS could either be collected, reviewed by the teacher and later discussed, or learners could fill out the questionnaires and share their reactions with others.

As I have mentioned above, a significant source of anxiety stems from highly unrealistic student beliefs. Some common erroneous beliefs are related to the nature of language acquisition. Other, typical, harmful beliefs are “that one is not worthy unless one is thoroughly competent and adequate in all aspects of life” or that “one must be approved of by every person one encounters” (Foss and Reitzel, 1991: 135). Such beliefs often result in the fear of making mistakes or the fear of being laughed at. To address student beliefs, teachers could ask learners to complete the BALLI questionnaire (mentioned above in subchapter 1.3.) and exploit it in the same way as FLCAS. The BALLI is a good opportunity for teachers to instruct students about the language-learning process. During the feedback session it is important that instructors clarify that aptitude is not the only variable that matters in foreign language acquisition. As Philips (1999: 127) points out:

First, students need to know that while aptitude plays an important role in one’s ability to speak another language, there are many other variables associated with language learning, such as attitude, motivation, anxiety, learning style, tolerance for ambiguity, and risk-taking. Risk-taking, for example, can be as important as accuracy in language learning because students who risk speaking, even if they are unsure of themselves, generally receive more feedback, hence get further exposure to comprehensible input (Rubin 1975).

To reduce anxiety stemming from instructor beliefs, teachers should realise that their role is not one of a drill sergeant, but a facilitator whose duty is to provide students with input and opportunities to communicate in the target language in an authentic way. Young (1991) points out that the role of a facilitator may be threatening for instructors who believe that all mistakes should be corrected, that the teacher should be the authority figure and, worst of all, that intimidation is a necessary element of student motivation. Instructors should be aware that such wrong beliefs may have a negative impact on learners.

Once students recognise their unrealistic beliefs and fears, they will deal with anxiety-provoking situations in a different way and approach them rather than avoid them. (Foss and Reitzel, 1991). Foss and Reitzel suggest that students should verbalise their fears and instructors should write them on the board. Alternatively, an anxiety graph or an anxiety thermometer (Figure 3.2.) could be used. Graphic representations of stress can show students that different phases of oral interaction cause different anxiety levels and pinpoint the highest amount of stress in a given activity. Foss and Reitzel (1991) argue that graph analysis could help the learner approach the same situation more realistically.

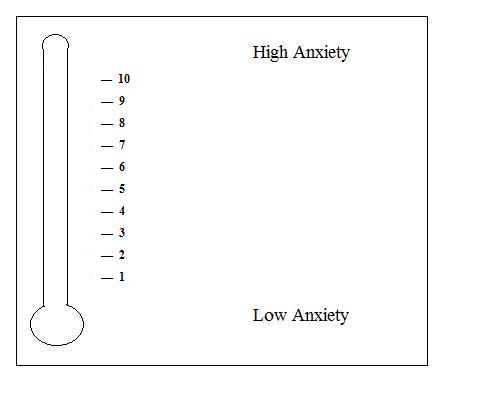


FIGURE 3.2 Anxiety Thermometer (after Vogely, 1999: 120)

Crookall and Oxford (1991) suggest several activities, such as Agony Column, Ghost Avengers, or Anxious Photos. The activities let learners examine their own anxieties, which is an important step in overcoming their fears. In the activity “Agony Column”, students perform roles of language learners (themselves), agony aunts and counsellors. At the beginning of the activity, students write letters to Agony Column. The letters are supposed to express students’ fears about language learning. Then, in small groups, students act as agony aunts. They read and discuss the letters and try to give advice. In the third part of the activity, students perform the role of counsellors. The letters with replies are returned and students react to them in small groups.

To deal with particularly severe cases of language anxiety Young (1991: 431) recommends that students take part in special supplementary instruction or a support group, work with a tutor, do relaxation exercises or practise self-talk. Young believes that self-talk proves particularly useful with state anxiety, i.e. anxiety resulting from a given evaluative situation, such as a test or some kind of performance. She gives an example of productive, anxiety-decreasing self-talk:

I can handle this .... Just relax . .. take a deep slow breath and I'll start as I rehearsed it.

Self-talk may be an effective technique; however, it seems to be suitable for psychotherapists or specially trained instructors. Regular language teachers may feel embarrassed encouraging self-talk to their students. In addition, this technique would not appear to work during standard language classes. Anxious students might find it a bit awkward. Students who feel confident might laugh at self-talk or simply find it a waste of lesson time.

## RELAXATION TRAINING

MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) state that relaxation techniques can channel negative emotions into positive ones. People generally like the challenge of overcoming difficulties. However, this is possible only when the negative emotions are out of the way. A state of relaxation is related to many aspects of human functioning. From the physiological point of view, relaxation techniques slow the heart rate and breathing, lower blood pressure and muscle tension. From the cognitive point of view, practising relaxation improves concentration by making people focus on the rational system, rather than the experiential system. In terms of affect, relaxation exercises decrease frustration and boost confidence. As concerns the social domain, relaxation techniques slow down conversation pace and tend to produce clearer speech.

There are several techniques that can reduce learners’ anxiety and tension (MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012). In autogenic technique students use visual imagery and body awareness to relax and lower muscle tension. The teacher asks students to visualise a peaceful place and to concentrate on breathing, slowing their heart rates or relaxing each part of body separately. Progressive muscle relaxation technique is about tensing and relaxing each muscle group. Carrying out this exercise helps students to feel the difference between muscle tension and relaxation.

Visualisation technique involves student imagination. It is a mental journey to a peaceful place, accompanied by all possible senses, i.e. smell, sight, sound and touch. The teacher can model the visualisation process. MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012: 207) give an example of asking students to imagine the ocean, the smell of the salt water, the sound of the waves and the heat of the sun. Alternatively, students could just close their eyes and think of a place of their choice where they can make themselves comfortable. Teachers could vary the techniques or ask students to choose one, which in their opinion is the most effective.

## ERROR CORRECTION

In order to alleviate language anxiety teachers should revise their error correction approach. Since self-image is important for every person, it is natural that many learners find error correction embarrassing, especially if it is overused or done in a harsh manner. As Philips (1999: 138) observes, speaking is particularly anxiety-evoking, because it is then when students’ mistakes are most apparent to other members of class. She believes that teachers should use error correction techniques that reduce student anxiety while speaking in the foreign language.

The most simple method is raising students’ awareness. Teachers should keep reminding students that mistakes are an integral part of language learning and that everybody makes them. In a similar vein, Price (1991) argues that students should be encouraged to make mistakes and be repeatedly informed of their instructional significance. It is important, however, that instructors’ behaviour should be consistent with this belief. If teachers correct every single mistake, students do not feel convinced.

Obviously, error correction plays an important role in L2 instruction. According to Pawlak (2014: 69), corrective feedback (CF), which is a vital ingredient of form-focused instruction, facilitates foreign language acquisition (Ellis, 2010) as well as lets learners communicate both accurately and fluently in it (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011). Furthermore, error correction is also what many students expect from instructors. For example, Pawlak’s research project on the importance of feedback (2010) demonstrated the subjects’ favourable attitude towards error correction. Therefore, learners may feel frustrated when it is missing or there is not enough of it. They may also feel disappointed with teachers and think they are not doing their jobs properly.

It seems sensible if instructors judge the anxiety level of a particular group of students and decide on the amount of error correction accordingly. Instructors could also vary the amount of error correction they use depending on particular students’ sensitivity. In extreme cases, when students hardly speak at all, it may be a good idea not to correct any mistakes during oral practice. As Pawlak (2014: 88) emphasises:

...correction does not have to be inherently embarrassing because most learners expect and require it anyway, and teachers can adjust it drawing upon their knowledge of learners’ personality and preferences.

Generally, a sensible approach is to use different correction methods in different situations. Thus overt correction is appropriate during controlled grammar exercises. Nevertheless, when an activity focuses on authentic communication, it should not be used. Price (1991) believes that each lesson should contain communicative activities during which there is either no error correction at all or there is only a small amount in the case of lack of comprehension. Communicative activities should focus on the message that learners are trying to get across, rather than on accuracy.

Alternatives to overt correction can be negotiations of form or recasts. Negotiations of form were defined by Majer (2008: 82) as “digressions from mainstream talk taken by interactants in order to deal with formal inadequacies in L2: phonological, lexical or structural”. Their main purpose is to draw the student’s attention to error without revealing the correct form and hence prompting the student to modify his/her mistake. Recasts, on the other hand, are correct reformulations of learner erroneous utterances. Recasts allow instructors provide the correct form or word while responding to what the student has said in a communicative way. Using recasts is a much more sensitive method than overt correction, because it does not put students on the spot or make them feel embarrassed. Because corrective feedback is provided indirectly, students must listen carefully in order to work it out. Majer (2008: 82) gives the following example of recasts:

Teacher: What nationality is he?  
Student: Britain.  
Teacher: Yes, he is from Great Britain. He is British.

In situations when the teacher is concerned that the learner might feel intimidated, humiliated or discouraged from speaking in front of others, Pawlak (2014) suggests using delayed correction, i.e. addressing the error after the message has been conveyed, but still during the same lesson. Delayed correction also seems suitable when the teacher does not want to interrupt authentic communication, for example when students are talking in pairs or groups. While monitoring, the teacher could note errors on a piece of paper and discuss them during a whole-class feedback session, when the activity is finished. Alternatively, as Pawlak (2014: 134) points out, feedback could be more individualised, i.e. students could be provided with pieces of paper, containing errors jotted down by the teacher while monitoring and asked to correct them. Setting a correction task for homework seems to be a good option.

Teachers could also decrease student anxiety related to error correction by focusing on successful communication as much as on correct forms. When students realise that instructors are equally interested in what they have to say as in how they say it, they may feel much less self-conscious about their errors (Young, 1991). Paying attention to what students are saying has also a positive impact on the rapport between the teacher and students. It makes students feel that instructors care about them and treat them like human beings and not just like impersonal objects of assessment. This has a positive influence on the atmosphere and, consequently, student apprehension. Classrooms where meaning is as important as form are also places where the language is used in an authentic way, which is a highly motivating factor.

## COMMUNITY BUILDING

Before authentic communication can happen, students must constitute a community of learners. Little and Sanders (1989) state that “the existence of a classroom community feeds the desire for authentic communication”. Community in this sense implies learners who “support each other regardless of differences in ability” (Kitano, 2001:553), listen to each other’s personalised responses and generate collective knowledge. Even though the teacher cannot create a community on his or her own, he or she can take certain measures to foster an environment which can help a community to develop and thus decrease language anxiety. Some of the ideas or activities that will be presented in this section have already been mentioned above in section 1.1.4. Motivational Strategies and subchapter 2.3. Emotions Of Language Learners. This is because a well-functioning, cohesive group helps to develop positive affect among learners, which is closely interrelated with motivation.

### GROUP FORMATION

It seems crucial that measures to foster community building are taken right from the beginning of the course, when student anxiety is very high. Students are suddenly put in the same group with strangers. They worry whether they will be accepted by others and whether they will be able to get on with each other. The following quotation comes from an apprehensive student describing her feelings at the beginning of a language course.

*At the beginning, when I didn’t know the group, I was always nervous – when nobody knows the others yet and doesn’t even dare to approach and start getting to know them. Everybody is alone and so very shy; you don’t know what you can joke about and what you can say to the others without offending them; you don’t even know if they are good people or bad ones. . . It’s all so uncertain. You don’t know how other people’s minds work.* (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998: 110-111)

At the stage of group formation, people try to be on their best behaviour and hide any signs of weakness, which may be frustrating. Moreover, as Dörnyei and Murphey (2003: 14) observe, becoming part of a new group requires redefining oneself and taking on a new identity of a group member, rather than a separate individual, which often means restricting one’s behaviour.

At the beginning of the course students also tend to have uncertainties concerning their abilities. They worry whether they will be able to cope with requirements or whether they will appear as clever as other group members. At the same time they have a difficult task of fitting in with the instructor’s teaching style and personality. All these initial negative feelings are joined with anxiety about using the foreign language and comprehending instructions in the L2. In order to help learners overcome their stress at this early stage of group formation and to develop community, the teacher could try to establish a friendly atmosphere, address student anxiety and project as much enthusiasm as possible. Learners would benefit from opportunities to get to know one another through oral activities, particularly in pairs or small groups (Philips, 1999).

During partner work, students tend to feel safer and are less afraid to speak because they are not performing in front of the whole class and the teacher. Group and pair work decreases the pressure to perform perfectly and gives learners time to think of original answers. Even the most timid students open up when they are not the focus of whole-class attention. Moreover, when learners report on a group or pair response, they seem to be less self-conscious than when they give an answer for which they are responsible themselves.

Getting to know one another activities or ice-breakers help members of the group see each other as people and build relationships with each other. As students usually stay in one group for a long period of time, rapport building seems to be a significant factor, facilitating language acquisition in a classroom situation. Good relationship between group members do not only make lessons an enjoyable learning experience, but they also stimulate more target language production due to mutual interest in each other. Another advantage of ice-breakers is that they reduce FL classroom anxiety and make shy students less withdrawn. As teachers are group members as well as students, it seems beneficial if they take part in ice-breaking activities and share personal information about themselves with learners.

### ACCEPTANCE

As soon as the group is formed, instinctive attractions as well as dislikes between some students start to appear. As Schmuck and Schmuck (2001) observe, those early attractions tend to be based on physical attractiveness, intelligence, similar views, characters, lifestyles, interests, background or family situation. Dörnyei and Murphey (2003: 18) claim that these factors are not very important in the long run. What really matters is that the group will become cohesive regardless of the initial attractions which will be replaced by a deeper kind of relationship, i.e. acceptance.

Dörnyei and Murphey (2003: 18) explain that acceptance is a non-evaluative, unconditional feeling, acknowledging the individual with positive characteristics as well as limitations, similar to what one might feel toward a family member. Once a group develops acceptance between its members, this positive feeling overrides negative emotions that might arise. Cohesive group members accept each other even if they would dislike each other outside the group. It is generally easier to promote acceptance within a group if the teacher implements it in his or her own practices.

Acceptance within a group does not happen without teacher intervention. As insufficient knowledge about others often results in intolerance, the most significant factor in promoting acceptance is learning about one another. Most teachers include ice-breaking activities in their first lessons; however, in order to foster intermember relationships it is of high importance that learners share personal information regularly. Another important thing, as Senior (2003: 401-402) has observed, is that that during information sharing activities teachers pay attention to the content as well as the form.

Focusing on the content of what people say about themselves, rather than on the form alone, enables classes of language learners to evolve into learning communities, in which students know and respect one another as people.

Solidarity among group members could also be promoted by means of proximity, i.e. the physical distance between students. This could be achieved by using suitable seating arrangement and regularly moving students about so that each student has the opportunity to work with every other member of the class and to know something personal about his or her peers. A practical way to achieve this is to ask students to sit next to a different class mate each time they enter the classroom. This gives students the chance to interact with and get to know everybody and also to avoid the situation when they are stuck sitting next to a person they may not get on well with.

Another factor which has a positive influence on relationships within a group is spontaneous communication between group members. One kind of communication which is particularly important for rapport building is working together in small groups to accomplish a common goal. Sometimes the goal is to win and then groups collaborate in order to compete with others. When group members support each other towards a common goal, they build positive interdependence and empathy for each other. This is why it is a good opportunity to put students who do not get on well together so that they could build friendship (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003: 25). Sometimes there is a group member who does not fit in with the rest of the group and seems to be rejected. The teacher can help such a student by giving him or her additional praise or support.[[5]](#footnote-5) Teacher personality or style may also have an influence on the relationships between students. The following quotation comes from a student whose teacher’s cold manner had a negative influence on group cohesion.

*If the teacher is very cold, it will naturally influence the students’ behaviour. Students cannot get in close contact with each other. They have few opportunities to form close relationships.* (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003: 26)

Community spirit can also be fostered when both the teacher and all students remember and use each other’s names. Students feel important when they see the teacher making an effort trying to remember their names. What is more, they feel included in the group. When the teacher does not remember or use students’ names, they feel anonymous and it is difficult to talk or relate to them.

### GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Before the community of learners gets established as a group, it has to go through four development stages, i.e. group formation, transition, performing and dissolution (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998). After the initial stage (mentioned above) when a number of random people become a group, group building continues until the very end of its life. Knowledge of typical patterns in group development is useful for teachers to understand why at times difficulties arise and how to deal with them in order to provide optimal learning atmosphere.

While during the formation stage students try to avoid disagreements, the transition stage tends to be less peaceful. Conflicts and tensions normally occur, as group members need to sort out a number of matters before they develop some routines. As learners become more familiar with each other, they feel free to speak their mind and may appear hostile or argumentative. The best way for the teacher to deal with this stormy phase is to stay calm as conflict is a natural sign of group development. Even though transition is usually accompanied by tension, disagreements can be communicated in an unruffled manner. Discussing issues, rather than bottling them up leads to trust building and consequently better group cohesiveness.

The performance phase occurs after the transition phase and is more fulfilling. As Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) observe, it is characterised by a decrease in emotionality and an increase in cooperation and task orientation. It does not mean, however, that everything always goes smoothly during this stage. Dissolution is the last stage in group development. A sudden end of a group’s life may spoil the whole group experience. This is why this phase needs as much teacher attention as the initial phase.

There are cases when groups do not go through all of the four development stages, which according to Schmuck and Schmuck (2001), is often the case in state school education. As Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) point out, traditional, authoritative teachers, rigid curricula and school regulations may result in bypassing or never reaching a certain phase, e.g. group members may remain strangers or the conflict may never get resolved. Sometimes teacher controlling style may hinder the performing stage. Another irregular situation is when students do not fit in with the rest of the group and need individual teacher attention. For example, a student joining the group later will need some icebreaking, even though the rest of the class have already reached another stage.

### GROUP COHESIVENESS

A group is cohesive when its members desire to belong to it because they like the other members (Mullen and Copper, 1994). According to Yalom (1995), cohesive groups show greater acceptance, intimacy and understanding. Students in a cohesive group make each other welcome, demonstrate mutual affection and support each other. They cooperate willingly with each other, take an active part in conversation and are happy to exchange personal information (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003: 62-63). Cohesive groups generally have a more pleasant atmosphere than non-cohesive ones.

Senior’s study (2002: 402) has demonstrated that language learning is most effective when instructors use a group-sensitive teaching approach which promotes group cohesiveness.

I have shown that experienced language teachers set up learning tasks to accommodate not only learning but also the social needs of their students. Such teachers, it seems, have an intuitive understanding of the fact that all language classes are composed of individuals who, with careful handling, can be melded into cohesive learning groups. The evidence suggests that skilful teachers regularly take steps to reinforce the feeling that everyone in class is progressing along a collaborative language learning path, rather than learning in isolation from one another. It therefore seems that experienced teachers have adopted a *class-centred* approach to their teaching.

There is a positive relationship between group cohesiveness and performance in groups which are goal-oriented (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998). This is due to the fact that cohesive group members feel obliged to contribute to group success.

Despite the fact that cohesiveness has been shown to be a desirable feature of every group of students, some instructors believe that their job is just to teach and they should not be interested in students’ liking each other or their emotional closeness. Schmuck and Schmuck (2001: 114) disagree with such an approach to teaching:

We think such a view is shortsighted and naive. It oversimplifies the social-psychological realities of teaching and ignores the psychodynamics that are integrally a part of most academic learning.

### THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The social turn in SLA highlights the significance of the context in which language learning takes place. As MacIntyre and Mercer (2014) point out, a positive classroom environment enables success in L2 attainment. It has already been pointed out in section 2.3.2., that a positive learning environment is crucial in creating positive emotion and consequently a well-functioning classroom community. Consequently, foreign language acquisition depends on the relationship between the learner, the group of learners and the teacher.

Piechurska-Kuciel (2011) has found the relationship between teacher support and FLCA. Her study demonstrated that students with higher levels of teacher support experience lower levels of language anxiety compared with their peers with lower levels of teacher support.

The teacher who shows understanding, empathy and consistency in behaviour helps pupils start forming an identity that will assist them in coping with stress and anxiety induced by the foreign language learning process. (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2011: 87)

Another environmental factor that influence classroom atmosphere is distance. Too much space, for example, can result in psychological distance and the feeling of isolation and anxiety. In order to feel more relaxed and positive students need to sit close to each other so they can communicate easily. It is also a good idea not to leave too much space between the teacher and students.

Even though teachers cannot normally choose their classroom, they can usually rearrange students’ seats. There is no one ideal way how to do this and different seating arrangements suit different types of activities and different groups of students (Wannarka and Ruhl, 2008; Falout, 2014). What is important is that students see one another and can communicate freely. It is also important to bear in mind that certain types of seating arrangement, e.g. rows of desks, create inequality among learners.

Traditional columns or rows of desks are associated with teacher-centred instruction and do not facilitate student-student interaction, particularly moving students around. Moreover, teacher-fronted lessons may cause boredom and sense of alienation from the teacher (Falout, 2014). However, they are suitable for presentations or very large groups of students. Seating structures that are more appropriate for peer interaction are semi-circles or circles. In a circular desk arrangement everybody is equal, including the teacher. Nevertheless, as Dörnyei and Murphey (2003: 82) point out, imposed intimacy can be associated with negative feelings of confinement. Islands of desks are ideal for group or project work. More radical seating arrangements include ad hoc clusters of desks, not using desks at all or even asking students to sit on the floor. What is really important from a community-building point of view is to avoid fixed seating positions, which has a negative effect on contact and interaction among students.

A recent study by Falout (2014) demonstrated superiority of circular seating arrangements since they allow students to feel close to the teacher and can help create a sense of belonging within the classroom community, which in turn facilitates learning, has a positive effect on student emotions and well-being. The term circular seating, may refer to various combinations such as ovals, irregular circles, broken circles, as well as semi-circles.

Furthermore, Falout (2014) formulated the concept of action zones in the classrooms, i.e. “areas in which the most interest, excitement, and class participation takes place” (Marx *et al*., 2000). He believes that average-sized classrooms with row-and-column seating have a usual action zone (see Figure 3.3.):

...ranging across the front rows and down along the aisles directly facing the teacher, forming an inverted T-shape pointing away from the teacher. At times this shape may fill out into a triangle, with the action zone dissipating toward the back and center of the room at the tip of the triangle, and intensifying toward the row in front as its base. (Falout, 2014).

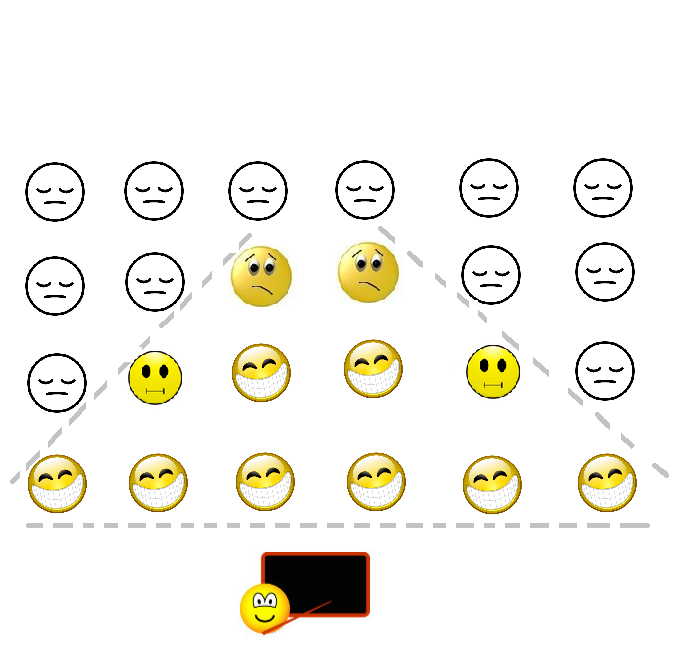


FIGURE 3.3 Triangle-Shaped Action Zone Formed in Row-And-Column Seating (adapted from Falout, 2014: 280)

Falout (2014) states that action zones facilitate academic achievement, whereas students outside it may face academic problems. Action zone students can see and hear the teacher better and are also better heard and seen by him or her. They tend to receive more attention from the instructor, which makes them feel more capable, confident, conscientious and motivated. Conversely, students sitting outside the action zone may feel or be neglected by the teacher and consequently lose interest in the lesson and stop participating. Falout concludes that thanks to circular-style seating arrangement and its proximity, face-to-face orientation and eye contact it is possible to transform the whole classroom into an action zone.

Moreover, as Falout (2014) points out, circles foster empathy, respect and trust among potentially all members of the class, which is likely to reduce ridicule and increase helpfulness. Besides, when students sit in a circular-style fashion, they usually listen more attentively to what their peers are saying. Circular arrangements help to focus student attention. This provides a forum for interest, enthusiasm, and other positive emotions to interact. What is more, the circle makes students both physically exposed and mentally open to the voices of their peers, indicating their ideas as well as the language used to communicate the messages.

Beginning to listen and then speak the new language and ideas one hears, called ventriloquation, is a process of appropriating these different voices for one’s own uses (Wertsch, 1991). Dialogic mediation or dialogic inquiry involves teacher and students engaging together in activities and meaning-making that reconceptualizes and recontextualizes knowledge, and it develops both an individual’s cognitive functions and a group’s collaborative knowledge building (Johnson, 2009; Wells, 1999). In short, dialogic energy comes from “the ongoing dialogue, the vibrant ‘chain of texts’ of a speech community” (Wertch, 2006, p. 63) acting through and upon each other; wherein “one voice comes into contact with another, thereby changing the meaning of what it is saying and becoming increasingly dialogical, or multivoiced” (Wertsch, 1991, p. 90).

Another advantage of circular-style seating arrangement is *near peer role modelling* (Murphey and Aro, 2001). This means that learners can get courage to do the task by watching others carrying it out. They are also likely to make more effort to speak and be happy with their own successes. Students often lack confidence speaking L2, but observing others perceived as similar to them become inspired to try an activity for themselves (Falout, 2014: 286). Furthermore, watching other students speak with mistakes may be more motivating than watching them speak perfectly.This was also apparent in the present author’s student narratives:

*Nobody is speaking very well yet, so I think we shouldn’t feel bad of that reason.*

According to Schunk *et al.* (2008), struggling students, i.e. *coping models*, can be an example that determination and positive thoughts are an effective way to deal with difficulties and improve.

Falout (2014) also believes that circular seating, as opposed to rank-and-file seating encourages students to share information about themselves, particularly from a point of emotional security. This is because students can all feel as accepted members of the circle. In addition, students are more likely to speak openly about their feelings, especially in stressful situations. As Boekaerts points out, this lets students feel that the learning environment is supportive, which in turn positively affects their sense of control and belonging, and in the long run fosters their emotional well-being.

### GROUP LEADERSHIP

There is a general agreement among researchers (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003: 91) that democratic, participatory leadership is the most effective. The opposite of this is an authoritarian teaching style, described by Walker (2008) as extremely demanding and unresponsive to learners’ needs. According to Schmuck and Schmuck (2001), classes taught by autocratic teachers often fail to go through all stages of group development, which results in lack of cohesiveness based on peer acceptance. The humanistic concept of a group leader as a facilitator, i.e. a partner in the learning process, as opposed to a ‘drill sergeant’ or ‘lecturer’ of knowledge, seems to be the preferred leadership model from a class-centred point of view.

Dörnyei and Murphey (2003: 107) argue that there is not one recommended leadership style and different styles are required depending on the group development phase and the group needs at a particular moment.

Generally, it is recommended that group-conscious teaching begins more autocratically to give direction, security and impetus to the group. Then as the students begin performing, teachers can initiate increasing democratic control of the processes. When the group further matures and begins to show their initiative, more autonomy-inviting leadership might be the most conductive to encouraging student independence and initiative.

Teachers could also switch from one leadership style to another depending on circumstances. Even with mature groups, the teacher could adopt an autocratic style to introduce and demonstrate a new activity.

One of the goals of the effective leader, as Dörnyei and Murphey (2003: 107) claim, is to encourage student and group collaborative autonomy. This does not mean that the leader should abdicate. As a member of the group, his or her role is to balance delegating more and more responsibility to students, while at the same time providing valuable input. In a more recent study, Chaffee *et al.* (2014: 358) state that the teacher’s behaviour can influence learners’ experience of autonomy and self-determined motivation during lesson time.

Autonomy-supportive behaviors such as providing choice and emphasizing how course materials are relevant to students’ lives have been associated with students’ self-determined motivation, positive feelings, and engagement in learning, while controlling behaviours such as pressuring or being intrusive may have the opposite effect (e.g. Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Black & Deci, 2000; Chirkov & Ryan, 2001).

According to Chaffee et al., a controlling teaching style, which is low in autonomy-support may have a damaging effect on students’ perception of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This, in turn, leads to a decrease in engagement, achievement and intrinsic motivation.

\* \* \*

The present chapter has been the pivotal part of this dissertation. It has presented an in-depth analysis of language anxiety, looking into classic research from the 1980s when the term was introduced as well as up-to-date literature related to this area. The chapter has defined the phenomenon and described its types as well as provided an account of language anxiety symptoms, origins an effects. Furthermore, the importance of the phenomenon in all components of L2 acquisition, such as speaking, listening, writing, reading, vocabulary and grammar has been presented. In addition, implications for alleviating language anxiety have been given.

The final two chapters are of empirical nature. They demonstrate how the phenomenon of language anxiety is reflected among a sample of the present writer’s own students in the further education context. Chapter four will describe the research as well as provide quantitative data results, analysis and discussion. Chapter five, on the other hand, will deal with qualitative research and will contain and analyse the present writer’s students’ narratives which reveal the participants’ emotions, perceived during their English classes.

# QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

This is an empirical chapter. The first part of it includes the description of the present study: its aims, the tools that were utilised, the research questions, the context, the sample and the procedure. The second part of the chapter presents quantitative data analysis. The type of the study was action research. In this type of study, the instructor reflects on his or her teaching by systematically collecting data on his or her everyday practice and analyses it in order to come to some decisions about what his or her future practice should be (Mackey and Gass, 2005). Accordingly, in the present study the researcher collected the data for her study during her lessons and the subjects were her own students. This way the research was conducted in natural classroom conditions, without the intrusion of using extra stressors, e.g. video cameras, special equipment, e.g. halter heart monitors, or visitors handing out questionnaires. Therefore, the students’ learning process was uninterrupted and the learners did not go through unpleasant or abnormal experiences for the sake of data collection.

## GOALS AND RATIONALE

Anxiety has been proved to be one of the most significant predictors of success or failure in foreign language learning (Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014). As it has been demonstrated to affect as much as a third of students (Horwitz, 2013), lack of success in foreign language learning due to the feeling of apprehension seems to be a widespread problem. This is why reducing language anxiety among students appears to be a salient task for foreign language educators.

The goal of this study was to investigate language anxiety of four groups of students throughout a one year English course at Intermediate level in the further education context in Poland. The researcher wanted to find out to what extent teacher involvement can have an influence on reducing student anxiety and consequently on increasing student chances of achievement as foreign language learners. Teacher involvement included such aspects of classroom atmosphere as rapport building, community building, teaching style.

Another aim of the study was to discover sources of language anxiety among the students in the further education context and how these affect the learning process. The participants were asked to evaluate the degree of apprehension caused by various aspects of the class, such as teacher personality and style, lesson topic, lesson style or working with particular group members. The researcher also investigated the degree of stress generated by typical components of a foreign language class, such as homework, home revision, open-class speaking, in pairs or groups, listening, reading and writing tasks, grammar exercises, written tests and oral exams. Moreover, the present author looked into the relationship between anxiety and personality traits, previous negative experience, unrealistic expectations and student beliefs about foreign language learning.

The research also endeavoured to discover the anxiety types experienced by students in order to find out whether speaking anxiety is the most prevailing type or whether the other skills, i.e. reading, listening and writing trigger as much apprehension. What is more, the researcher studied the subjects’ learning styles and personality types so as to discover whether there were any clashes between the students’ learning styles and the teacher’s teaching style as well as personality clashes. The present author intended to observe whether such clashes gave rise to language anxiety among the students.

Another purpose of the study was to find out to what extent the anxiety perceived by the students was debilitating. The researcher intended to discover whether the students would have made the same progress if it had not been for their language anxiety. In addition, the author aimed at observing whether students were determined to continue with activities they regard as stressful because they find them essential for foreign language acquisition or whether they would demonstrate unwillingness to communicate and other forms of avoidance.

Apart from anxiety, the researcher intended to gain insights into the subjects’ “ideal selves”, “ought to selves” and “feared selves” (Dörnyei, 2005) as well as the participants’ reasons for studying English as this would reveal not only student anxiety but also motivation, which could override apprehensive feelings. Besides, student attitudes towards the L2 culture were checked, as another factor that could offset student negative feelings.

In order to provide optimal conditions for language acquisition, the author/researcher used a variety of methods to make the learning environment as positive, supportive and stress-free as possible. The main objective of the study was to determine whether those stress-combating techniques are an effective way to decrease student anxiety. The participants’ anxiety level was measured both at the beginning and at the end of the course to investigate how far teacher involvement can influence student anxiety reduction.

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

In order to investigate the subjects’ anxiety a variety of instruments were used. The collected data is of both qualitative and quantitative nature. Both types of instruments can be found in the Appendix. On top of that, the researcher/teacher used naturalistic observation of the subjects’ behaviour in class and her own judgement to verify the data. She regularly reflected on the classes she taught and made notes. The notes, however, are of more personal character, and are not included in the Appendix.

### PLACEMENT TEST

In order to make sure that all of the subjects were at the same, Intermediate proficiency level of English, they were given a verifying test. It was a written test, consisting of 30 multiple choice items, each of which was worth one point. The questions were supposed to check the subject’s command of grammatical structures, characteristic for Intermediate level of English.

A sample question from the test is presented below:

I must go. I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Sarah for lunch.  
  
a) meet b) meeting  
c) ‘m meeting d) ‘m meet

### FLCAS

The FLCAS (see Appendix 1) was administered to measure the level of the subjects’ language anxiety (communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation) with the focus on a speaking aspect. The author adapted FLCAS designed by Horwitz *et al*. (1986). First of all, the researcher translated the items into Polish (the students’ mother tongue) in order to make them clear for the students and thus obtain the most reliable results.[[6]](#footnote-6) To avoid ambiguity, negative, items, e.g. *I don’t worry about making mistakes in language class* was converted into positive ones, e.g. *I worry about making mistakes in language class*. After the conversion, two of the original items became identical. Consequently, the original number of 33 items was reduced to 32.

Additionally, the author noticed that some of the original statements, e.g. *I often feel like not going to my language class* would benefit from being matched with frequency responses e.g. *often*, rather than agreement responses, e.g. *strongly agree*. In order to group the statements according to two kinds of responses the order of the original statements was slightly changed. A 4-point Likert scale was applied to all the 32 statements. For the statements 1-29 the response options were: 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – agree 4 – strongly agree. For the statements 30-33 the response options were: 1 – very rarely, 2 – not too often 3 – quite often, 4 – very often. Several items were positive and had to be key-reversed so that a high score on the scale corresponded with a high anxiety level.

### LISTENING, READING AND WRITING ANXIETY SCALE

This instrument (see Appendix 2) was applied to measure the subjects’ listening, reading and writing anxiety. It was designed by the author. The scale consisted of 30 statements and was divided into three parts: Listening, Reading and Writing. Each part contained 10 statements. Some of the statements were adapted from or inspired by Xiao and Wong’s Anxiety Scales (2014) and Reading Anxiety Scale (Young, 1999a: 256). The subjects were provided with four response options: 4 – strongly agree, 3 – agree, 2 – disagree, 1 – strongly disagree. The maximum score for each of the parts was 40, and the minimum was 10.

### AN INVENTORY ASSESSING ANXIETY LEVEL GENERATED BY TYPICAL LANGUAGE CLASS ACTIVITIES

This instrument was designed by the author. It consisted of a list of ten typical components of a foreign language class, including homework. The subjects were asked to evaluate each item according to the amount of anxiety it provokes. There were four response options to choose from: 1 – not stressful, 2 – little stressful, 3 – quite stressful, 4 – very stressful. The list was in both English and Polish and consisted of the following items:

1. revising material at home
2. homework
3. written tests
4. oral exams
5. speaking in pairs or groups
6. open-class speaking
7. listening tasks
8. writing tasks
9. reading tasks
10. grammar exercises

### THE BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING INVENTORY – BALLI

This instrument (see subchapter 1.3.) was designed by Horwitz (1988)[[7]](#footnote-7) in order to evaluate student beliefs as they enrol for a foreign language course. The assumption was that many students begin a language course with a number of preconceptions, many of which are false. Student erroneous beliefs may cause anxiety due to such factors as low self-confidence, lack of belief in success or unrealistic expectations. The BALLI consists of thirty-three items divided into the following categories:

1. the difficulty of language learning:

* general difficulty of language learning
* relative difficulty of the target language
* difficulty of certain skills
* optimism about language learning
* estimates of the time it will take to learn a language

1. foreign language aptitude

* child superiority
* female learner superiority
* superiority of speakers of other languages
* inferiority of people who are good at maths or science
* general aptitude
* Polish people aptitude
* personal aptitude

1. the nature of language learning

* necessity of knowing the foreign culture
* learning the foreign language in a foreign country
* language study compared to other subjects
* primacy of vocabulary learning
* primacy of grammar study
* primacy of translation

1. learning and communication strategies

* importance of accent
* importance of repetition and practice
* beliefs about making mistakes
* beliefs about guessing

1. motivation and expectations

* job expectations and perceived importance of specific target language
* national attitude towards the importance of speaking a foreign language
* importance of integrative motivation

The subjects were asked to respond to each item by indicating one of five options: 1 – strongly agree, 2 – agree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 4 – disagree, 5 – strongly disagree. There was no overall score for the BALLI. As Horwitz (1988: 284) points out, there are no clear-cut right or wrong answers to the questions. Nevertheless, students’ responses provide descriptions of individual views on language learning.

The researcher used the original BALLI without translation, as the language seemed appropriate for Intermediate students of English. Several, more advanced vocabulary items, e.g. *ultimately* or *to get rid of* were pre-taught to ensure complete clarity of the statements.

The only thing that was adapted to suit the context of Polish learners was replacing the nationality adjectives: *English* with *Polish*. As the original BALLI was designed for American students, some statements referred to the situation or stereotypes in the United States. The item: *Americans think that it is important to speak a foreign language*, for example, is completely irrelevant in the Polish context and has been changed into: *Poles think that it is important to speak a foreign language*.

### STYLE ANALYSIS SURVEY

This instrument (see Appendix 3) was designed by Oxford (1995), who came to the conclusion that assessing style preferences is one of the most important actions that language teachers can take to alleviate student anxiety. As Oxford (1999: 227) states, assessing teachers’ learning and teaching style and the style of their students can help teachers discover differences in style between them and their students. She believes it is important to find out about style differences before they become serious clashes. Once the styles are assessed, instructors can adapt the way they teach. Oxford (1999) points out that the same inventory is suitable for both teachers and students, as instructors tend to teach the way they learn. The Style Analysis Survey (1999) that the author used in her study is a reduced form of Oxford’s inventory from 1995.

The Style Analysis Survey is divided into 5 parts:

* Part A: How You Use Your Physical Senses for Study and Work (visual, auditory, or hands-on learning and working style)
* Part B: How You Deal with Other People (extroverted or introverted learning and working style)
* Part C: How You Handle Possibilities (intuitive-random or concrete-sequential learning and working style)
* Part D: How You Approach Tasks (closure-oriented or open learning and working style)
* Part E: How You Deal with Ideas (global and analytic learning and working style)

Each part is subdivided into two sections representing two opposite styles, apart from Part A, which has three subsections. There are ten items in each subsection. Each item has four response option: 1 – never, 2 – sometimes, 3 – very often, 4 – always. There is no overall score for the survey. Each part identifies a different aspect of subjects’ preferred learning or working styles. It is possible that the scores within one subsection are close. This indicates that a subject can easily use both learning styles (or three in Part A), for example, if the scores in Part B are close, one is able to learn effectively both alone and with others. The survey was administered in the original version, without translation into Polish. The teacher/researcher assisted students while they were choosing their preferred options and explained any vocabulary items that were not clear for the subjects.

### “SELF” QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was related to students’ own vision of “ideal self”, “feared self” and “ought to self” and student attitude to native speakers of L2. It contained one closed question and six open questions, all of which were inspired by Dörnyei (2005: 93-108). Question 1 had four options and the subjects were allowed to choose as many as they considered appropriate. The remaining five questions required written answers. Both ways of reacting to questions are in accordance with the definition of a questionnaire (Dörnyei, 2003: 6). The tool included the following questions:

1. Why are you studying English?
   * To live abroad
   * To find a good/better job, to get promoted
   * To communicate with people abroad or with foreigners in your country
   * For other reasons. Please, specify.
2. Did you take the decision to study a foreign language or did someone else decide for you (for example your parents or your boss)? If someone else decided for you, what level of English do they expect you to reach?
3. Have you got a vision of your desired level of English? What is this image? Is the course making this image more achievable?
4. Are you expecting to reach native-like competence or is your objective just to communicate in this language?
5. Are you afraid that you will never learn this language as well as you’d like to? Why?
6. Have you got a positive image of native speakers of English? Why? Why not?

### STUDENT JOURNALS

Student journals, also referred to as diaries or learner autobiographies (Mackey and Gass, 2005: 176) were the instrument for obtaining qualitative data from the students. According to Mackey and Gass, since carefully tailored questions can elicit learners’ reports about their internal processes and thoughts, journals are often used to gather data for qualitative studies. The researcher prepared seven different journals for learners to complete. Seven of the journals examined various issues related to language anxiety. Each of the journals consisted of two or three open questions. The students were asked to write a narrative of up to one paragraph in answer to each question. The questions were both in Polish and English and the subjects had the choice of using either Polish or English to write their narratives.

The following questions were included in the journals:

1. Do you feel less anxious now than you did at the beginning of the course? Why? / Why not?
2. Are there any aspects of the class that make you feel anxious (for example, classroom atmosphere, your relationship with the teacher or other students, the pace of the lesson)?
3. Which classroom activities make you feel most anxious? Why? Would you prefer to avoid them?
4. Which classroom activities do you find most relaxing? Why?
5. Do you ever avoid speaking because you feel stressed / anxious? How often?
6. Do you ever avoid any other activities or tasks because you feel stressed / anxious, for example writing, tests or homework? How often?
7. Do you think the way you are taught has an influence on your level of anxiety?
8. Are there any other reasons why you may feel anxious (e.g. your personality, previous negative experience, perfectionism, unrealistic expectations etc.)?
9. Do you think your English would improve more if you were less anxious?
10. Do you wish to continue with any activities you find stressful because you think they are useful?
11. Do you find it more stressful to practice with some students than with others? Can you explain why?
12. Is your level of anxiety ever related to the lesson topic? Why?
13. What would you change in order to make lessons less stressful? Would it improve the benefit you derive from the course?
14. Do you remember any stressful experiences from your previous language courses? What were they?
15. Have you ever experienced any clashes between your learning style and your foreign language teacher’s teaching style? Can you describe them?

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main thesis of the study is that approximately a third of FL students begins a language course with language anxiety that is likely to affect their L 2 acquisition. Student anxiety is likely to be reduced as a result of positive, supportive, stress-free classroom atmosphere created by the teacher. The thesis is accompanied by a number of research questions:

Q1: What is the exact percentage of students that can be classified as suffering from language anxiety?

Q2: Does student language anxiety decrease as a result of a positive, supportive, stress-free classroom atmosphere created by the teacher?

Q3: What are the main sources of language anxiety and how strongly do they affect students?

Q4: Which aspects of the FL class do students perceive as the most and the least stressful?

Q5: Which of the typical classroom/homework activities create the most apprehension among students?

Q6: Is speaking anxiety the most significant anxiety type, or are the students equally affected by anxiety related to listening, reading or writing?

Q7: Do students tend to avoid anxiety-provoking activities or do they choose to continue with them because the activities are perceived as useful?

Q8: Do students consider language anxiety a significant obstacle in FL acquisition?

Q9: What is the significance of students’ self system and “integrativeness”?

Q10: What could be done in students’ opinion in order to decrease language anxiety in the foreign language classroom?

## CONTEXT AND SUBJECTS

The research was carried out in a further education context. The participants were students of a private language school in Łódź. Further education contexts are typical in Poland for foreign language learning. They are popular with all age groups, but mostly with adult learners (middle school age and above). The majority of the students are Polish, but there are some participants from other countries, mostly those who come to study at universities in Poland. Many Polish students decide to attend extra language classes in a further education context on top of their regular classes at school or at university. They (or their parents) believe that regular, state school tuition is not at a satisfactory level, often due to students’ mixed abilities, large class sizes or an insufficient number of lessons. Students attending classes in the further education context are normally quite ambitious and serious about their studies. They typically hold a degree, study at universities or intend to do so. What is more, this context in Poland is a private sector and therefore students or their parents pay for the tuition, which usually makes the participants appreciate the classes more and put in more effort.

It seems that the further education in Poland meets the necessary criteria to be labelled “a positive institution” (see section 4.6.1.), i.e. an institution that enables success and promotes a positive learning environment. The following factors related to this context make it a favourable place for foreign language learning:

* Lessons are conducted in attractive, modern classrooms, often equipped with computers and smart boards.
* The groups are small and rarely exceed the number of 15.
* Circular seating arrangement prevails, which according to Falout (2014) helps to create a sense of belonging within the classroom community, which in turn facilitates learning, has a positive effect on student emotions and well-being (see section 3.10.5. on classroom environment).
* There are no mixed ability groups. All students are at the same proficiency level, placed on the basis of a written and oral placement test.
* Teachers usually have a friendlier attitude and demonstrate more patience than at state schools owing to the fact that they treat students as customers.
* There is usually a better quality of instruction, since teachers are carefully selected on the basis of their teaching abilities. In addition, there is usually a professional development programme included in the further education context, e.g. lesson observations or teacher-training sessions. Moreover, it is easier for instructors to use a variety of appealing teaching techniques when students are motivated and the conditions are favourable. Even teenagers who may be difficult to manage at state schools tend to be more cooperative in the further education context.
* Students usually attend to enrol for the courses voluntarily.
* There is no exam at the end of year, which means that teaching is not affected by wash-back.
* There is very little anxiety related to grades thanks to the fact that all tests can be retaken. What is more, unlike in state schools, students are not evaluated for giving speeches in front of others or even forced to do so. In addition, there is very little stress related to passing a year, since it is based on coursework as well as the final test. In very rare cases, when learners are required to repeat a year, they do it with a different course book and instructor. Consequently, this is not considered punishment, but another course that aims to help learners to catch up with material or improve some language skills.

Most of the subjects (88%) in the present research said that studying a foreign language was their choice. Only four of the respondents said that it was their parents’ idea to attend an English course, while one subject admitted to being sent by his employer. The fact that students enrol for an L2 course voluntarily is a characteristic feature of the further education context, which makes language learning circumstances exceptionally favourable for promoting student engagement. As Chaffee *et al.* (2014: 356) point out:

Factors that cause students to feel controlled have been shown to negatively affect motivation (e.g., Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994). In light of this finding, the fact that language study is often compulsory at North American and European schools, as is the study of English as a foreign language EFL) in many Asian countries, is potentially problematic.

The research participants were studying English at an Intermediate level. Some of the students attended classes at the same school at Pre-Intermediate level. After successfully completing that level, they decided to continue with the same school at a higher level. As a result, several students knew some other participants from the previous year. There were also students who had not attended any classes at that school before. They were classified as Intermediate on the basis of a school placement test, which consisted of four components: speaking, writing, vocabulary and grammar.

The researcher verified the subjects’ level one more time, giving everyone a written placement test and evaluating their speaking competence. The test indicated that despite some differences all of the students were at the same, Intermediate level. The course consisted of 120 lessons per year. Students had two ninety-minute lessons per week in the afternoon. Most students came after school, university or work. The class size ranged from six to eleven students, and could not exceed twelve according to the school regulations.

There were four classes altogether, two in the first year of the study and two in the second year. The total number of subjects taking part in the research was thirty-four. There were thirteen males and twenty-one females. The average age of the students was twenty-three. Most of the students were Polish; however, three of them were foreigners: from Ukraine, Moldova and China. Thirteen subjects were still under eighteen years old and middle school or high school students. Four subjects were university students. The remaining students were well-educated adults, holding university degrees. One participant was a working, part-time university student. There was also one subject who refused to provide information about his education. The names of the participants have been changed to protect their confidentiality.

Most of the subjects had experience of studying other foreign languages, apart from English. Only for 5 subjects (12%) was English the sole foreign language they could speak. Over a third of the participants (36%) declared that their knowledge of another foreign language was at an Intermediate level or above. The most popular foreign languages the subjects had studied were German, French, Spanish, and Russian. Other, less popular languages included Italian, Latin, and Japanese. For the majority of the participants Polish was the mother tongue. Nevertheless, there were two students who were bilingual. One of them was a native speaker of Ukrainian and Russian, the other of Romanian and Russian. Both of them had Polish relatives and could speak Polish as a foreign language. They came to Poland to study at university. There was also one monolingual Chinese student whose mother tongue was Mandarin.

## PROCEDURE

As mentioned above, in this chapter’s introduction, the empirical part of the study was carried out in the further education context, in a private language school. The method was action research and the researcher was the subjects’ regular instructor. The study lasted one year and was repeated with different groups at the same level the following year in order to obtain a larger number of subjects. The researcher explained to the students at the beginning of the course that she was doing research for her doctorate and asked if they minded taking part in it. The students seemed quite enthusiastic and willing to cooperate. They expressed their interest in the subject of the study and admitted that language anxiety was an important issue affecting most of them in a certain way.

The researcher began her study by checking whether all of the subjects were at the same proficiency level. She used a multiple choice grammar and vocabulary test, outlined above in section 5.2.1. The test consisted of 30 items. The average score was 19. The lowest score was 10 and the highest one was 25. This suggests that despite some differences between the students’ abilities, they were all at Intermediate level. This was additionally confirmed by the teacher’s own evaluation of the students’ speaking skills during regular classroom activities. The students were not informed that the placement test was connected with the research and the students did it during their lesson time. Such tests are common practice at the beginning of a course, particularly if participants have not studied together before as a group.

In order to ensure that the students benefited from the course as much as possible and did not waste too much lesson time, whenever the subjects were asked to complete a questionnaire or write a journal, the instructor usually added about ten minutes to the regular lesson time. In the case of the Style Analysis Survey, which took approximately 40 minutes, no extra time was added, but the survey was used as part of a lesson on learning styles. Similarly, the administration of Listening, Reading and Writing Anxiety Scale took about half an hour. Therefore, the instructor carried it out during a speaking test class.

All of the research instruments were administered in class. However, there were usually several students missing. The instructor typically asked the subjects to complete an inventory or write a journal when they were back in class after their absence. Occasionally, students completed the missing questionnaires or wrote their narratives at home, if the researcher had confidence she could rely on them to do so. This was the case particularly when students were absent for a longer period of time and missed several journals or questionnaires.

After the researcher verified the subjects’ level, she administered the FLCAS (see subchapter 4.2. Instruments and Appendix 1). This took place during the third week of the course. The idea was to administer this instrument early on to measure student anxiety at the entrance, without them being influenced by their current course. This was because the researcher believed she could reduce student language anxiety by community building, creating a positive atmosphere, building a good rapport with the students and using non-threatening activities and techniques. Nevertheless, the test was not administered at the very beginning, because during the first few weeks students often change groups and it takes a few weeks until they settle in.

One week after the subjects completed FLCAS, the author continued with other instruments. On average the instruments were applied every week, i.e. every other class. The research stretched approximately over one semester. While FLCAS concentrated mainly on measuring language anxiety in speaking, LISTENING, READING AND WRITING ANXIETY SCALE (see section 4.2.3. and Appendix 2) provided data about the subjects’ language anxiety related to other skills. The scale was administered in English and the researcher had to pre-teach many essential vocabulary items. Due to rather difficult language, the scale was time-consuming. Therefore, the researcher decided to administer it during an oral exams class, towards the end of the semester. The students took the oral test in pairs in a separate room, so those who were not being examined completed the questionnaire while waiting for others. This way the subjects did not lose any of their lesson time.

The main instrument in this study was a series of written narratives/journals (see section 4.2.9.). They were the main source of qualitative data in this study. Not only did they provide the researcher with many answers to research questions but they were also a very useful tool for the instructor’s daily teaching. One of the objectives of the study was to find out to what extent the teacher can reduce student language anxiety. The narratives/journals gave the researcher numerous ideas and practical suggestions on how to behave in way that alleviates student language anxiety. An inventory assessing anxiety level generated by typical language class activities (see section 4.2.4.), despite its quantitative character, was administered as part of one of the journals.

Journal writing continued throughout the whole study with other instruments administered in the meantime. The researcher was concerned that writing the narratives in Polish could be a missed opportunity for stronger and more ambitious students who would appreciate extra writing practice in the target language. Therefore, the journal questions were asked both in Polish and English. The subjects had the choice of language for their narrative writing. This also proved useful for the subjects who were not native speakers of Polish and might have had difficulties with writing or understanding questions in Polish. Consequently, some of the journals were written in both languages. Some of the students attempted to write in English but used occasional Polish words whenever they did not know a suitable English equivalent.

Journal writing seemed difficult at times to younger teenagers. The questions seemed serious to them and they felt confused. The instructor clarified them and put them in a simpler way. At times, some participants pointed out that some questions in the journals were similar and they had an impression that they repeated the same ideas several times. Consequently, they wrote very short, sometimes one- or two-word answers. Other participants took journal writing very seriously. They wrote long and well thought through narratives, providing valuable data for the study.

As mentioned above, the Style Analysis Survey was used as part of a lesson on learning styles. For this reason, the survey was used in English, without translation. The writer thought that students would benefit from finding out about their learning styles. Consequently, she thought that her research tool could be useful for her study as well as for the subjects. The survey was preceded by a lead-in and all of the unfamiliar vocabulary items were pre-taught. After the survey had been completed the instructor explained to the subjects how to calculate the score, using the guidelines that come with the survey. Thus, each subject calculated their own score and at the end of the lesson found out about their preferred learning style.

This was followed by a group discussion, during which students revealed their results and said whether they agreed or disagreed with them. There was no subject who said that the result of the survey was not true for him or her. Once students found out about their preferred learning style, the teacher explained that the results represents their strengths, or the ways to study in a comfortable way, without being challenged. The learners were advised, however, to try and develop other areas outside their comfort zone. In order to improve their learning, it is beneficial to try and do activities in a different way (Oxford, 1999: 237).

The instructor also told the students that sometimes a source of frustration or anxiety can be the differences between the teacher’s teaching style and the learners’ learning style. The teacher asked the students to think whether this was the case for them and to write a narrative describing such experiences:

1 Have you ever experienced any clashes between your learning style and your foreign language teacher’s teaching style? Can you describe them?

At the end of the class the researcher collected the students’ narratives as well as their completed Style Analysis Survey together with the results. The students who were interested, received a photocopied completed survey.

The BALLI (see subchapter 1.3. and section 4.2.5.) was administered in a similar way to Style Analysis Survey. It was included in one of the lessons. Since many researchers (e.g. Horwitz, 1988; Young, 1999; Dörnyei, 2005) state that student erroneous beliefs can lead to language anxiety, the author thought that the subjects would benefit from responding to BALLI, followed by a class discussion of student beliefs. Even though there are no clear-cut right or wrong answers to BALLI, certain items are most probably true or false. The instructor went over some of them with the students and tried to tone them down.For example, the author told the students that although language aptitude certainly exists, the belief that one does not possess it is a serious obstacle in language learning and may lead to anxiety. The instructor explained to the students that it is still possible to acquire a L2 despite the lack of language aptitude if one is strongly motivated. The purpose of the follow-up discussion was to reduce student language anxiety resulting from student beliefs.

The last stage of the research was the second administration of FLCAS. This took place at the end of the semester. The researcher intended to find out whether the subjects’ language anxiety level was stable or whether it evolved as the course progressed. The author expected that language anxiety level should decrease due to a number of techniques used by the researcher. The ideas for stress-alleviating teacher behaviour came partly from the literature on language anxiety that the author studied for the theoretical part of the dissertation, from the researcher instinct based on twenty-year-experience as a teacher and from studying her own students’ suggestions included in the journals. The techniques that constituted stress-free teaching can be summarised as follows:

* Using students’ first names
* Using ice-breaking activities
* Horse shoe/islands seating arrangement
* Encouraging students to sit next to different partners during each class
* Introducing autonomy by providing students with choice
* Democratic teaching style
* Overall friendliness and non-threatening manner
* Treating all of the students fairly and giving everyone equal attention
* Genuine interest in students and their lives
* Using a lot of personalisation
* Encouraging acceptance among group members
* Student-centred teaching
* Speaking in groups/pairs rather than in front of others
* Familiarising students with test types and testing on the material that has been taught and clearly specifying material included in the test
* Letting students confer before checking their answers, e.g. after a reading or listening task
* Correcting errors in a gentle manner or correcting errors globally at the end of the activity
* Giving praise, encouragement and positive feedback to boost student self-esteem
* Using a variety of techniques to cater for different learning styles
* Avoiding criticism
* Using humour
* Encouraging autonomy
* Aiming stress-free classroom atmosphere
* Avoiding stress-provoking activities
* Community building
* Using background music when appropriate

## QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative data was obtained using the following instruments described above: FLCAS pre-test and post-test, Listening, Reading and Writing Anxiety Scale, an inventory assessing anxiety level generated by typical FL class activities, the BALLI and Style Analysis Survey. When analysing the data, the researcher will first report the results with no interpretation and then discuss and reflect on them in subsequent paragraphs.

### FLCAS PRE-TEST RESULTS

The main instrument used for gathering quantitative data was the FLCAS. The reliability of the pre-test was verified by means of Cronbach’s alpha. Thus, the internal-consistency reliability estimate for the Likert scale was 0.912. In other words, the inventory items are about 91 percent reliable and about 9 percent unreliable. The tool was applied in order to answer the following research questions:

Q1: What is the percentage of students that can be classified as suffering from language anxiety?

Q3: What are the main sources of language anxiety and how strongly do they affect students?

Q4: Which aspects of the FL class do students perceive as the most and the least stressful?

The results of the FLCAS were interpreted as follows: 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – agree, 4 – strongly agree. For the sake of the clarity of the results the researcher regarded statements marked as 1 or 2 as disagreement with a given statement, while statements marked as 3 or 4 as agreement. Six of the statements were positive in meaning and unlike the others, agreement with them indicated lack of anxiety. These statements have been accompanied by letter R = reversed, since they were interpreted in the reversed way (1 – strongly agree, 2 – agree, 3 – disagree, 4 – strongly disagree). Thus the results for these statements were calculated in the reversed way.

Since agreement with FLCAS statements[[8]](#footnote-8) indicated anxiety and disagreement indicated lack of anxiety, marks 1 to 4 were interpreted as follows: 1 - very relaxed, 2 - quite relaxed, 3 - quite anxious, 4 - very anxious. Accordingly, the present author assumed that an anxious student is represented by an average of points of 2.5 or above. 24% of the students taking part in the study achieved such a score. The most anxious student’s score was 3.00. The least anxious student’s FLCAS result was 1.37. This student mentioned several times during the course that he was enjoying the classes very much and attending them was a real pleasure for him. Since only one subject achieved an average score of 3.00, this author concludes that there have not been any cases of extremely anxious students in her research.

The average FLCAS result for the total number of subjects when the instrument was utilised for the first time, at the beginning of the course, was 2.23. This suggests that overall the subjects cannot be regarded as very anxious. This could be explained by the further education teaching context. In this type of context, students typically enrol for language courses out of their own initiative, which means that they are motivated and interested in studying this language. This was also the case with the subjects. Furthermore, the course does not finish with an exam and the final grade consists of course work as well as the final test results. If students do not get a satisfactory result, they can retake the final test. Even if they do not manage to pass the course, the consequences are not as severe as repeating a year at school or university. Therefore, the author concludes that the anxiety level of students in the further education context is generally lower than at schools or universities, where a language course is obligatory and a positive final grade is essential for students to complete a year.

It seems that this specific, further education context, could be referred to as “a positive institution” (MacIntyre and Mercer, 2014: 165). MacIntyre and Mercer believe that positive institutions are one of the three components of positive psychology (PP), together with positive emotions and positive character traits. Such institutions, according to MacIntyre and Mercer, “enable success and promote positive learning environments”. The further education context seems to provide learners with favourable experiences of language learning owing to the fact that it generates very little anxiety.

Nevertheless, 27% of anxious students in the context which is not stress-provoking because of its nature is quite a significant figure. Moreover, the mean for 7 out of 32 statements ranged from 2.58 to 2.93, which means that the aspects of foreign language learning represented by these items are anxiety-provoking for these subjects (see Table 4.1).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **STATEMENT** | ***M*** | ***SD*** |
| 6 I keep thinking that other students are better at languages than I am. | 2.62 | 0.83 |
| 7 I am usually at ease during tests in my language class. (R) | 2.58 | 1.01 |
| 10 I wonder why some people get so upset over foreign language classes. (R) | 2.93 | 0.88 |
| 13 I would be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers. | 2.69 | 0.93 |
| 25 I get nervous when I don’t understand every word the teacher says. | 2.56 | 0.76 |
| 28 I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language. (R) | 2.67 | 0.83 |
| 30 I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class. (R) | 2.59 | 0.76 |

TABLE 4.1 Statements Reflective of Language Anxiety Supported by Most of the Subjects

In addition, the most strongly supported FLCAC statement was identified. In order to do so, the researcher took into consideration both the statements with which the informants agree and agree strongly. Consequently, the item: *I wonder why some people get so upset over foreign language classes* was found to be endorsed by the most (70%) of the respondents. This suggests that language anxiety is a common problem that does not surprise anyone. Perhaps most students have experienced it or know other people who have. Even though according to the FLCAS results the subjects are not strongly affected by language anxiety, most of them are affected by some of its aspects. This is why the feeling of language anxiety is familiar to the participants.

The most anxiety-provoking aspect connected with foreign language learning for the subjects was the idea of speaking with a native speaker. Both statements: *I would be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers* and *I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language (R)* got an average result of 2.69 and 2.67 respectively. This issue has nothing to do with the instructor’s behaviour or classroom atmosphere. However, this problem could be dealt with by exposing students gradually to authentic language listening. The subjects would have probably been less anxious about communicating with native speakers if they were taught by one. At the school where the subjects are studying there are classes with both native and non-native speaker instructors and in the future years the subjects are likely to have lessons with one as well.

Other statements demonstrating language anxiety that are supported by a considerable part of the subjects[[9]](#footnote-9) are *6* *I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class (R)* and *30 I keep thinking that other students are better at languages than I am*. The first statement was supported by 42% of the subjects and the latter by as many as 53%. Both results demonstrate the subjects’ low self-esteem. The instructor tried to boost the subjects’ self-esteem by providing opportunities for success, giving lots of praise and avoiding criticism. However, lack of self-esteem may not only accompany foreign language speaking, but also be a personal characteristic. Therefore, it may not always be increased by teacher influence.

The subjects’ strong agreement with the statement *30 I keep thinking that other students are better at languages than I am* also suggests that they believe that language aptitude is a crucial factor determining second language acquisition. Even though this belief is valid, if students think they do not possess a language aptitude, it creates a serious obstacle to language learning which may lead to anxiety or frustration. As Horwitz (1988: 288) points out,

Students who feel that they personally lack some capacity necessary to language learning – by virtue of personal make-up or group membership – probably doubt their own ability as language learners and expect to do poorly in language study.

In the same vein, Peng and Woodrow (2010) established that confidence was the most important predictor of WTC.

*7 I am usually at ease during tests in my language class (R)* was another strongly supported statement (48% of the subjects),[[10]](#footnote-10) which means that the respondents are strongly affected by test anxiety. This is quite surprising, considering that the consequences of not passing a test in the further education context are not serious, i.e. every test can be redone. Perhaps, due to the fact that the FLCAS was administered at the beginning of the course, the students had in mind their tests at school or university. Moreover, the instrument did not measure language anxiety in this particular English class, but anxiety accompanying studying any foreign language in general.

Another possible explanation is that students are quite ambitious or perfectionist and do not want to face a failure, even if its consequences are insignificant. There are several things an instructor could do to reduce test anxiety (described in section 3.2.2.). The author/instructor implemented some of them during the course. For example, she provided the students with ample practice of the material to be tested or created a friendly atmosphere during tests.

Anxiety related to not understanding every word the language teacher says turned out to be a common problem as well, since 45% of the sample[[11]](#footnote-11) admitted it. This item is related to an erroneous student belief that one must understand every single word in order to understand a message. The students who hold such a belief would benefit from being told explicitly that this is not true and from developing a strategy of listening for gist and training in it. Once students get used to coping with not knowing every single word, they are likely to stop feeling anxious about it.

The statements that were supported by the fewest respondents (the mean ranged from 1.6 to 1.96) are presented in Table 4.2. The statements represent language anxiety aspects which are the least relevant for the subjects of this study.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **STATEMENT** | ***M*** | ***SD*** |
| 2 I tremble when I know that I’m going to be called on in language class. | 1.94 | 0.72 |
| 5 During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course. | 1.84 | 0.72 |
| 15 Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it. | 1.87 | 0.81 |
| 16 I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make. | 1.93 | 0.56 |
| 22 I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes. | 1.81 | 0.74 |
| 24 When I’m on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed. (R) | 1.96 | 0.74 |
| 31 I feel like not going to my English class. | 1.50 | 0.62 |

TABLE 4.2 Statements Reflective of Language Anxiety Supported by the Smallest Number of Subjects

The statement *2 I tremble when I know that I’m going to be called on in language class* had quite a low mean of 1.94, which could superficially look as though the subjects do not generally feel anxious about being called on. Although 27% of the respondents affirm strongly that they are not affected by this type of anxiety, as many as 21%[[12]](#footnote-12) of the subjects admit that they do tremble when expecting to be called on by the teacher. The instructor/researcher tried not to overuse this technique and employed a lot of pair-work and group-work instead. Nevertheless, there were occasions when students were called on, for example, to report on the results of group discussion. If teachers managed to identify their most anxious students, for example by administering the FLCAS, they could avoid calling on these particular students. Alternatively, they could talk to them after class and ask them whether they wish to be called on despite their anxiety.

Low means for the statements: *5 During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course* (1.84), *24 When I’m on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed (R)* (1.96) and *31 I feel like not going to my English class* (1.50) could be explained by the fact that students attend this English class because of their own choice and are quite motivated. This is why in general they concentrate on the class, want to attend it and feel quite relaxed on the way to it. Similarly, if the respondents had definitely felt more tense and nervous in their language class than in their other classes at school, (statement 22), they probably would not have enrolled for another language course in the further education context. Relatively low support by the subjects of the statement *15 Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it* could signify that adequate preparation for the class may decrease language anxiety. This differs from extreme language anxiety cases described by Price (1991). Another interpretation of this result could be that the subjects in general do not consider themselves very anxious.

The FLCAS results also demonstrate that the subjects are not afraid that the teacher is going to correct every mistake they make (only 2% of the respondents support statement 16).[[13]](#footnote-13) This could suggest that the subjects have no noteworthy experience of harsh error correction or that they expect to be corrected by the teacher in their foreign language class. They might even hold a belief that they will not learn the language unless the instructor corrects every mistake they make.

### FLCAS 2 – POST-TEST RESULTS

The main purpose of the FLCAS post-test was to find out whether the anxiety level of the subjects decreased over the semester owing to the teacher’s effort to reduce student apprehension. The internal-consistency reliability estimate for the Likert scale of the post-test was verified by means of Cronbach’s alpha. The scale was found reliable with the score of 0.937. In other words, the questions used in the survey were about 93 percent reliable and about 7 percent unreliable. The results aimed at answering the research question Q2: Does student language anxiety decrease as a result of a positive, supportive, stress-free classroom atmosphere created by the teacher?

The overall, average result of the FLCAS post-test was 2.19, which means that the figure had gone down negligibly, i.e. by 0.04. In order to elaborate on the data statistically, a paired-samples t-test was employed, which is the standard procedure whenever the researcher is dealing with two groups consisting of either the same cases, or cases that have been matched on key variables (Steele *et al*., 2012: 82). The t-test for paired samples further confirmed the fact that there was no statistical difference between the FLCAS pre-test (*M1*=70.9032, *SD1*=12.95) and post-test: (*M2*=68.45, *SD2*=15.21),conditions: *t*(30)=1.05, *p*=0.303) (see table 4.3).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TESTS OF NORMALITY | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOVa | | | | | | | | SHAPIRO-WILK | | | | | | |
|  | STATISTIC | | DF | | SIG. | | | STATISTIC | | | | DF | | SIG. |
| SCORE | .095 | | 31 | | .200\* | | | .966 | | | | 31 | | .423 |
| a Lilliefors Significance Correction | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| \*This is a lower bound of the true significance | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PAIRED SAMPLES TEST 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PAIRED DIFFERENCES | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | *M* | | | *SD* | | STD. ERROR *M* | | 95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL OF THE DIFFERENCE | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | | | | LOWER | | | UPPER |
| PAIR1 | TEST1-TEST2 | | | 2.45161 | | | 13.03288 | | 2.34077 | | -2.32889 | | | 7.23211 |
| PAIRED SAMPLES TEST | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | T | | | | DF | | | SIG. (2-TAILED) | |
| PAIR1 | | TEST1-TEST2 | | | | 1.047 | | | | 30 | | | .303 | |

TABLE 4.3 Paired-Samples Test 1

One might conclude that the instructor’s effort to teach in the manner that is as little stress-provoking as possible did not give expected benefits. Another conclusion could be that further education learners are generally not very anxious to start with, owing to the fact that studying a foreign language is their own choice. Therefore, it is not surprising if an initial low average result only slightly drops. This result is in line with a recent study by Jin *et al*. (2015). In their research, anxiety in English did not change in time. The researchers concluded that either language anxiety is stable in a foreign language that has been studied for a long time or it does not change in time.

The FLCAS post-test average result, however, is not consistent with the results of other instruments used in the study. Both student journals and the teacher’s observation log indicated that after several months of instruction the participants were a lot less anxious and willing to talk than at the beginning.

Although the average FLCAS post-test did not yield an expected result, the number of very anxious students (*M*=2.5 or above) has fallen considerably from 9 subjects in FLCAS pre-test to 4 in FLCAS post-test (see Figure 4.1).

FIGURE 4.1 The Difference between the FLCAS Pre-Test and Post-Test *M* for the Most Anxious Subjects

FIGURE 4.2 The Decrease in Anxiety According to the FLCAS Pre-Test and Post-Test M for 8 Most Anxious Subjects Excluding Malwina

The t-test for paired samples further confirmed the fact that there was a statistical difference between the FLCAS pre-test (*M1*=86.67, *SD1*=6.28) and post-test: (*M2*=79.33, *SD2*=9.26), conditions: *t*(8)=1.53, *p*=0.19 (see Table 4.4). This was, however, after removing Malwina from the sample (see Figure 4.2). Unlike any other subjects’, Malwina’s anxiety dramatically increased according to the FLCAS pre-test and post-test results, from *M*=2.87 to *M*=3.59. Malwina seemed to be highly self-conscious and emotionally unstable with tendencies to overreact largely due to being an adolescent at the age of fourteen. Since I did not observe any negative changes in her behaviour over the course of the study, I concluded that choosing the questionnaire answers indicating extreme anxiety was done on purpose to make the point and to attract my attention to her. Another observation is that she was one of the weakest students right from the beginning of the course and she may have preferred to attribute lower academic results to anxiety.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PAIRED SAMPLES TEST | | | | | | | | |
|  | | PAIRED DIFFERENCES | | | | | | |
|  | | *M* | | *SD* | | | STD. ERROR *M* | |
| Pair1 Group 1-Group2 | | 7.33333 | | 7.54983 | | | 2.51661 | |
| PAIRED SAMPLES TEST 2 | | | | | | | | |
|  | PAIRED DIFFERENCES | | | | T | DF | | SIG. (2-TAILED) |
|  | 95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL OF THE DIFFERENCE | | | |  |  | |  |
|  | Lower | | Upper | |  |  | |  |
| Pair1 Group1-Group2 | 1.53002 | | 13.13665 | | 2.914 | 8 | | .019 |

TABLE 4.4 Paired-Samples Test 2

This means that while it may not be possible to reduce every student’s apprehension, a large proportion of learners can obviously benefit from the instruction that is not anxiety-provoking. An interesting observation is that two subjects’ (Malwina’s and Imogen’s) anxiety level rose over the period between the FLCAS and its post-test. While in Malwina’s case journal entries confirm the result, in Imogen’s case they are not consistent. According to both qualitative and quantitative research, Malwina is the only student whose anxiety level had risen. Nevertheless, the instructor observed that soon after the post-test and the last journal were administered, almost half-way through the school year, Malwina began to volunteer to answer the instructor’s questions. The explanation could be that the teacher finally succeeded in rapport and trust building between herself and Malwina.

To conclude so far, despite the seemingly disappointing average result of the FLCAS post-test, teaching in a stress-reducing manner together with rapport building and creating a pleasant, supportive atmosphere, has a positive effect on students’ language anxiety level. The FLCAS was not the only instrument employed to investigate fluctuations in student language anxiety. The results of the qualitative study presented in Chapter 5 demonstrate a clear drop in the subjects’ FLCA.

### LISTENING, READING AND WRITING ANXIETY SCALE RESULTS

The data obtained using this tool provided the answer to the research question 10: Is speaking anxiety the most significant anxiety type, or are the students equally affected by anxiety related to listening, reading or writing? The reliability of the test was verified by means of Cronbach’s alpha. Thus, the internal-consistency reliability estimate for the Likert scale was found to be 0.819 for the score for the listening section, 0.773 for the score for the reading section, and 0.851 for the score for the writing section. In other words, the questions used in the survey were about 77 to 85 percent reliable and about 23 to 15 percent unreliable. The results of the LISTENING, READING AND WRITING ANXIETY SCALE were interpreted in the same way as FLCAS results, i.e. 1 very relaxed, 2-quite relaxed, 3 - quite anxious, 4 - very anxious. Consequently, the author assumed that an anxious student is represented by *M*= 2.5 or above. Almost a third of the respondents (32%) achieved such a score. This is consistent with Horwitz’s results (2013). The most anxious student’s score was 2.97, while the least anxious one’s was 1.40. The average result for the total number of subjects was 2.28, which means that the subjects on average are not seriously affected by listening, reading or writing anxiety. This result is consistent with the one obtained by means of the FLCAS. The instrument demonstrated that there were no greater differences between listening, reading and writing anxiety levels, with *M*=2.3; 2.27; and 2.25, respectively. Even though the mean for listening was the highest, the researcher expected the difference to be much bigger. According to the subjects’ written narratives, listening anxiety has been the second most frequently reported anxiety, after speaking anxiety (see section 5.2.1.). This has been further supported by a statistical correlation found between the level of general anxiety measured by FLCAS and listening anxiety measured by the listening section of LRWAS (see Table 4.5) In contrast, no statistically significant correlation was found between FLCAS pre-test and reading or writing.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| VARIABLES ENTERED/REMOVEDa | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MODEL | | | | | | | | | VARIABLES ENTERED | | | | | | | VARIABLES REMOVED | | | | | | METHOD | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | | | | | | Listening | | | | | | |  | | | | | | Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .051). | | | | | | | | | |
| a Dependent Variable: FLCAS 1 (pre-test) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| b EXCLUDED VARIABLES | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MODEL | | | | BETA IN | | | | | T | | | SIG. | | | PARTIAL CORRELATION | | | | | | | COLLINEARITY STATISTICS | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | |  | | | | |  | | |  | | |  | | | | | | | TOLERANCE | | | | VIF | | | MINIMUM TOLERANCE | | |
| 1WRITING | | | | .012a | | | | | .073 | | | .942 | | | .014 | | | | | | | .989 | | | | 1.011 | | | .989 | | |
| READING | | | | -.235a | | | | | -.854 | | | .401 | | | -.165 | | | | | | | .357 | | | | 2.799 | | | .357 | | |
| a Predictors in the Model: (Constant), listening | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| b Dependent Variable: FLCAS 1 (pre-test) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MODEL | | | | | | | | | | | SUM OF SQUARES | | | | DF | | | | | | MEAN SQUARE | | | | | | F | | | | SIG. |
| 1 | | | | | | | Regression | | | | 1403.428 | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1403.428 | | | | | | 10.464 | | | |  |
|  | | | | | | | Residual | | | | 3621.330 | | | | 27 | | | | | | 134.123 | | | | | |  | | | |  |
|  | | | | | | | Total | | | | 5024.759 | | | | 28 | | | | | |  | | | | | |  | | | |  |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), listening | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. Dependent Variable: FLCAS 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MODEL SUMMARY | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MODEL | | R | | | | R SQUARE | | | | ADJUSTED  R SQUARE | | | | STD. ERROR OF THE ESTIMATE | | | CHANGE STATISTICS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | |  | | | |  | | | |  | | | |  | | | R SQUARE CHANGE | | | F CHANGE | | | | DF1 | | | DF2 | | | SIG. F CHANGE | |
| 1 | | .528a | | | | .279 | | | | .253 | | | | 11.58116 | | | .279 | | | 10.464 | | | | 1 | | | 27 | | |  | |
| MODEL SUMMARY | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MODEL | | | R | | R SQUARE | | | ADJUSTED  R SQUARE | | | | | STD. ERROR OF THE ESTIMATE | | CHANGE STATISTICS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | |  | |  | | |  | | | | |  | | R SQUARE CHANGE | | | | F CHANGE | | | | DF1 | | DF2 | | | SIG. F CHANGE | | | |
| 1 | | | .528a | | .279 | | | .253 | | | | | 11.58116 | | .279 | | | | 10.464 | | | | 1 | | 27 | | |  | | | |
| COEFFICIENTSa | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MODEL | | | | | UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS | | | | | | | | STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS | | T | | | SIG. | | | | | 95.0% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL FOR B | | | | | COLLINEARITY STATISTICS | | | |
|  |  | | | | B | | | STD. ERROR | | | | | BETA | |  | | |  | | | | | LOWER BOUND | | UPPER BOUND | | | TOLERANCE | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | | | | 36.938 | | | 10.685 | | | | |  | | 3.457 | | | .002 | | | | | 15.015 | | 58.861 | | |  | | | |
|  | listening | | | | 1.476 | | | .456 | | | | | .528 | | 3.235 | | | .003 | | | | | .540 | | 2.413 | | | 1.000 | | | |
| a DEPENDENT VARIABLE FLCAS 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

TABLE 4.5 Correlation Between the Level of General Anxiety (FLCAS) and Listening Anxiety (LRWAS)

The percentage of students with the mean of over 2.5 is 32%, which is 5% higher than the result obtained with the FLCAS. Nevertheless, some of the subjects with a high FLCAS average score are different from those with a high average score for LRWAS. Since most of the FLCAS items are related to speaking, this result could suggest that it is possible to be affected by speaking anxiety but not by listening, reading or writing anxiety and vice versa.

Only two out of thirty statements in the scale had the mean of 2.5 or above: statement 9 in the Listening Anxiety section: *When a person speaks English very fast, I worry that I might not understand all of it* (2.87) and statement 1 in the Reading section: *It bothers me to encounter words I can’t pronounce while reading in English* (2.5).However, twenty-five out of thirty statements were supported by at least 30% of the respondents. This means that almost a third of the subjects experience language anxiety related to listening, reading and writing. The above mentioned statement related to anxiety perceived when trying to understand fast speech was endorsed by 77% of the sample. This suggests that the students would benefit from more exposure to authentic listening materials. Initially, the tasks could be relatively easier to provide the students with the feeling of success, which is likely to reduce anxiety by increasing student self-esteem (see section 1.4.).

The statement: *It bothers me to encounter words I can’t pronounce while reading in English* was supported by 52% of the respondents. This was quite surprising, particularly since reading is generally considered to be less anxiety-provoking than other skills (see section 3.6.4.). Nevertheless, as this aspect of reading has been demonstrated to be stress-provoking, it seems crucial during the pre-reading lesson stage to pre-teach vocabulary and practise its pronunciation at the same time. Moreover, it appears to be a good idea to remind students to use computer or mobile phone dictionaries to check the pronunciation of the new words they encounter when reading at home.

### THE BALLI RESULTS

As the BALLI is divided into five parts, each representing a different aspect of language learning, the results will be presented in five sections: The difficulty of language learning, Foreign language aptitude, The nature of language learning, Learning and communication strategies, Motivation and expectations. Apart from several items which were accompanied by their own, specific instructions, the respondents marked the beliefs in the following way: 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=neither agree nor disagree; 4=disagree; 5=strongly disagree. The reliability of the questionnaire was verified by means of Cronbach’s alpha. Thus, the internal-consistency reliability estimate for the Likert scale was 0.766. In other words, the inventory items are about 76 percent reliable and 24 percent unreliable. For the purpose of clarity in the subsequent data analysis, it has been decided that the mean between 1 and 2.5 signify that the subjects agree with a given statement, while the mean between 3.5 and 5 signify that the respondents do not agree with it.

THE DIFFICULTY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

Table 4.6. reflects the subjects’ responses to BALLI questions concerning the difficulty of language learning.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **THE BALLI ITEM** | ***M*** | ***SD*** |
| 1 Some languages are easier to learn than others. | 1.79 | 0.86 |
| 2 The language I am trying to learn is: 1) a very difficult language, 2) a difficult language, 3) a language of medium difficulty, 4) an easy language, 5) a very easy language | 3 | 0.65 |
| 3 I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well. | 2.14 | 0.89 |
| 4 If someone spent one hour a day learning this language, how long would it take him/her to become fluent? 1) less than a year, 2) 1-2 years, 3) 3-5 years, 4) 5-10 years, 5) you can’t learn a language in one hour a day. | 2.66 | 0.73 |
| 5 It is easier to speak than to understand a foreign language. | 2.92 | 1.39 |
| 6 It is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it. | 2.48 | 1.06 |

TABLE 4.6 The Difficulty of Language Learning

The results suggest that the subjects believe that some languages are easier than others and they regard English as a language of medium difficulty. In addition, they believe that they will ultimately speak this language very well. Furthermore, they think that if someone spent one hour a day learning English, it would take him/her approximately three years to become fluent. The subjects are also confident that they will ultimately learn to speak this language very well. They do not generally have an opinion whether it is easier to speak than to understand a foreign language. More than half of the subjects (62%) agree or strongly agree that it is easier to read and write in English than to speak and understand it.

The results do not demonstrate any preconceptions that could hinder the subjects’ English language acquisition. Even though the students believe that some languages are easier to learn than others, they have a neutral attitude towards English, considering it neither difficult nor easy. The subjects’ estimated time to become fluent in English is realistic, which means that they are not likely to get frustrated about becoming fluent in a very short time. Furthermore, the results show a high degree of optimism about the subjects’ success in English language acquisition, which can help them deal with any difficulties they may encounter (see section 2.2.2. on emotions). Perhaps the belief that learning to speak and understand is more difficult than to read and write could have an influence on the subjects’ speaking and listening anxiety. In general, however, the subjects’ beliefs about the difficulty of language learning should put them in a strong position as English learners.

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE APTITUDE**

The subjects’ responses to BALLI questions concerning foreign language aptitude are presented in Table 4.7.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **THE BALLI ITEM** | ***M*** | ***SD*** |
| 7 It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. | 1.71 | 1.39 |
| 8 Some people are born with a special ability which helps them to learn a foreign language. | 2.06 | 1.10 |
| 9 It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one. | 2.48 | 1.12 |
| 10 I have foreign language aptitude. | 3.15 | 1.05 |
| 11 Women are better than men at learning foreign languages. | 3.52 | 0.91 |
| 12 People who are good at maths and science are not good at learning foreign languages. | 3.41 | 0.98 |
| 13 People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent. | 2.83 | 1.00 |
| 14 Poles are good at learning foreign languages. | 2.93 | 0.80 |
| 15 Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language. | 2.29 | 1.12 |

TABLE 4.7 Foreign Language Aptitude

The subjects agree with a common sense belief that it is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. They also believe that some people are born with a foreign language aptitude. More than a half (59%) of the subjects think that it is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one. Even though on average the subjects neither agree nor disagree with the statement: *I have foreign language aptitude,* as many as 41% of them believe that they do not have a foreign language aptitude. Slightly over half of the subjects (55%) disagree with the statement that women are better than men at learning foreign languages. The subjects have no opinion whether people who are good at maths and science are not good at learning foreign languages, whether people who speak more than one language well are very intelligent or whether Poles are good at learning foreign languages. Nevertheless, they agree with the statement that everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.

As the subjects believe that some people are born with a special ability which helps them to learn a foreign language, the fact that 41% of them think that they do not possess such an ability could suggest that they do not expect to do well in their English study. This, however, is not consistent with the above mentioned response to item 3, which demonstrates the subjects’ faith in their success. In the light of the subjects’ another belief that everyone can learn to speak a foreign language, it could be concluded that the informants think that lack of language aptitude can be overridden by other factors such as motivation or effort. This has been pointed out frequently in the students’ narratives (see section 5.1.). Moreover, 59% of the subjects hold the belief that it is easier for someone who speaks a foreign language to learn another one. Since most of them have stated that they have had experience of studying other foreign languages, they are likely to consider themselves to be in a favourable position as language learners.

THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

The subjects’ responses to BALLI items concerning the nature of language learning are presented in Table 4.8.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **THE BALLI ITEM** | ***M*** | ***SD*** |
| 16 It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language. | 2.76 | 0.83 |
| 17 It is better to learn the foreign language in the foreign country. | 1.93 | 1.09 |
| 18 Learning the foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words. | 2.14 | 0.88 |
| 19 Learning the foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules. | 2.67 | 0.90 |
| 20 Learning the foreign language is different from learning other school subjects. | 2.67 | 1.11 |
| 21 Learning the foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English. | 2.93 | 0.90 |

TABLE 4.8 The Nature of Language Learning

The subjects on average neither agree nor disagree with the following statements: *16 It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language, 19 Learning the foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules, 20 Learning the foreign language is different from learning other school subjects or 21 Learning the foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English.* Nevertheless, they believe that it is better to learn the foreign language in the foreign country and that learning the foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new words.

Both beliefs that the subjects hold about the nature of language learning do not seem likely to affect their foreign language acquisition. Even if they consider studying L2 in a L2 speaking country more effective, it does not stop them from making an effort and having faith in success when studying in their home countries or another country, which is not a L2 speaking country (in the case of the Chinese, Ukrainian and Moldovan subjects). Similarly, focusing on vocabulary learning, rather than grammar or translation, is not likely to hinder the subjects’ foreign language acquisition. The reason for the beliefs about the importance of vocabulary may be the result of the Lexical Approach (Lewis, 1993; 1997; 2000), which has been quite influential during the last two decades and is reflected in many teaching materials. Possibly the instructor’s teaching style has also affected this belief to an extent.

As far as the importance of learning grammar rules in foreign language acquisition is concerned, the mean equalled 2.67, with the standard deviation at 0.90 and both the median and the mode at 2. This suggests that a large number of the respondents may be preoccupied with memorising grammar rules and perhaps not focusing enough on more communicative aspects of language learning. Paying too much attention to grammar might also result in grammar anxiety, which affects some of the subjects quite strongly (as the written narratives demonstrate[[14]](#footnote-14)).

LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

The subjects’ responses to the items concerning learning and communication strategies are presented below, in Table 4.9.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **THE BALLI ITEM** | ***M*** | ***SD*** |
| 22 It is important to repeat and practise a lot. | 1.55 | 0.87 |
| 23 It is important to practise in the language laboratory. | 2.79 | 1.23 |
| 24 It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent. | 2.79 | 0.98 |
| 25 You shouldn’t say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly. | 3.76 | 1.09 |
| 26 If I heard someone speaking the language I am trying to learn, I would go up to them so that I could practise speaking the language. | 2.38 | 0.78 |
| 27 It’s o.k. to guess if you don’t know a word in the foreign language. | 2.34 | 1.23 |
| 28 I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people. | 2.59 | 1.01 |
| 29 If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning it will be hard to get rid of them later on. | 2.72 | 1.16 |

TABLE 4.9 Learning and Communication Strategies

The subjects believe that it is important to repeat and practise a lot. They also agree with the statement: *26 If I heard someone speaking the language I am trying to learn, I would go up to them so that I could practise speaking the language.* In addition, the students think that it is a good idea to guess if one does not know a word in the foreign language. The respondents have no opinion about whether it is important to practise in the language laboratory, to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent or whether it will be hard to get rid of one’s mistakes if one is allowed to make mistakes in the beginning. Almost half of the participants (45%) admit to feeling self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people.

The results in this section of the BALLI demonstrate that the subjects are aware of some beneficial learning and communication strategies. For example, almost all of the students (93%) support the statement that it is important to repeat and practise a lot, which is likely to have a positive effect on their L2 acquisition. Similarly, the students endorse the item: *27 It’s o.k. to guess if you don’t know a word in the foreign language*, which should have a positive effect on their communication skills. The majority of the subjects (66%) disagree with the statement that one should not say anything in the foreign language until one can say it correctly, which means that on the whole the subjects are not afraid to make mistakes while they are speaking. This should have a positive effect on the students’ WTC as well as language anxiety.

On the other hand, almost half of the subjects (45%) support the statement: *29 If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning it will be hard to get rid of them later on.* This suggests that the subjects are not afraid to make mistakes when speaking English and at the same time a large proportion of them expect to be corrected by the teacher. It seems likely that students do not mind being corrected if they believe strongly that it prevents the fossilisation of errors. As Pawlak (2014: 77-78) states, student beliefs about the utility of corrective feedback might have impact on learners’ behaviours. In light of the above, it appears surprising that nearly half of the subjects feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people. A possible explanation could be found in the written narratives (section 5.2.1.). Many subjects state in them that they are willing to continue with some stressful activities if they believe in their usefulness. The proportion of self-conscious students is substantial, which would mean that almost half of the subjects experience language anxiety when speaking in front of their peers.

Another interesting result is the students’ s support of the statement *26 If I heard someone speaking the language I am trying to learn, I would go up to them so that I could practise speaking the language* (66%). The result seems unexpected due to the fact that 48 % of the respondents either agree or strongly agree with the FLCAS items *28 I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language (R)* (*M*=2.67, *Mdn*=3, *SD*=0.83) and *13 I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers (R) (M*= 2.69, *Mdn*=2.5, *SD*=0.93). It seems reasonable to explain this inconsistence with the above mentioned argument. The subjects may be willing to communicate with native speakers despite feeling apprehensive because they consider it useful for improving their English.

The only statements in this section that the subjects were neutral about were those related to pronunciation, i.e. *23 It is important to practise in the language laboratory* and *24 It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent.* This suggests that acquiring excellent pronunciation is not the subjects’ priority. This supports the present author’s argument (section 3.6.2. Pronunciation Anxiety) that having native-like accents is less desirable at lower proficiency levels. Another interpretation of the result that the subjects neither agree nor disagree that it is important to practise in a language laboratory is that this equipment is very rarely used in foreign language class these days and the students simply do not know how useful it might be.

MOTIVATION AND EXPECTATIONS

Responses to the items related to motivation and expectations are presented in Table 4.10 below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **THE BALLI ITEM** | ***M*** | ***SD*** |
| 30 If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it. | 2.6 | 1.30 |
| 31 If I learn to speak this language very well, it will help me get a good job. | 1.8 | 1.11 |
| 32 Poles[[15]](#footnote-15) think that it is important to speak a foreign language. | 2.32 | 0.92 |
| 33 I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better. | 2.6 | 1.02 |

TABLE 4.10 Motivation and Expectations

The results suggest that the subjects are not sure whether they will have many opportunities to speak English in the future; however, most of them (83%) believe that if they learn to speak this language, it will help them get a good job. The subjects also endorse the statement *32 Poles think that it is important to speak a foreign language.* The students are neutral about the statement *33 I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better.*

Only 53% of the subjects expect to have many opportunities to use the L2. This means that the informants do not foresee many practical applications for the language they are studying. Therefore, the subjects are not strongly motivated by the prospect of using L2 in the future. However, the subjects’ motivation is likely to be boosted by their strong belief that English will help them get a good job (86% of the subjects hold this belief). The fact that the students support the statement *Poles think that it is important to speak a foreign language* suggests that the respondents consider speaking a foreign language a desirable skill in Poland. This should also have a positive influence on their motivation.

The endorsement of the statement: *I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better* would mean that the subjects have integrative motivation. On the other hand, the fact that about half of the subjects (53%) support this statement means that the level of their integrative motivation is only moderate. It is not as low, however, as one could expect, considering that English is an international language and one does not necessarily study it in order to communicate with its speakers. The 53% support of this statement could be caused by the fact that emigration to the English speaking countries is a common phenomenon in Poland at the moment.

### RESULTS OF AN INVENTORY ASSESSING ANXIETY LEVEL GENERATED BY TYPICAL LANGUAGE CLASS ACTIVITIES

The purpose of this instrument was to find the answers to the following research questions:

Q4: Which aspects of FL class do students perceive as the most and the least stressful?

Q5: Which of the typical classroom/homework activities create the most apprehension among students?

Q6: Is speaking anxiety the most significant anxiety type, or are the students equally affected by anxiety related to listening, reading or writing?

The reliability of the inventory was verified by means of Cronbach’s alpha. Thus, the internal-consistency reliability estimate for the Likert scale was 0.816. In other words, the inventory items are about 81.5 percent reliable and 18.5 percent unreliable. The results will be presented in two tables, putting the activities in order from the most to the least stress-provoking. In Table 4.11 the activities have been arranged according to the mean. On the other hand, Table 4.12 has been based on the percentage of students that consider each activity quite or very stressful. The order of activities in both tables is not identical.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITY** | ***M*** | ***SD*** |
| 1 oral exams | 2.97 | 0.50 |
| 2 speaking in front of other students | 2.55 | 0.51 |
| 3 written tests | 2.32 | 0.83 |
| 4 speaking in pairs or groups | 2 | 0.95 |
| 5 grammar exercises | 1.84 | 0.68 |
| 6 listening tasks | 1.77 | 0.89 |
| 7 writing tasks | 1.61 | 0.96 |
| 8 reading tasks | 1.51 | 0.72 |
| 9 homework | 1.26 | 0.68 |
| 10 revising material at home | 1.23 | 0.90 |

TABLE 4.11 Typical Classroom Activities Presented in Order of Anxiety They Cause, Based on the Mean

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 3 written tests | 42% |
| 4 listening tasks | 23% |
| 5 grammar exercises | 19% |
| 6 speaking in pairs or groups | 16% |
| 7 writing tasks | 13% |
| 8 reading tasks | 10% |
| 9/10 homework | 3% |
| 9/10 revising material at home | 3% |

TABLE 4.12 Typical Classroom Activities Presented in Order of Anxiety They Cause, Based on the Percentage of Students that Consider Them Quite Stressful or Very Stressful

The results show that the most anxiety-provoking aspect of foreign language learning are oral exams, endorsed by the majority of the subjects (74%). This is highly understandable, because fear of oral exams or performance anxiety includes a combination of test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension, i.e. the three main components of language anxiety (Horwitz, 1986). The second most stressful foreign language classroom activity is speaking in front of other students, supported by more than half of the respondents (55%). Both results are related to speaking, which might suggest that speaking causes more anxiety than any other activities.

This does not refer, however, to speaking in pairs or groups, which causes apprehension only among 16% of the subjects. Even though this figure cannot be ignored, it is much lower than the percentage of students affected by anxiety caused by speaking in front of their peers. The results suggest an obvious conclusion that instructors can decrease student anxiety dramatically by replacing speaking in front of other students with speaking in pairs and groups. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that the subjects have been exposed to pair or group discussion since the beginning of the course. Consequently, they are likely to regard this technique as a natural part of language learning. The results might differ for students taught in a more teacher-centred manner.

Even though relatively few students have been found to suffer from anxiety caused by speaking in pairs or groups, the percentage of students affected by writing or reading anxiety is even lower (respectively, 13 and 10%). This is consistent with Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert’s (1999) claim that language anxiety is above all related to speaking and listening. The aspects of foreign language learning that according to the subjects do not generate apprehension are revising material at home and homework.

Despite the fact that speaking has been proved the most anxiety-provoking ingredient of L2 learning, a very high proportion of the subjects (42%) admitted to being affected by apprehension resulting from written tests. Even though writing tests do not seem to generate as much anxiety as oral exams, they are one of the major anxiety sources affecting foreign language learners. The percentage of the subjects who declare anxiety related to written tests seems relatively high, considering the fact that the researcher/instructor tried to reduce this type of anxiety by making it clear what would be included in the test, providing many opportunities for revision, letting the students retake the test in the case of failure and providing, creating a friendly atmosphere during the test with soft music in the background, not giving the time limit.

The results also show that listening activities are the third most anxiety-provoking aspect of foreign language learning after speaking in front of other students and testing. This came as no surprise, as researchers in foreign language anxiety agree that listening is the second most stressful skill. The research into anxiety related to grammar has been scarce so far. The results of this survey demonstrate that 19% of the subjects find grammar exercises quite or very anxiety-provoking. This is a considerable figure, which perhaps needs to be investigated in further research. The fact that anxiety related to grammar is relatively high may be due to the popularity of the communicative approach and the fact that grammar is given less priority.

### STYLE ANALYSIS SURVEY RESULTS

The Style Analysis Survey results will be presented in five different sections. Each of them is related to a different aspect of learning. For each part of the survey several subjects have not demonstrated one particular preferred learning style, which means that they can learn equally well no matter which of the styles they follow. Therefore the sum of the percentages for each style in every part will be higher than 100%. In each part the students’ preferred learning styles will be compared to the instructor’s preferred teaching style.

PART A: HOW STUDENTS USE THEIR PHYSICAL SENSES FOR STUDY AND WORK (VISUAL, AUDITORY, OR HANDS-ON LEARNING AND WORKING STYLE)

Most of the respondents (81%) have turned out to be visual learners, while 56% of the subjects prefer auditory learning style. 44% of the respondents are hands-on learners. The instructor’s preferred teaching style is auditory. This is an area for possible clashes between the teacher’s and the students’ styles. Even though the instructor might naturally choose listening and speaking activities, the majority of the learners may benefit from more reading, video and writing activities as well as the whiteboard or pictures used more frequently. Since the interactive whiteboard has now become a significant part of instruction, the lessons cater more for visual and kinaesthetic learning styles despite the teacher’s natural preference. Because a large part of the subjects are hands-on learners, there could be more project work, active games and moving around the classroom included in the lessons.

PART B: HOW STUDENTS DEAL WITH OTHER PEOPLE (EXTROVERTED OR INTROVERTED LEARNING AND WORKING STYLE)

The results demonstrate that there are more extroverts (63%) than introverts (52%) among the respondents.[[16]](#footnote-16) 33% of the subjects are able to learn easily alone as well as with others. The teacher is extrovert, which corresponds with the prevailing part of the sample. Nevertheless, 37% of introvert learners must not be overlooked. Allowances must be made for students who do not mix well with others and prefer learning independently. Since introvert students normally enjoy working with one person they know well (Oxford, 1999: 233), they could be allowed to stick to such a person for pair work and not be forced to work with other students if they find it uncomfortable.

PART C: HOW STUDENTS HANDLE POSSIBILITIES (INTUITIVE-RANDOM OR CONCRETE-SEQUENTIAL LEARNING AND WORKING STYLE)

The majority of the respondents (74%)[[17]](#footnote-17) represent an intuitive-random learning stylFe, which is in line with the instructor’s teaching style. Intuitive-random people take pleasure in abstract thinking and do not enjoy step-by-step instruction (Oxford, 1999: 234). 22% of the students are flexible to learn in either way. Slightly over a quarter of the subjects (26%) prefer a concrete-sequential style, which means that they want to know where they are going in their learning at every moment of their instruction (Oxford, 1999: 234). Catering for these students may be a challenge for the teacher, as it is against her nature. Nevertheless, it is important for her to realise that some of the subjects prefer to have a clear plan and to stick to it.

PART D: HOW STUDENTS APPROACH TASKS (CLOSURE-ORIENTED OR OPEN LEARNING AND WORKING STYLE)

This section is yet another point of concern, since half of the subject’s preferred learning style does not coincide with the instructor’s teaching style. While 50% of the subjects are likely to feel comfortable being taught in an open style, another half demonstrate a closure-oriented way of learning. This means that in order to meet all of the student’s needs, the instructor should keep a balance between discovery learning and relatively little structure (which are natural to the teacher), and rules, neatness, rapid decisions and planning (which would require more effort from the instructor).

# QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

As stated by Creswell (2009: 173),

Qualitative procedures demonstrate a different approach to scholarly inquiry than methods of quantitative research. Qualitative inquiry employs different philosophical assumptions; strategies of inquiry; and methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Although the processes are similar, qualitative procedures rely on text and image data, have unique steps in data analysis, and draw on diverse steps of strategies of inquiry.

It is with these ideas in mind that the present author approached her qualitative data analysis for the purpose of this research project. Thus, qualitative data was obtained by means of a ‘self’ questionnaire and student journals. This chapter is divided into two subchapters, each representing one of the two instruments used for qualitative data collection. ‘Self’ questionnaire data analysis has not been subdivided as the data were collected on one occasion, using a single questionnaire. Student journals, in contrast, were collated over a period of several months, using seven different journals. Ample data were gathered and a number of various topics related to different aspects of language anxiety were identified. Thus, the subchapter analysing the written narratives has been divided into several sections, related to each of the topics that have arisen.

## ‘SELF’ QUESTIONNAIRE

The main aim of ‘self’ questionnaire was to obtain the answer to the research question Q9: What is the significance of students’ self system and “integrativeness”? Apart from anxiety, I[[18]](#footnote-18) intended to get insights into the subjects’ “ideal selves”, “ought to selves” and “feared selves” (Dörnyei, 2005) as this would reveal not only student anxiety but also motivation, which could override apprehensive feelings. Besides, student attitudes towards the L2 culture were sampled, as another factor that could offset student negative feelings.

The first part of the ‘self’ questionnaire focussed on the subjects’ reasons for learning English. Most of the students (93%) declared that they were studying this language in order to be able to communicate with foreigners both abroad and in their country. Another strong reason, supported by 76% of the subjects, was to find a better job or to get promoted. A third of the subjects admitted to be learning English so that they could go abroad. The results demonstrate the students’ strong extrinsic motivation. Other reasons of extrinsic nature given by the subjects include:

*Svetlana: It will be useful at university.[[19]](#footnote-19)*

*Deng: Study university subject.*

*Róża: For job*

Even though intrinsic motivation did not appear to be as common among the subjects as extrinsic, a number of students made comments that would signify its relevance:

*Angelika: Not to be a backward dunce.[[20]](#footnote-20)*

*Kamelia: For my own satisfaction.[[21]](#footnote-21)*

*Dąbrówka: To help family members, e.g. children with homework/translating something.[[22]](#footnote-22)*

*Krzesimir: To read books or watch films in the original version as well as to understand the lyrics of songs in English.[[23]](#footnote-23)*

*Róża: For fun; I think that is very important nowadays.*

The next part of the ‘self’ questionnaire was supposed to reveal the subjects’ ‘ought to’ selves. They were instructed to specify whether the decision to attend an English course was their own or whether someone else had decided for them. The majority of the subjects (83%) said that they decided themselves to study this language. 17% of the participants admitted that their parents had decided for them. There was also one subject who said that he decision about his studying English was his employer’s. The results suggest that ‘ought to selves’ do not play a very significant role for the subjects, but are still relevant, particularly for the youngest group of learners who are under eighteen years old and their parents pay for the classes.

The subjects who did not take the decision to study English themselves were asked to say what level of English they were supposed to achieve. Two of the subjects were expected to achieve *a “high”* or *“advanced”* level by their parents. Two others did not know their parents’ expectations. The student who was sent to attend a course by his employer said that he was expected to improve his communication skills.

In the next questionnaire item the subjects were asked to describe their ideal vision of themselves as English speakers, which corresponds with the concept of possible and ideal selves. Markus and Ruvolo (1989: 213) (see section 2.3.1.) believe that visualising one’s image of elaborated possible self, achieving their goals may help to transform goals into actions. Dörnyei (2005: 100) put it in a similar way:

The more vivid and elaborate the possible self, the more motivationally effective it is expected to be.

The subjects’ possible selves are mostly elaborate. 72% of the subjects’ desired image is either a perfect command of the language (41%) or speaking the language fluently, naturally, without an effort or anxiety and being able to communicate very well (31%). 18% of the subjects have a slightly less possible self image, i.e. they intend to be able to communicate and speak quite fluently, whereas 10% of the respondents say they do not have an ideal-self image at all.

*Dalia: I guess I would like to communicate in this language and use it expertly, like my mother tongue.[[24]](#footnote-24)*

*Przemysław: I would like to cope well with communicating with others in English, not to feel anxious about speaking in this language and to make fewer mistakes.[[25]](#footnote-25)*

*Angelika: I’d like to be understood by others and to be able to express my thoughts.[[26]](#footnote-26)*

*Krzesimir: My ideal-self: I communicate in English well, I speak fluently and have rich vocabulary. I perfectly understand other speakers as well as all texts written in English. I use English as naturally as Polish.[[27]](#footnote-27)*

Several subjects’ ideal self image was related to successful communication with native speakers of English or other foreigners who speak this language:

*Liliana: I can communicate with foreigners, I can understand what they are saying to me.[[28]](#footnote-28)*

*Jagoda: I want to go abroad and easily speak with people who permanently live in england. [[29]](#footnote-29)*

*Malwina: I imagine going to Britain and speaking to Gordon Ramsey.[[30]](#footnote-30)*

Several subjects mentioned being able to use English for career purposes:

*Dąbrówka: I imagine that I will speak this language fluently. If I find a job for which English language is required, I will be able to write a letter or email.[[31]](#footnote-31)*

*Jaromir: I’d like to be able to communicate with foreigners working at building sites in Poland without any difficulties.[[32]](#footnote-32)*

*Róża: I’d like read texts in English e.g. economics text and a bit speak English with colleagues and friends while the conferences.[[33]](#footnote-33)*

*Klaudiusz: I think in the future I will speak English. I will work with english people.*

A number of students focused on some particular skills, related to their own interests or needs:

*Svetlana: I want to speak fluently, understand others, to read books easily in this language, maybe even use it in public speeches.[[34]](#footnote-34)*

*Deng: I hope my level of English is more higher. For now, I think I should be achieve B2 because I want to understand in university.*

Most of the above quoted descriptions of the participants’ ideal selves indicate a high level of international posture (see section 2.1.) among the subjects, which according to Yashima (2009: 4), may motivate students to study as well as to increase their willingness to communicate:

Those students with a higher level of international posture might generate possible selves (maybe based on experience) speaking with international students, helping foreigners lost on the street, reading English language newspapers. Furthermore, beyond those relatively familiar images, they might envision their ideal selves pursuing an international career, working in a foreign country, or conducting business negotiations in English. These ideal selves require proficiency in English as a necessary component and therefore function as incentives for L2 related actions.

After writing a description of their ideal selves, the subjects were asked whether they thought achieving their desired level of English was realistic or not. The question: *Are you afraid that you will never achieve your desired level of English?* was supposed to reveal the students’ *feared selves.* AsDörnyei (2005: 100) points out, the impact of the motivational effect of the self is stronger “if a positive possible self is offset by a *feared* possible self in the same domain”. The questionnaire results revealed that more than half of the subjects (55%) were not afraid that they would not achieve their desired level of English, whereas 45% of the students were not so optimistic about realising their aspirations.

Many students who believed in the realisation of their ideal selves mentioned such factors as determination, motivation and effort:

*Flora: I think that If I engage fully in my studies, I can achieve what I’d like to. It depends on my will and time.[[35]](#footnote-35)*

*Józefina: I think I will manage to learn this language because I’d really like to.[[36]](#footnote-36)*

*Celestyna: If someone makes enough effort, he or she will achieve it.[[37]](#footnote-37)*

*Dalia: I know I can achieve it thanks to my work and motivation and nothing can prevent it. ☺[[38]](#footnote-38)*

There were subjects who were not worried about achieving their target, because they believed that they had set for themselves realistic objectives:

*Jagoda: I’m not worried about this, because the aim I have set myself is not so difficult to achieve.[[39]](#footnote-39)*

*Angelika: I’m not afraid because I will not learn to speak this language very well anyway.[[40]](#footnote-40)*

Other students who were positive about achieving their desired level, expressed general optimism or trust in myself as their instructor:

*Laurencja: I hope I will achieve the level at which I will communicate well.[[41]](#footnote-41)*

*Jaromir: I’m not worried about that with such a good teacher. ☺[[42]](#footnote-42)*

The students who did not believe in realising their ideal selves often mentioned reasons such as lack of time to study, low foreign language aptitude or insufficient dedication:

*Esmeralda: Of course I worry about this. Sometimes lack of time and the abundance of responsibilities cause that I do not focus on my foreign language studies as much as I’d like to, but I try to reconcile this somehow. [[43]](#footnote-43)*

*Roland: I worry because of lack of determination in pursuing my objective and lack of time.[[44]](#footnote-44)*

*Liliana: I worry that I will not achieve a desired level, because I don’t have enough free time which I could devote to more intensive work at home. [[45]](#footnote-45)*

*Malwina: Because I haven’t got a good memory and I can’t.[[46]](#footnote-46)*

*Narcyz: I’m worried that I will not achieve the level I need because I have a low language aptitude.[[47]](#footnote-47)*

While the subjects’ images of their possible selves are generally quite vivid, the students do not seem very concerned about consequences of not living up to their own expectations. Most of them have faith in achieving the desired competence. In this case, the subjects’ positive possible selves cannot be offset by *feared* possible selves. I would conclude, however, that the subjects are very strongly motivated, which has been demonstrated by their elaborate possible selves images and general optimism about realising them.

The last part of the ‘self’ questionnaire included a question about the students’ attitude toward native speakers of English. The aim of the question was checking the relevance of integrative motivation (see section 1.1.3.) among the subjects, which is part of the research question 9. The results showed that 77% of the subjects declared a positive attitude towards native speakers of English. Considering that many of the subjects may not have met any native speakers of English and the fact that no specific nationality was given, the results seem surprisingly high. The rest of the subjects (23%) declared neither a positive nor a negative attitude. They did not think that nationalities could be positive or negative as a whole and expressed neutral views such as:

*Malwina: Every person is different.[[48]](#footnote-48)*

*Konstanty: I don’t have an opinion. They are normal people, just like us.[[49]](#footnote-49)*

To conclude so far, on the basis of the “self questionnaire”, the subjects demonstrate a very high level of motivation towards L2 attainment, which should help them overcome any negative emotions they may encounter, including anxiety.

## STUDENT JOURNALS

The subjects’ written narratives provided a lot of insights into student anxiety. They helped to identify anxious students, explained the origins of their anxiety and pointed out the most anxiety-provoking aspects of the class. Not only did they provide me with invaluable data, but also demonstrated some apprehension-raising aspects of the class that I had not been aware of. This made me look reflectively at my own teaching and showed some areas for improvement in order to eliminate apprehension that could affect my students’ foreign language acquisition.

### ANXIETY-PROVOKING ACTIVITIES

One of the main aims of the journals was to discover which classroom activities make the subjects most anxious and why and at the same time to answer the research Q5: Which of the typical classroom/homework activities create the most apprehension among students? This research question has already been addressed in section 4.6.5. on the basis of quantitative data. The journals were supposed to verify the data with qualitative findings.

The subjects almost unanimously agree that they feel most apprehensive when they speak in L2, particularly in front of their peers. This is consistent with the results of Horwitz’s research (1991: 29)

Difficulty in speaking in class is probably the most frequently cited concern of the anxious foreign language students seeking help at the LSC.[[50]](#footnote-50)

The subjects in my study mention such reasons as fear of making mistakes, not being perfect, not being able to think of the correct word on the spot (see section 3.6.1. on vocabulary anxiety) or feeling self-conscious.

*Wioletta: I think that speaking is the most stressful, a conversation when everybody is listening.[[51]](#footnote-51)*

*Esmeralda: My stress escalates the moment I have to speak publically in front of the group – it doesn’t matter whether I have known them for one day or three years.[[52]](#footnote-52)*

*Konstanty: The most stressful activity is in my opinion speaking in front of other students. I feel a bit nervous that my speaking may not go as well as I would like to.[[53]](#footnote-53)*

*Klaudiusz: Speaking is the most difficult exercises, because you must speak quickly.*

*Liliana: The activity that I find most stressful is speaking because I can’t speak English. I can’t think in English and this is why I have problems with conversations.[[54]](#footnote-54)*

*Hortensja: Speaking in front of others is a bit stressful. I can feel myself turning red ☺ And this is what I would like to avoid ☺ :P [[55]](#footnote-55)*

*Przemysław: The most anxious activities are speaking exercises, Because I’m afraid of mistakes.*

*Svetlana: The activity that is most stressful for me is speaking. This is because I can’t always figure out straightaway what I want to say, I forget a word and I know that I speak with mistakes.[[56]](#footnote-56)*

*Narcyz: It often happens when I speak that I am short of words that I really know but I have forgotten this moment. This is when my anxiety rises dramatically and I feel apprehensive about continuing the conversation.[[57]](#footnote-57)*

Apart from a small group of very confident students, the subjects generally perceive anxiety when speaking in front of their peers. Being aware of the fact that speaking in front of peers is anxiety-provoking, I have used this activity only marginally, usually during lead-in or feedback. Judging from the subjects’ reactions in their written narratives, I do not feel that abandoning this activity completely is a good idea. Some of the subjects, like Krzesimir, really enjoy it. Most of the others want to continue with it despite anxiety, as they find the ability to speak in public useful and feel that more practice will overcome their fear. I would be more careful, however, about calling on most anxious students, particularly when they are not expecting it. Once the teacher identifies a student for whom answering a question in front of peers is a painful, terrifying experience, I believe that it is better to avoid calling on them. It will make their lessons more enjoyable and if they speak in pairs or groups, they can still develop fluency. It is possible that such students will gain confidence later on and start contributing when they are ready (see Malwina’s case in Conclusions).

Angelika, one of the subjects, who always preferred to sit on the side, away from other students, admitted to speaking anxiety resulting from communication apprehension:

*Angelika: Speaking makes me feel most anxious because you have to communicate with others. I am quite shy, so I am not good at talking with other students. I think they are from other world and we can’t find anything in common.[[58]](#footnote-58)*

At the beginning of the course I encouraged her to join the others. Nevertheless, I noticed that after she finished pair work or group work, she went back to her seat in the corner, away from others. I decided it was better to respect her need of more distance if it made her feel comfortable. As I found out later from the Style Analysis Survey results, Angelika is a highly introvert student, who prefers to study alone. Despite her preference, Angelika made an effort to speak when put in a pair or group with other students for communication practice.

Many subjects pointed out that they felt most anxious when, after discussing some questions in pairs, they were asked to report in front of other students what their partner had said.

*Dąbrówka: Exercises that I find stressful are those in which we speak in pairs or groups and then we have to say what another person has been talking about. I don’t always understand or remember another person’s speech because I concentrate too much on my own speaking.[[59]](#footnote-59)*

*Kamelia: It’s most stressful for me to summarise what another person has said.[[60]](#footnote-60)*

*Józefina: In my opinion it is most stressful when we first speak in pairs, and later on we have to retell what another person has said.[[61]](#footnote-61)*

I use this activity regularly, believing that it is less stressful to report an answer than to think of one on the spot. Another reason why I ask students to report what the partner said is to encourage listening actively to others and to motivate students to do the task. Teenage students sometimes avoid speaking if they do not have to report the outcome of the discussion. The journals made me realise that this activity generates more anxiety than I thought. Students who are anxious about speaking experience extra apprehension when they try to memorise what their partners have said. I conclude that it might be sensible to use this activity in moderation and perhaps let volunteers report, rather than call on students who would prefer to avoid reporting.

Another speaking activity that several subjects pointed out as anxiety generating is a vocabulary game, during which students have to explain a word for other learners to guess:

*Esmeralda: Vocabulary guessing - we pick a slip of paper with a word on it and have to describe the word and what we associate with it open-class, using our own words. This kind of game makes me feel very anxious because I worry that I may misunderstand/incorrectly define the phrase/word. It may be related to the pressure I feel to explain the word accurately and sometimes I feel so apprehensive that I am short of words and I can’t express myself in a satisfactory way. [[62]](#footnote-62)*

I was not aware that this type of a vocabulary revision game might generate so much anxiety. Before the students are asked to explain words or expressions in front of their peers they get some time during which they can prepare their explanations in groups. They can use their notes, dictionaries or consult the teacher. The reason why I tend to do the activity in a whole class manner is to be able to verify the students’ explanations. Nevertheless, I conclude that it might be a better idea to do this activity in groups, rather than in a whole-class manner and move from group to group to monitor. This way the students would be able to focus on their explanations without feeling self-conscious.

Apart from speaking, the subjects seem to be the most anxious about listening and being tested. As the journals demonstrate, listening seems to be the second most apprehension-raising foreign language skill. This is similar to Horwitz’s (1991) findings that anxiety is mainly related to listening and speaking. Horwitz (1991: 29) describes student difficulties concerning sound discrimination or understanding the content of the teacher’s input in L2 (see subchapter 3.4.).

One male student claims to hear only a loud buzz whenever his teacher speaks the foreign language. Anxious students may also have difficulty grasping the content of a target language message. Many LSC clients claim that they have little or no idea of what the teacher is saying in extended language utterances.

My subjects almost unanimously say in their journals that listening in L2 is not easy and they have difficulties in understanding. Their comments, however, might suggest that they expect to understand absolutely every word and they get frustrated if they do not, which is in line with Voguely’s study (1997) results described in section 3.6.6. of this thesis.

*Róża: I don’t like listening, because it is very different to understand what this English - people are sayed. This activities make me feel most anxious.*

*Svetlana: I feel most anxious when I have video as for me it is hard to understand native speakers. I prefer to read for me it is easyer.*

*Hortensja: Listening makes me feel most anxious, because I find it difficult to understand all the details.[[63]](#footnote-63)*

*Hiacynta: Listening seems the most stressful. It requires a lot of concentration to ‘catch’ important information.[[64]](#footnote-64)*

*Wioletta: Perhaps also listening. I find it difficult sometimes because I don’t always understand what the teacher is saying. [[65]](#footnote-65)*

*Imogen: I think that most anxious activities for me are speaking and listening because I’m not very good in this.*

To conclude the discussion so far, the subjects need to be reminded that it is not necessary to identify every word as long as they understand the message. They should also get as much practice as possible, particularly with authentic listening materials. It might be a good idea to let students look at the script in the case of more demanding materials. This way they could focus on more difficult areas, such as weak forms. It is also important to give students a sense of achievement. This could be done by preparing relatively easy tasks for authentic materials. As for my own speaking, it is important to remember to grade my own language, particularly when talking to more anxious students and to make sure that everybody understands instructions by following them with concept questions or asking students to repeat them in their own words or in their mother tongue.

As Horwitz (1986) pointed out, test anxiety is one of the three main components of performance anxiety, together with communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation (see section 3.2.2). Horwitz (1991: 30) believes that test anxiety is caused by a fear of failure. It is also related to student “unrealistic demands on themselves”. My subjects find testing anxiety-provoking mainly due to time limits, a lot of knowledge to be assessed at a time, lack of confidence and fear of not passing the course. One respondent attributed his low test results to anxiety.

*Narcyz: For me the most anxious activities during a lesson it is write exaim ( test). Why..? I think usually me results it are low. Maybe to mutch stressful and make a lot of mistake.*

*Wioletta: Another thing that is very stressful is that if I know that there is a time limit for a test (not the whole class) I worry that I will not manage to complete all of the tasks in time. [[66]](#footnote-66)*

*Deng: No, I don’t think some activities make me feel anxious, except exam.*

*Malwina: Long and short tests: I feel stressed about them because I am worried that I will not pass the coursework.[[67]](#footnote-67)*

*Mieszko: I feel most anxious about tests, because you need to know a lot.[[68]](#footnote-68)*

Time limits for tests are given for several reasons: not to waste lesson time, not to make the students who finish early wait for others, and to accustom students to testing conditions for the sake of future exams. Since the subjects are not taking any exams in the immediate future, I have decided to allow anxious students as much time as they need. The subjects should not be stressed about failing a particular test, because they have a chance to retake it. Malwina, who is one of the weakest students, may be concerned about being able to pass tests even when she retakes them. I suggested to her that she might benefit more by studying at a lower level, as being a weak student may have a negative effect on one’s self-esteem. However, she is determined to stay at the present level.

To address the issue of stress related to large pieces of material to be assessed I believe that regular revisions together with more thorough pre-test round-up should relieve anxiety. Another option is administering more tests covering smaller pieces of material. What is most important, is that students know exactly what is going to be assessed and are familiar with the types of tasks (see section 3.2.2).

None of the subjects mentioned anxiety resulting from stressful testing conditions. This was a very positive result of my conscious actions. I try to make testing conditions as stress-free as possible by behaving in a reassuring manner, monitoring and helping with task understanding, speaking with a soft voice and even playing some background music.

In addition to speaking, listening and test anxiety, grammar has also been pointed out as a source of frustration. One student, Dalia, admitted to being anxious about grammar exercises done as a whole-class activity with little time to think of correct answers.

*Dalia: No activities make me feel anxious, but if I were to choose something, I’d go for grammar exercises, as I often make mistakes, usually because of carelessness, and not lack of knowledge, so I feel nervous when my turn comes, because I don’t want to say something wrong ‘in a hurry’.[[69]](#footnote-69)*

Dalia’s comment is a perfect illustration of an issue raised by Horwitz (1991: 29). According to Horwitz, students often claim that they know a certain grammar point, but fail to use it correctly during an oral exercise. I normally give students several minutes to provide correct answers; however, to keep the lesson pace fast, I do not usually wait for the students who finish last. A possible compromise could be to ask students to compare their answers when the first ones complete the task.

There was also a student (Dąbrówka) who said she was anxious about using new words whose meaning has not been translated into L1 (Polish).

*Dąbrówka: Sometimes there’s also a problem with an activity in which we have to make sentences with some words, and we don’t translate these words into Polish.[[70]](#footnote-70)*

In order to avoid anxious feelings, after explaining target vocabulary, Polish translations could always be provided or elicited. At the moment, Polish translations are referred to only for more confusing words or expressions. Particularly, as some of the students are not native speakers of Polish, I try not to overuse translation, which could make these students feel excluded. Learners could also be reminded that they are always welcome to ask a question whenever in doubt.

The journal item about the most stressful activities was followed up with a question whether the subjects would prefer to avoid them, which was supposed to answer the research Q7: Do students tend to avoid anxiety-provoking activities or do they choose to continue with them because the activities are perceived as useful?

Almost all of the subjects would prefer to continue with anxiety-provoking activities.

*Roland: I wouldn’t like to avoid speaking in pairs because it helps to break the barriers.[[71]](#footnote-71)*

*Imogen: I don’t want avoid them because I want learn english very well.*

*Liliana: I know I have to try to speak because only practice will help me learn it.[[72]](#footnote-72)*

*Konstanty: In my opinion speaking open-class is the most stressful activity. Nevertheless, I wouldn’t like to avoid it because I know how useful it is, it aid what is most important, that is speaking.[[73]](#footnote-73)*

*Przemysław: I don’t want to avoid speaking exercises, because I have to practise my speaking in English and I feel it’s better.*

*Hortensja: I don’t want to avoid listening, but to practise it ☺ [[74]](#footnote-74)*

*Arianna: I think the most anxious activities are speaking and listening. I wouldn’t to avoid them because there are very important to learn english.*

*Dalia: I’d like to speak even more, because this would help me become a more confident speaker.[[75]](#footnote-75)*

This could suggest that that the participants’ motivation and positive emotions coming from the supportive and enjoyable classroom atmosphere have helped them to overcome their anxiety and increased their willingness to communicate.

### THE LEAST ANXIETY-PROVOKING ACTIVITIES

Student journals have demonstrated that the least stressful foreign language classroom activities are speaking exercises during which students communicate in pairs or groups. They appreciate lack of control and the comfort of not feeling self-conscious because of speaking in front of only one person or a small number of students. Moreover, the subjects find it exciting to be able to use L2 as a means of natural conversation.

*Krzesimir: My favourite and the most relaxing activities is generally any kind of speaking.*

*Laurencja: Speaking exercises seem to be the least stressful. Communicating in a foreign language, different from the one used every day is interesting and fascinating.[[76]](#footnote-76)*

*Kamelia: Speaking in pairs or groups ,when I can talk freely, is in my opinion the least stressful activity. I don’t feel the centre of attention then and that’s why I’m not afraid so much that I will say something wrong.[[77]](#footnote-77)*

Free speaking practice in pairs or groups is an activity that I use frequently in my teaching. As becoming fluent speakers of English is the most frequently mentioned goal of my subjects (see section 5.1.), they need to practise speaking more than other skills. I have been aware that speaking in pairs or groups is less stressful than speaking in front of other people (Price, 1991; section 3.6.7.), but I did not expect this activity to be rated as the least stress-provoking of all, particularly as speaking has been demonstrated to be the most anxiety-raising aspect of foreign language learning (see sections 5.2.1. and 3.6.7.). It was very reassuring to discover that the type of activity that I consider most important is enjoyable for the students as well as most relaxing. My research has clearly shown that not all speaking classroom activities cause the same amount of anxiety and free speaking in pairs or groups is in fact considered the least stressful by most of the subjects. What is more, this suggests that my students’ oral communication anxiety (see section 3.2.2.) is low.

I was very pleased to find out that several students stress the importance of communication exercises for community building. This is because creating a cohesive group is one of my main personal teaching goals. Students in cohesive groups, as Dörnyei and Murphy (2003: 63) state, are willing to take part in group activities and enjoy working with each other. They also get engaged in conversation and are happy to share personal information (see section 3.10.4). The comments in my subjects’ journals demonstrate without doubt that they take pleasure in communication activities. The subjects do not just consider speaking in pairs or groups language practice, but they seem to be genuinely interested in each other.

*Dalia: I find speaking the least stressful, because I love talking and thanks to these exercises I can additionally practise communicating with others in English, get to know them and have fun at the same time.[[78]](#footnote-78)*

*Jagoda: The activity that I consider the most relaxing is talking with another person about something (about anything). I like talking to other people and have a laugh with them. You get to know people and make friends through conversations.[[79]](#footnote-79)*

*Krzesimir: Moreover – we can get a knowledge from others member of our group, some interesting information about they life.*

My conclusion is that the students are keen on communicating in pairs or groups as long as they are not expected to report in front of their peers afterwards. The pressure of having to report information makes speaking stressful, instead of enjoyable. Therefore, it seems reasonable to ask only volunteers for feedback.

Doing exercises in class, particularly grammar ones, seems to be the second most frequently mentioned relaxing activity. This is understandable, as students get time to think of their answers and to check them with other students. Many of the subjects mention homework, as a stress-free aspect of a foreign language class. This is not surprising, since students can work at the pace which is convenient for them, they can check the meaning of words in a dictionary or a grammar point in a reference book. There is no risk of appearing foolish in front of others.

Some students say that written assignments are relaxing thanks to the fact that there is no time pressure.

*Krzesimir: Written assignments are definitely the most relaxing activities. I don’t have to worry about my pronunciation and I can think over carefully every sentence and use a lot of vocabulary in it. These activities are the easiest and the most pleasant.[[80]](#footnote-80)*

*Angelika: When it comes to activities not only done in class, written assignments make me least stressed.[[81]](#footnote-81)*

*Klaudiusz: The most relaxing activities is writing, because I have a lot of time to write a text. I think the writing is good for me.*

I was a little surprised about this discovery since a number of the subjects seemed to avoid their written tasks. The subjects’ favourable opinions on homework assignments could suggest that they enjoy working autonomously and perhaps they could be given more tasks to do independently.

Other frequently mentioned stress-free activities are listening, watching videos and reading. Several students say that learning vocabulary does not provoke any anxiety. In particular, the subjects praise games and group competitions. Games are considered to be low-anxiety activities by several researchers, e.g. Young (1991), Saunders and Crookall (1985) (see section 3.6.7). Competition is normally regarded as stress-building. However, group competitions that my subjects mention in their journals are types of games and tend to be rather light-hearted.

*Hortensja: I find warm-up most relaxing, introductory game-like exercises, stimulating my imagination. One can have a laugh and relax.[[82]](#footnote-82)*

*Gniewko: What I find most relaxing are vocabulary competitions – I like competition.[[83]](#footnote-83)*

*Kamelia: I think group competitions seem cool and fun. One can also remember a lot from them.[[84]](#footnote-84)*

*Dąbrówka: Vocabulary guessing activities are the least stressful. Actually they are easy, enjoyable and fun.[[85]](#footnote-85)*

It is worth pointing out that the same activities, e.g. listening or speaking, can provoke anxiety among some students, while being the most relaxing for others. I have noticed that skills that one is good at create less anxiety than challenging ones. Giving tasks that are too easy is not a good solution, as it may lead to even more frustration (Egbert, 2003; see section 1.1.2.). What seems more appropriate, however, is giving a good range of activities to cater for individual students’ preferences.

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TEACHER’S TEACHING STYLE AND THE SUBJECTS’ ANXIETY

I expected to discover in this journal some of my subconscious behaviour that might cause anxiety unintentionally. This is why one of the questions was: *Do you think the way you are taught has an influence on your anxiety?* Nevertheless, almost all of the students said that there was nothing about my teaching style that could make the subjects feel apprehensive. Many students focused on positive aspects of the class that make them feel more at ease. They mentioned creating a friendly, supportive, stress-free classroom atmosphere and its influence on student motivation. In addition, they pointed out my friendly manner and a personal approach. There was also a comment about the smooth lesson flow and my ability to match the instruction to students’ needs.

*Róża: I think the way of teaching has a significant influence on my level of anxiety. When the teacher make a good impression – creates a nice atmosphere I wanted to learn more and I’m happy to come to class.*

*Narcyz: The way I am taught has an influence on my anxiety. If there is a friendly atmosphere during the class, I’m not afraid of making mistakes, etc., which reduces my stress during the class.[[86]](#footnote-86)*

*Liliana: I am a person whose everyday life is accompanied by anxiety. This is why I am anxious during my English class as well. The teacher’s approach and his or her teaching style has an influence on the student’s anxiety, however, in case of my present class, the instructor is always smiling and has a positive attitude towards the students, as a result I feel less apprehensive.[[87]](#footnote-87)*

*Wioletta: The way one is taught definitely has an influence on student anxiety. I believe that when the teacher has a negative attitude, the students react accordingly. It is of great importance to approach each student individually in a friendly way and this is what we have in our English class. Personally, I was nicely surprised when I got an e-mail from my teacher when I was absent from my class.[[88]](#footnote-88)*

*Krzesimir: I think that atmosphere in this classroom is wonderfull. I feel freedom.*

*Hiacynta: The instructor’s teaching style is so smooth and suitable that it has no effect on my anxiety level.[[89]](#footnote-89)*

*Flora: I feel good in this class. I don’t feel anxious.[[90]](#footnote-90)*

There were very few comments pointing out the teacher’s behaviour as an anxiety source. Two students said that the lesson pace was too fast at times, which made them feel stressed. The comment reminded me that it is important to make sure that all of the students are following at every stage of the lesson. Students could also be encouraged to tell the teacher to repeat things in case they get confused. A Chinese student said he felt anxious at times as a result of my inability to explain things in Chinese. There was also a student who admitted feeling stressed when she was called on and did not know how to answer the question.

*Malwina: I don’t like it when the teacher asks me a question and I don’t know something, that’s why I feel anxious about making a fool of myself during the class.[[91]](#footnote-91)*

This student was one of the most anxious subjects, which was related to the fact that she was the weakest learner in her group. This comment and other ones by Malwina made me realise how painful it is for her to speak in full view of her classmates and myself. Consequently, I decided to stop asking her questions in front of other students. Since other narratives by Malwina revealed that she was happy to speak in pairs or groups I thought I was not worried that her fluency practice would suffer.

### OTHER ANXIETY SOURCES

Apart from reflecting on classroom activities or the instructor’s teaching style, the subjects were asked to describe any other, relevant anxiety sources. A large number of responses were related to the students’ previous, negative experience. The comments concerned various aspects of the class. The source of most severe anxiety seems to be previous traumatic experience of being taught in a threatening manner.

*Dąbrówka: My English language course was my worst experience of all of my high school education and left me feeling anxious in the years that followed. My young English teacher, straight from the University, made the whole English course a nightmare, all four years. She didn’t even let go in my final year, when I decided not to take my matura exam in English, A-level equivalent. The lessons were so terrifying that we used to forget the things we had learnt. The teacher intimidated us in every minute of her lessons. Whenever we gave a wrong answer or didn’t know the answer to her question, she responded with giving us a 1, the lowest mark. Sometimes she managed to give several 1s to one student during one lesson. This led to some students failing the course and having to repeat a year.[[92]](#footnote-92)*

Jagoda*: I remember a teacher who shouted when someone hadn’t done homework or called our parents.[[93]](#footnote-93)*

There is an agreement among researchers that the instructor’s teaching style affects student anxiety, particularly an authoritative style, represented by teachers who motivate students through intimidation. Young (1991: 4) states that teachers who believe that their role is to be a drill sergeant, rather than a facilitator may increase student apprehension (see subchapter 3.7.). Koch and Terrell (1991: 110) point out that studying in a threatening atmosphere has a negative effect on foreign language acquisition.

These studies all indicate that the activities in the foreign language class that create an atmosphere of panic, fear, anger, and other unpleasant feelings, which are psychologically and physiologically associated with anxiety, can impede language acquisition.

Beside the teacher’s threatening manner, the subjects mentioned negative, past experience, related to being laughed at by other members of the same group.

*Angelika: I think I may feel anxious because of my previous negative experience – my last extra English lessons were about three years ago. Students there were laughing at me sometimes and I didn’t like them. Maybe because they were in my age.*

Even though the anxiety source in this case are students rather than the teacher, it is the teacher’s responsibility to create a supportive atmosphere of mutual respect. As the quotation demonstrates, the teacher failure in providing adequate learning environment resulted in anxiety experienced even several years afterwards.

Róża wrote about feeling anxious when taught by an unpleasant teacher who demonstrated a careless attitude.

*Róża: Yes, I have many stressful experiences from my previous language courses. My teacher was very impolite. The teacher didn’t answer questions, didn’t clear up doubts, didn’t check homework etc.* *[[94]](#footnote-94)*

One of the subjects, described negative past experiences resulting from the teacher not meeting the student’s expectations. She was frustrated because in her opinion the instructor did not teach effectively.

*Celestyna: My previous negative language learning experience is related to my instructor who could not teach and we played games all the time. As a result, the level of English instruction was low and hopeless.[[95]](#footnote-95)*

Celestyna’s anxiety could be contributed to style differences between herself and the teacher. The teacher was probably more outgoing than her and wanted the course to seem like fun, whereas Celestyna, who was more of an introvert, expected hard work and a serious, educational situation.

Another anxiety source related to negative previous experience is related to feeling excluded because of not being at the same proficiency level as the rest of the group.

*Hortensja: My anxiety is definitely related to my negative experience at high school and university. I was never good at foreign languages and I stuck out from the rest of the group.[[96]](#footnote-96)*

Since Hortensja, the student who made this comment, was one of my best and most intelligent learners, it is hard for me to assess whether she really was the weakest or whether she had a low self-esteem and considered herself less able than she really was. Perhaps her previous teachers could have given her more praise to help her build confidence.

Low self-esteem has been mentioned by several other subjects as an anxiety source. These students often wrongly believe that others are better at L2 than they are. The following quotation comes from Esmeralda, who was a very good speaker of English:

*Esmeralda: I worry that other people may speak about a certain topic better and more fluently than me, which results in my loss of confidence.[[97]](#footnote-97)*

Some students admitted that they are anxious due to lack of confidence, which they think is their trait (see subchapter 1.4. Self-esteem).

*Kamelia: Sometimes I feel anxious and this may be because I am not a confident person.[[98]](#footnote-98)*

*Imogen: Other reasons for my feeling apprehensive are my lack of confidence, lack of abilities and knowledge.[[99]](#footnote-99)*

*Przemysław: I am a rather anxious person. I don’t like speaking when everybody is listening and catching my mistakes.[[100]](#footnote-100)*

*Atanazy: Another reason for my anxiety is lack of confidence - my feature of character.[[101]](#footnote-101)*

Cheng *et al.* (1999) point out that there is consistent association between low self-confidence and anxiety. Thus, low self-confidence may affect student expectations about L2 learning. According to Bandura’s (1977a) self-efficacy theory, people who believe they can cope with dangers or threats tend not to fear or avoid them, whereas people who doubt they are capable of dealing with difficulties usually give up, feeling anxious. Consequently, as Cheng *et al.* (1999) state:

In the context of second language learning, we could hypothesize that students with low self-confidence might tend to underestimate their ability to learn a second language and have negative expectations about their performance, thereby feeling insecurity or anxiety in the face of the language learning tasks (MacIntyre, Noels, & Clément, 1997). They are likely to cope with their anxiety less effectively and easily disengage from the anxiety-producing tasks (Aida, 1994; Carver and Scheier, 1992), which would probably impair their progress in language learning, further undermining their confidence.

In order to address the relationship between low self-confidence and anxiety, it is important to boost student self-confidence. As a pedagogical implication, Cheng *et al.* (1999) highlight the significance of creating a nonthreatening and supportive learning environment.

As far as anxiety resulting from personal characteristics is concerned, several students admit to being perfectionist or setting themselves very high or unrealistic goals. As mentioned in section 3.3., perfectionism and fear of public speaking are the most important personality variables that may be related to language anxiety (Price, 1991; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002).

*Róża: For me personally the problem is perfectionism.*

*Liliana: Other reasons why I may feel anxious are perfectionism and unrealistic expectations from myself. I am frustrated when things don’t go as well as I wish.[[102]](#footnote-102)*

*Wioletta: Reasons for my anxiety? I definitely feel frustrated because I can’t speak as well as I’d like to.[[103]](#footnote-103)*

*Narcyz: I think that in my case the reason for my anxiety is the fact that I set myself unrealistically high goals.[[104]](#footnote-104)*

*Esmeralda: I am rather critical of myself and I find it very frustrating to see that despite my effort my results are not as satisfactory as I would like them to be.[[105]](#footnote-105)*

It may be unrealistic to make students less perfectionist, if this is their trait; however, telling them explicitly that they are not expected to be perfect and that mistakes are natural in the process of learning could have a positive effect on language anxiety related to learner unrealistic expectations.

One of the subjects, Hiacynta, experiences frustration because she expects to be creative in English as well as accurate. This is a reflection of the discrepancy between the “true” self as known to the language learner and the more limited self as a speaker of L2 described by Horwitz *et al.* (1991: 30; see subchapter 3.3. above). Hiacynta, who is a student of art, may be a creative person when she speaks in her mother tongue. She perceives anxiety when she cannot be equally creative as well as accurate in English.

*Hiacynta: I may feel apprehensive because of my unrealistic expectations and being as accurate as possible and at the same time creative has a subconscious influence on my anxiety experienced during the class.[[106]](#footnote-106)*

Depression was another personal characteristic that Malwina, one of the most anxious students, attributes to her apprehension.

*Malwina: The sources of my anxiety are: my negative experience, my personality and depression.[[107]](#footnote-107)*

I have found out that Malwina’s depression might be related to her difficult family situation.

Apart from negative past experience and personal characteristics, yet another source of anxiety has turned out to be monitoring. This was a very interesting remark, since speaking in pairs or groups is regarded by the subjects as a stress-free activity. It turns out that this is not true for some students during monitoring. Some students feel anxious when during pair or group work the instructor is sitting in front of them, listening attentively.

*Esmeralda: Sometimes I feel anxious when I speak in pairs right in front of the teacher. It is caused by the fact that I feel less confident when the teacher corrects me and I am aware that I make many mistakes, however, I know that the aim of the teacher’s correction is to eliminate my mistakes and to make me speak accurately. (This is not the teacher’s fault but part of my character)[[108]](#footnote-108)*

I have put the same observation in my personal log. It often happens during monitoring that the students I approach immediately stop speaking, typically saying that they have just finished the task. It has even happened to me that one of the students said openly that they feel uncomfortable when I am listening. As long as students are motivated and do their speaking task, it is a good idea to leave them to their own devices. Moreover, it seems sensible not to correct anxious students during pair work or group work, but to write mistakes on a piece of paper and discuss them later without saying who made them.

In order to encourage community building in my classes (see subchapter 3.10.), the subjects are asked to change partners for speaking activities so they get the opportunity to get to know each member of the group. I was wondering whether the subjects find it more stressful to practise with some students than with others. Thus, I asked them to describe their experiences in their journals.

43% of the subjects do not think working with some students may be more anxiety-provoking than with others. Almost all of them seem very enthusiastic about the opportunity to practise with various group members.

*Krzesimir: No, I like everybody. I don’t think so, that some students stress me more than each other.*

I was nicely surprised to discover a positive comment from Dalia, a teenage student, who likes talking to older students. Generally, groups are formed according to student ages because of a common belief that this is what learners prefer and benefit more from.

*Dalia: I like working with everybody, but most of all with students older than me, because I can learn a lot of interesting things*.[[109]](#footnote-109)

There was one anxious student, Imogen, who did not think that practising with some students is more stressful than with others, because she thought that speaking is always anxiety-provoking no matter who you are talking with.

*Imogen: No, I think that stressful for me is generally speaking with all students. I don’t know, maybe because I think that I couldn’t speak well for questions.*

The most frequently mentioned reasons why the subjects think that working with some students causes more anxiety than with others is mixed ability. Generally, the subjects feel more confident when talking to someone whose proficiency level is not higher than theirs.

*Hortensja: The group is at the same level, so I don’t feel anxious. If someone were considerably better, I would feel stressed.[[110]](#footnote-110)*

*Semiramida: Yes, I feel anxious when I know that someone is much better than me.[[111]](#footnote-111)*

*Malwina: I find it more stressful to practise with some students than with others because they are better than me.[[112]](#footnote-112)*

*Konstanty: I prefer practising with learners who speak English worse than me, because if I make a mistake, they will not notice.*

Wioletta, like most other subjects, is anxious about working with students who are at a higher proficiency level than her. However, this is because she is worried that more advanced students will not benefit from practising with her.

*Wioletta: Sometimes I find it more stressful to practise with some students than with others. When I work in a pair or group with a person who speaks in a foreign language much better, I feel embarrassed that they have to work with a person who will not have a lot to say.[[113]](#footnote-113)*

Moreover, the subjects find it more stressful to practise with someone they have never spoken to than with someone that they know quite well.

*Jędrzej: Sometimes is difficult to tolk with students when I tolk to them first time. Well but now I might I was tell with every one of this group.*

*Florian: If I’ve known someone longer, we work together better.[[114]](#footnote-114)*

Several subjects find it anxiety-provoking when they speak to a shy or reserved person.

*Nastia: I find it more stressful to practise with some students than with others because sometimes it is hard to make somebody speak openly.*

*Esmeralda: Each of us is different and it’s not possible to get on with everyone and to enjoy group work with everyone. They are often shy people who are not very outgoing. Such people are a lot harder to practise with. I find it a lot easier to talk to a person who can joke, laugh, is friendly and open.[[115]](#footnote-115)*

What is more, apprehension may be provoked by speaking partners who are opinionated or domineering.

*Semiramida: It is more stressful to practise with someone who stops me when I am talking or doesn’t let me express myself.[[116]](#footnote-116)*

*Narcyz: I find it stressful if a student is too opinionated.[[117]](#footnote-117)*

A number of subjects revealed they found it stressful to practise with Klaudiusz, an autistic student.

*Hiacynta: I begin to feel uncertain when I’m paired up with Klaudiusz from our group. This is because I am worried about his abilities to work in groups. I’d like to help him, but I don’t really know how to go about this. It’s the matter of empathy, rather than anxiety.[[118]](#footnote-118)*

*Roland: I don’t find it more stressful to practise with some students than with others, but actually there’s one exception ( a boy who can’t or at least finds it very hard to concentrate in class).[[119]](#footnote-119)*

There were also comments about speaking partners who do not cooperate well and thus are a source of anxiety.

*Atanazy: I find it stressful if I have to rely only on myself, because other members of the group are not interested in cooperation.[[120]](#footnote-120)*

*Danusia: Another person’s lack of cooperation can also be stressful.[[121]](#footnote-121)*

In addition, there was an interesting comment about how another person’s unclear or quiet manner of speaking can cause anxiety.

*Dąbrówka: Yes, there is a dramatic difference between people. It’s very stressful when I don’t know how to reply when another person asks questions/answers unclearly, too quietly, which is an embarrassing situation, because it looks like I don’t know something, and I just don’t understand someone else’s pronunciation or I can’t hear them. It’s very stressful. [[122]](#footnote-122)*

One of the journal questions was about the relationship between anxiety and the lesson topic. As stated in subchapter 2.1., unfamiliar lesson topics may result in student unwillingness to communicate. Most of the subjects (71%) declared that the lesson topic was not related to their level of anxiety.

*Jędrzej: No, in my opinion lesson topics can’t be stressfull for me becous thoues topics are very simple and we tipe with those every day.*

*Klaudiusz: No, I never stress related to the lesson topic.*

Other subjects believe that language anxiety may be related to the lesson topic if it is unfamiliar, if they do not like it or if it concerns personal issues. This is consistent with MacInyre’s (2007) belief that the topic of the discussion, is one of the variables contributing to student unwillingness to communicate (see subchapter 2.1).

*Hiacynta: Yes, if the topic is related to unfamiliar things then some stress occurs.[[123]](#footnote-123)*

*Svetlana: Yes. Because I don’t like this topic or I don’t know what to say.[[124]](#footnote-124)*

*Róża: Generally no but sometimes I don’t like telling about personal metters.*

*Malwina: Yes, because some are more difficult.[[125]](#footnote-125)*

*Nastia: Yes, sometimes the lesson topic may be unknown for me, and my vocabulary is less, in this theme.*

One of the subjects, Liliana, believes that there is no relationship between the lesson topic and anxiety; however, she finds some topics difficult regardless of the language:

*Liliana: Anxiety is not related to the lesson topic, although there are many topics which I consider quite difficult even in Polish language and that’s why I find it difficult to talk about them.[[126]](#footnote-126)*

### ANXIETY AND ACHIEVEMENT

The subjects were asked whether their English would improve more if they were less anxious. The question was supposed to demonstrate to what extent anxiety is debilitating as well as to reveal how anxiety affects foreign language acquisition (see subchapter 3.5. above). The data obtained by means of this question enabled me to answer the research question 8: Do students consider language anxiety a significant obstacle in FL acquisition?

A vast majority of the subjects believe that their English would improve more if they were not affected by anxiety. Most of them feel that anxiety has a negative effect on their speaking, the quality of their speaking performance in particular. Several students admit to the avoidance of speaking.

*Esmeralda: When I feel anxious and worried, I don’t speak open-class even if I know the answer, which means that to a large degree I am limited by myself.[[127]](#footnote-127)*

*Przemysław: I believe that I am limited by anxiety. Without anxiety I would be a more confident speaker.[[128]](#footnote-128)*

*Roland: If I were less anxious I would be better at talking to strangers who speak English fluently.[[129]](#footnote-129)*

*Angelika: If I were less anxious I would speak better.*

*Kamelia: Anxiety interferes with my speaking open-class.[[130]](#footnote-130)*

*Imogen: I think that I could speak better when I could less anxious.*

What is more, the students claim that when they are anxious they cannot remember the material they have learnt, they lose confidence or perform less successfully, particularly during exams.

*Dąbrówka: Anxiety makes me forget what I have learnt.[[131]](#footnote-131)*

*Dalia: I’m not anxious very often, but I think that if I were not anxious during quite a serious oral exam, it would go a lot better.[[132]](#footnote-132)*

*Hiacynta: The high level of anxiety blocks me and I get lost in vocabulary or grammar. This is particularly apparent in my language studies. When I feel relaxed, everything goes smoothly ☺ [[133]](#footnote-133)*

Several subjects talked about unpleasant physical anxiety symptoms, accompanying their foreign language studies, for example:

*Malwina: I think my English would improve more if I were less anxious. When I’m anxious I feel unwell.[[134]](#footnote-134)*

*Jagoda: If I were less anxious, studying English would be less stressful, at least physically.[[135]](#footnote-135)*

*Hortensja: Speaking in front of the whole class is a little stressful as well; I feel myself turn red and this is something I’d like to avoid ☺[[136]](#footnote-136)*

My subjects’ physical manifestations of FL anxiety are not as severe as those described above in subchapter 3.1. Nevertheless, they obviously exist and should be born in mind. Once I identified the most anxious students, I treated them with extra care and tried to alleviate their apprehension.

About a quarter of the subjects are of an opinion that their English would not improve more if they were less anxious. Two of them believe so because they do not consider themselves apprehensive to start with. One subject feels that stress plays a facilitating role in her case. Interestingly, there was a subject who said that she would make more progress if she were more stressed. There was also a view that instead of trying to reduce anxiety-provoking situations, we should learn how to control stress.

*Laurencja: Stress in some cases is motivating.[[137]](#footnote-137)*

*Józefina: I think my English would improve more if I were more anxious.[[138]](#footnote-138)*

*Nastia: No, I don’t think my English would improve more if I were less anxious, because we have to control our stress, and to try many times.*

*Narcyz: I think that stress is not a very bad situation if it appears rarely.[[139]](#footnote-139)*

*Mieszko: No, I don’t think my English would improve more because I don’t feel anxious in this class.[[140]](#footnote-140)*

Even though there are students who claim not to be affected by anxiety, they are a minority. This suggests that most students will benefit from stress reduction in their foreign language class.

### TASK EVASION DUE TO ANXIETY

As Young (1986, 1992) discovered, one of the anxiety manifestations is avoidance behaviour (see subchapter 3.4.). In order to find out whether my subjects avoid any classroom tasks due to apprehension, I asked them the following questions:

* + - *Do you ever avoid speaking because you feel stressed / anxious? How often?*
    - *Do you ever avoid any other tasks because you feel stressed / anxious, for example writing, tests or homework? How often?*

Answers to these questions provided me with the necessary data to answer the research question 7: Do students tend to avoid anxiety-provoking activities or do they choose to continue with them because the activities are perceived as useful? Almost half of the subjects (47%) say that they never avoid speaking due to anxiety. Most of them are confident students who generally do not demonstrate anxiety symptoms. Some of them are anxious, but want to make an effort to overcome their fears, because they are dedicated students who are willing to put up with anxiety in order to learn English.

*Gniewko: I never avoid speaking because of feeling stressed.*

*Krzesimir: I always try to speak as well as I can and try to don’t trate my mistakes so serious.*

*Dalia: I don’t avoid speaking, because I’m not afraid of this, so it doesn’t happen to me at all. I like speaking and it’s one of my favourite lesson parts.[[141]](#footnote-141)*

*Laurencja: I try to overcome my anxiety and summon up courage to speak despite my mistakes.[[142]](#footnote-142)*

*Jagoda: No, I tend not to avoid speaking so I can’t say how often. I just face the challenges.[[143]](#footnote-143)*

Malwina, who is a rather anxious learner, said she could not avoid speaking because instructors call on her at any rate. Her diary entry sounds like a complaint that teachers do not respect anxious students and make them speak in front of their peers, even if they preferred to avoid it.

*Malwina: I do not manage to avoid speaking because teachers are not interested whether someone is anxious or not.[[144]](#footnote-144)*

After having read Malwina’s journal entries I decided not to call on her. In her case it is better to let her practise speaking in pairs and groups, particularly since she considers student-centred speaking activities most relaxing. It seems a good idea that once instructors identify anxious students, they do not give them additional stress by asking them to speak in front of their peers.

*Malwina: I find group work most relaxing because one can also talk freely.[[145]](#footnote-145)*

53% of the subjects admit to avoiding speaking as a result of apprehension. Most of them, however, say they avoid speaking only sometimes. Only 13% of the students avoid speaking quite often. One of the subjects always avoids speaking when she studies in a big group, but claims to be less anxious in a small group of students. In our case the group is very small and Róża sometimes volunteers to say something in front of her peers. The results suggest that the subjects do not often avoid speaking due to anxiety. Either it occurs rarely or it affects a small number of exceptionally anxious students.

One of the most commonly given reason for speaking avoidance or unwillingness to communicate (see subchapter 2.1.) is the fear of embarrassment caused by making a mistake or saying something wrong.

*Róża: It happens to me that I avoid speaking because of ‘the fear’ of being laughed at, of wrong accent, wrong pronunciation of words in particular.[[146]](#footnote-146)*

*Przemysław: Yes, I avoid speaking because I worry that I will say something stupid, illogical, or grammatically wrong. Unfortunately, it happens to me quite often, but I try to avoid such situations.[[147]](#footnote-147)*

*Hortensja: Yes, I sometimes avoid speaking because I’m afraid of making a grammar mistake in a sentence or not being able to say what I mean in English.[[148]](#footnote-148)*

*Narcyz: I sometimes avoid speaking, especially if I made mistakes earlier. [[149]](#footnote-149)*

Esmeralda does not want to say anything in front of her classmates unless she is absolutely certain that her speech is well-organised and coherent. This made me realise the need to remind the students that they do not need to be perfect, that in order to learn they need to take risks and in the process make mistakes.

*Esmeralda: I frequently avoid speaking due to anxiety. I’m the kind of person who only likes to speak in public when I am sure that what I’m saying is well-composed and is not chaotic. So, with the group I tend to stand aside and let others talk. I rarely feel like speaking out.[[150]](#footnote-150)*

Not knowing or not being able to think of a suitable word is another frequently given reason for the subjects’ unwillingness to communicate. It has been stated in subchapter 2.1. (*Un)willingness to Communicate* that insufficient vocabulary may result in student TAB (Task Avoidance Behaviour). The instructor could help by providing strategies to help with communicating a message despite not knowing or remembering a particular word.

*Liliana: I think that sometimes I’m in a situation when because of stress I can’t think of suitable words or expressions and put them together.[[151]](#footnote-151)*

*Dąbrówka: I sometimes avoid speaking because I don’t understand a question or I don’t know the right words to answer a question.[[152]](#footnote-152)*

Almost all of the subjects say they do not avoid any other activities due to anxiety. Several subjects commented that written activities are much easier and less stressful than speaking. This is understandable, as writing is not related to performance and hence does not carry the risk of being judged by others.

*Piotr: I don’t avoid written exercises. I think they are a lot easier than speaking, because I have more time to think.[[153]](#footnote-153)*

*Wioletta: I don’t avoid any other exercises. The only and perhaps the worst exercise is speaking.[[154]](#footnote-154)*

There were only two subjects, Svetlana and Hortensja, who avoid or put off writing because they find it difficult and consequently anxiety-provoking. As Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) state, procrastination is a characteristic feature of perfectionism as well as anxiety. Perfectionists often exhibit long delays in completing assignments since they are satisfied with nothing but a perfect outcome. I was expecting that more of the subjects would admit to avoiding writing, since a number of subjects do not meet deadlines for written assignments and some of the students do not turn them in at all.

*Hortensja: I don’t avoid any other exercises apart from writing ☺ , which takes me a long time to get down to.[[155]](#footnote-155)*

*Svetlana: I have avoided writing more than once. Writing, just like speaking is hard for me and I always put it off, thinking I will do it later.[[156]](#footnote-156)*

The journal entries generally suggest that that the subjects do not find writing in L2 particularly stressful.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR LESS STRESSFUL LESSONS

I asked the subjects what they would change in order to make lessons less stressful in order to obtain the data to answer the research question Q10: What could be done in students’ opinion in order to decrease language anxiety in the foreign language classroom?

There were not many suggestions provided. Several students said they did not know what to suggest. Many subjects did not want to suggest anything because they said that they did not find the lessons anxiety-provoking, they liked them and did not feel the need to change anything. I was very pleased to find these comments because it is my aim to teach in the way which makes students feel at ease.

*Hortensja: The classes are not stressful, so I wouldn’t change anything. All kinds of quizzes and games we have to warm-up make the atmosphere less tense.[[157]](#footnote-157)*

*Krzesimir: I like the course and these lessons. I feel good here. I think you shouldn’t change anything. ☺*

*Dalia: The classes don’t make me feel anxious. I fully benefit from the course. [[158]](#footnote-158)*

*Svetlana: I wouldn’t change anything, because I’m not stressed at all and I enjoy everything.[[159]](#footnote-159)*

*Kamelia: The classes are not stressful enough to change anything. I think they are conducted in a good way and I have no objections. [[160]](#footnote-160)*

*Róża: This course is very unstressful. The teacher is very friendly I think that is good for me. and for my English knowledge.*

*Józefina: I think that this course is not very stressful, because the teacher’s attitude is very friendly. Of course sometimes I feel stressed, e.g. when I don’t know how to answer a question, but the guilty party here is only my lack of knowledge.[[161]](#footnote-161)*

Several students gave examples of activities without which lessons would be less stressful. Nevertheless, the subjects admitted that eliminating these activities would reduce the benefit they derive from the course. As the students see the benefit of those activities, I would not try to reduce them.

*Celestyna: In order to make the classes less stressful I’d limit calling on students during the revision part of the lesson. I would benefit from the course a lot less.[[162]](#footnote-162)*

*Liliana: Conversations make me feel anxious, but I’m sure that eliminating them would not improve the benefit I derive from the course.[[163]](#footnote-163)*

*Flora: In order to make lessons less stressful I’d do fewer speaking activities, but then we wouldn’t practise communication.[[164]](#footnote-164)*

Other suggestions about what could be done to make lessons less stressful included using listening materials with a slower pace of speaking, more visual aids, more support, more games, and not giving test scores in front of the whole class. Arianna thought she would feel less anxious if there were more vocabulary revisions, particularly of words from previous units, introduced less recently. There was also a suggestion about using more free speaking and listening activities.

*Konstanty: To make lessons less stressful I would use more games.[[165]](#footnote-165)*

Games have already been mentioned above, in sections 3.6.7. and 6.2.2., as low-stress activities. Even though I use them regularly, the comment made me realise that I could use them more.

*Malwina: I would give students more support, teach through play, without nominating students to answer questions in front of their peers. I wouldn’t give test results in private.[[166]](#footnote-166)*

I do not give results in public, as I realise that it could be an unpleasant and demotivating experience for weaker learners. Malwina is a weak student who failed a test. Although I did not present her score in public, we were discussing when would be a good time for her to retake the test. This was an obvious sign that she had received a negative grade. Malwina’s comment made me aware of the fact that some students are very sensitive and would feel much more comfortable if such conversations took place face to face, for example after a lesson.

*Roland: I’d use more visual aids like films, picture quizzes. I’d definitely benefit more from this.[[167]](#footnote-167)*

Roland’s comment made me think that he is a visual learner. However, this was not confirmed by the Style Analysis Survey. I conclude that visual aids are attractive for students and facilitate learning regardless of student learning styles. Undoubtedly, learners can benefit if they are an integral part of every lesson. Nevertheless, I am not convinced that they reduce language anxiety in a direct way.

*Atanazy: I’d suggest more classes based on free conversations and listening exercises.[[168]](#footnote-168)*

It has already been mentioned in section 6.2.2. that the subjects consider free speaking activities in pairs or groups the most relaxing and enjoyable activity. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that in students’ opinion a larger number of this type of tasks can have a positive effect on reducing student anxiety.

*Arianna: Maybe I could change something that would be connected with revising not only recent vocabulary but also introduced earlier.[[169]](#footnote-169)*

This is a reasonable comment. Very often students feel insecure and unwilling to speak because they worry they do not know enough words to express their thoughts. I believe that frequent revisions of recent vocabulary as well as vocabulary taught earlier in the past can boost student confidence and consequently decrease language anxiety. Dąbrówka, for example, feels apprehensive when in the listening task speakers talk too fast. However, she attributes her difficulties with comprehension to her lack of vocabulary.

*Dąbrówka: The classes are all right, but if anything, listening could be at a slower pace in order to understand better, more.*

### THE IMPORTANCE OF GROUP COHESIVENESS

As mentioned above, in subchapter 3.10., a well-functioning, cohesive group helps to develop positive affect among students, which boosts their motivation. In order to verify whether community building has had a positive effect on my subjects, half-way through the course I asked them whether they felt less anxious than at the beginning of the course and why. Most of the students admitted to feeling less anxious owing to bonds created with other members of the group. The subjects say that their classmates are friendly and it is enjoyable to study with them.

*Przemysław: Yes, I feel less anxious. I know people from this group and they know me, soo I feel more (outgoing?)*

*Hiacynta: I don’t feel anxious during my classes. Obviously, my group has an influence on the way I feel. The people I study with are very friendly and they don’t evaluate negatively my attempts in English language.[[170]](#footnote-170)*

*Roland: I feel less stressed because I get on better with the people from my group.[[171]](#footnote-171)*

*Imogen: I feel better than at the beginning of the course because I’ve known my classmate well and I feel relaxed, I learn a lot of and I feel more confident.[[172]](#footnote-172)*

*Liliana: I feel less anxious than at the beginning because I know the people from the group better and I find it easier to communicate with them.[[173]](#footnote-173)*

Angelika pointed out the importance of learning other students’ first names. As mentioned in section 3.10.2., community spirit can be fostered when both the teacher and all students remember and use each other’s names.

*Angelika: I feel less anxious because I know most of my students by name and I can talk to them if I want. When I came here, I could only say to somebody “you” because I didn’t know his or her name. I also came here a little bit late so students were able to* [get to know each other ☺ (I don’t know how to say it ☹)]*[[174]](#footnote-174)*

Many subjects have commented on how the fact that they have become a cohesive group has changed their attitude to making mistakes. They say that they are not afraid of making mistakes because there are no negative reactions to them. The students also point out that the fact that they hear their peers speak with errors makes them reassured and less self-conscious. This is in line with Falout (2014: 286), who has pointed out that “watching another student struggle to speak and gradually improve may be better for building confidence than watching another student speak flawlessly” (see subchapter 3.10.5.).

*Celestyna: I feel less anxious now than I did at the beginning of the course, because I have got to know the people who attend the course with me and I’m not stressed when, for example I make a mistake or don’t know something.*

Hortensja: *We know each other better as a group and we know that everybody makes mistakes.*

*Kamelia: Yes, I feel less anxious than at the beginning. I don’t worry as much as I used to that I will say something incorrectly. I feel good in this group.*

*Józefina: Now I feel less anxious in class than at the beginning , because I’ve got to know my group and I know that we are at a similar level.[[175]](#footnote-175)*

*Esmeralda: I feel definitely less anxious than at the beginning of the course. It’s very probable that this because I have become acquainted with people from my group and I know their language abilities. Thanks to this I feel more confident and I’m not too afraid to speak during the class.[[176]](#footnote-176)*

*Jaromir: Now I know the teacher and the colleges from the group, and I feel more relax than at the beginning. I know that I can talk everything even when I’m telling wrong ☺*

Several subjects have highlighted that they are less anxious now than they were at the beginning of the course because they feel that they have made progress. This suggests that student low anxiety is not only the consequence of stress-free classes, but also effective teaching. When the students feel that learning has taken place, their anxiety decreases. This is consistent with Dörnyei’s (2001) argument that providing experiences of success is a vital confidence-building strategy (see section 1.1.4.1.). It is understandable that frustration may result from lack of success.

*Klaudiusz: I feel better than I began of the course, because I am better student.*

*Gniewko: I feel less anxious now than at the beginning. It’s because I learnd now and I become better in English. I improve my skils so I feel more [confiden])[[177]](#footnote-177).*

*Hortensja: I feel less anxious, regular attendance at English classes lets me get a feel for this language, better understand words and make sentences.[[178]](#footnote-178)*

There was a group of subjects who said that their anxiety had not gone down as the course progressed because they did not feel apprehensive to start with. These students seem happy with all aspects of the course. They say that they feel good in class and attend the lessons with pleasure.

*Dalia: I don’t feel less anxious than at the beginning because I never felt anxious ☺. What is more, I feel very good here and I attend classes with pleasure.[[179]](#footnote-179)*

*Jagoda: I feel the same as at the beginning of the course: I am equally motivated etc. I like spending my time in this group and what is more, if I learn something at the same time, it’s really cool[[180]](#footnote-180)*

There were just two subjects, Malwina and Arianna, who, despite my effort to make everyone as stress-free as possible, admitted that their anxiety level had not decreased and they felt as anxious as at the beginning of the course.

*Malwina: I don’t feel less anxious than at the beginning at the course because I can see the level of my peers and mine, I’m afraid of making fool of myself.[[181]](#footnote-181)*

*Arianna: I feel as anxious as at the beginning of the course because I can’t learn English and I’ve never learn English at school. In primary, middle and high school I learned germany and a bit russian so it is for me stressful.*

Both subjects are quite serious anxiety cases. They tend to be quite passive in class as though they have given up on their success as language learners. What is more, their test results are poorer than other students’. Malwina’s anxiety is related to her conviction that all other students are more able than her and that their English is better. Consequently, she has decided to withdraw to save her face. Arianna, on the other hand, believes she has insufficient abilities to learn English. In addition, she feels inferior because she has only been studying this language in the further education context, unlike many other subjects, who studied English at school as well. Both subjects would definitely benefit from some individual, professional support, similar to A Foreign Language Support Group[[182]](#footnote-182) for students having difficulties with studying a foreign language (Cope Powell, 1991). Since such groups are not run in the subjects’ country, I decided to talk to Malwina and Arianna after class and encourage them to accept correction, imperfection, be more active and take risks, as this is the way to make progress and hence overcome language anxiety (Cope Powell, 1991).

### THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER ATTITUDE

Student perceptions about the significance of the teacher in the language learning process occurred quite frequently in my subjects’ journals. Many students have highlighted my influence on creating a friendly, supportive atmosphere, which helped them overcome their anxiety. It made me feel very pleased because it has always been my intention to decrease student anxiety by making classes stress-free and enjoyable, which I believe facilitates learning.

Jędrzej, a student who seems to be one of the most apprehensive students, has admitted that the teacher’s personality and style has helped him reduce his anxiety.

Jędrzej: I feel much better than at the beginning. The classroom atmosphere is great and I think it is because the teacher is friendly and helpfull.

The following comments similarly stress the importance of positive classroom atmosphere:

*Laurencja: Good atmosphere helps to reduce anxiety.[[183]](#footnote-183)*

*Róża: I think that classroom atmosphere and relationship with other students and with the teacher are very important for my feel anxious. This group is very nice. The English teacher is helpful.*

*Wioletta: I think I feel less anxious now than I did at the beginning of the course. What matters for me a lot is classroom atmosphere and the instructor’s approach to learners.[[184]](#footnote-184)*

*Klaudiusz: I like learning English and I feel really good at the lessons.*

*Jaromir: I’m always fell good on the lesson. Atmosphere is very good and friendly.*

Krzesimir, who has never felt anxious in our English class, highlights my personal approach and empathy. The comments are in line with Dewaele and MacIntyre’s study (2014: 237) on enjoyment in the foreign language classroom, which demonstrated the importance of teachers’ emotional skills as well as of a supportive peer group.

*Krzesimir: I very like people from my group and my teacher who always understand our feelings and personality problems. Nobody is speaking very well yet, so I think we shouldn’t feel bad of that reason.*

In conclusion, apart from a few, most extreme anxiety cases, the teacher can decrease FL classroom anxiety by creating a friendly, supportive atmosphere and a good rapport with and among students. Positive, stress-free atmosphere makes learners feel at ease and thus, they are not afraid to take risks, experiment with the language, make mistakes and participate actively in class. When classes are an enjoyable experience and students attend them with pleasure, they absorb the language without feeling studying is hard work. It is also crucial that teachers pay close attention to students and their needs and try to identify anxious learners. Such learners need to be handled with special care and not be given tasks that make them lose face in front of their peers.

CONCLUSIONS

Language anxiety has been studied for approximately thirty years now. However, it seems that the problem is always up to date due to a large number of anxious students and the fact that apprehension related to studying a foreign language seriously hinders language acquisition. The present study is hoped to have filled the gap in the existing diachronic, longitudonal research into stability of language anxiety (see introduction). The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz *et al.*,1986) was used at two points: at the beginning and the end of a semester. Furthermore, between the two points, qualitative data, i.e. student written narratives, were collected on a regular basis. The changes in the intensity of FL anxiety were investigated as stress-free, student-centred instruction was provided.

The present study is also hoped to have shed new light on the issue of foreign language classroom anxiety thanks to the action research nature of the research, the variety of instruments utilised and the context. The further education context, which is a prevailing context in Poland for out-of-school foreign language learning, has been studied so far less than other contexts such as schools or universities. While Turula (2006) looked into this context as well, she used quantitative research in classes conducted by other teachers. This study, in contrast, involves using qualitative as well as quantitative instruments. The main difference between this study and most other research in this field is that it takes the form of action research and thus all of the tools were administered on my own students during lesson time. Not only was it much more natural for the subjects than being researched on by visiting outsiders, but it also helped me to improve my own instruction. Owing to the uniqueness of this research, the results are hoped to enrich the existing knowledge in the language anxiety domain.

The idea of action research (see Chapter Four introduction) is to systematically collect data on one’s own everyday practice and to analyse it in order to reflect on one’s teaching and to take decisions about one’s future practice. The clear advantage of this type of research was that I was able to find out how many and which of my own students were anxious, what they were anxious about and what in my approach needed changing in order to make them feel less apprehensive and thus benefit more from the lessons. Consequently, I was able to put my students’ suggestions into practice. Any conclusions that appeared as the research progressed were also immediately activated.

Apart from improvements inspired by the action research findings, I implemented stress-free instruction, which was based on the language anxiety research results so far[[185]](#footnote-185), as well as my own teaching experience. The most important elements of this instruction were listed in subchapter 4.5. At the end of the study, most of the anxious students declared a decrease in apprehension. Typical comments pointed out a friendly, supportive classroom atmosphere, enjoyment, a good relationship with other learners as well as the teacher.

Thanks to the study, I got to know every subject’s individual feelings, which enabled me to meet his or her expectations and avoid certain actions that could raise his or her anxiety. The study made me see my students as individuals with their own separate feelings, rather than as uniform groups. As it has been pointed out in Chapter Two, when students are treated as individuals, each having a distinctive identity, they feel accepted and respected. My research made it also possible for me to monitor the stability of language anxiety not only for the whole sample, but also for individual cases. This is in line with a currently growing interest in describing complexity of individual cases, as opposed to large-sample methods (see Introduction). Moreover, student narratives made me sensitive to manifestations of anxiety, which could otherwise be interpreted as rebellious, naughty behaviour, lack of interest or a negative attitude. An average teacher, when faced with this type of uncooperative behaviour, might want to criticise such students, which could lead to making their anxiety even more acute. Those anxious students, however, need extra help, attention, an individual, sensitive approach and ample patience. Only when such students’ individual needs are respected, can they feel contented and thus benefit from the instruction. I must point out here my success with my highly anxious subject, Malwina, who at the end of the study, finally overcame her inhibition and volunteered to speak.

I am aware that the above mentioned approach, which takes into account students’ individual differences, is easier to adopt in a further education context in Poland, which I have labeled as “a positive institution”, i.e. an institution that enables success and promotes positive language learning environments (see subchapter 4.4.). The further education context in Poland helps students flourish thanks to pleasant, modern classrooms, small groups and friendly, understanding instructors, who do not shame or criticize learners or evaluate them for public speaking. When studying in such a positive environment, learners are able to feel comfortable, which alleviates anxiety and facilitates language acquisition. Nevertheless, no matter what the teaching context is, all foreign language students are likely to benefit from stress-free lessons, a positive learning environment and an individual approach. Consequently, all language teachers, regardless of the context, should try to introduce elements of positive institutions into other, often less favourable contexts, making them as positive as possible. Since anxiety may naturally accompany speaking in a foreign language[[186]](#footnote-186), it is crucial that instructors do not add to this apprehension, but make a conscious effort to minimise it by putting students at ease and helping them to experience positive emotions, e.g. enjoyment.

Investigating a positive institution reflects a current interest of SLA researchers in positive psychology. Since positive institutions have so far been understudied in comparison with the other two PP pillars, i.e. positive emotions and positive individual characteristics, the present work is hoped to have contributed to positive psychology research.

Although the findings are insightful, the study is not free from limitations. First of all, more reliable results would have been obtained if the size of the sample had been bigger. The class size in the further education context tends to be small. The groups normally range from four to twelve students. Hence, teaching two groups at the same level provided me with 18 subjects that participated in all parts of the research. As this number was not big enough to draw meaningful conclusions, the study was repeated in the subsequent year, providing 34 subjects altogether. Small as it might appear, the number is a realistic figure in the further education context in the action research type of study when the participants are the researcher’s own students. Ideally, the study could have been repeated one more time, which would probably increase the number of participants to 50, and thus the results would be more consistent.

Moreover, the results could have been slightly affected by the fact that the questionnaires or journals were not anonymous. The subjects were asked to write either their names or e-mail addresses. This was necessary, since it enabled me to combine the questionnaire results and student narratives with the participants’ actual performance in class. Since it was a longitudinal study, the subjects’ identity was essential for monitoring the dynamics of changes in language anxiety intensity. Nevertheless, the fact that the questionnaires or narratives were signed might have caused that the answers provided were not always sincere. It is possible that the subjects might have wanted to please their instructor by providing answers they thought were expected of them. Another possible consequence of the subjects’ not being anonymous was fear of losing face and therefore not revealing the details the learners regarded as embarrassing. A number of questions were highly personal and perhaps some of the informants may not have wanted to admit being anxious, which they could have considered a weakness.

In addition, the fact that the subjects reported on themselves could be considered a limitation due to a possible lack of objectivity. Moreover, some of the informants were very young, 13 years old. At this age, with relatively little life experience, people may not be accurate judges of themselves. In addition, those young participants may not have completed many questionnaires before and perhaps were not always sure how to approach them. What is more, some of the answers may not have been reliable due to the fact that some respondents might have reported what they believed should have been reported (McKay, 2005: 36). However, I verified this possible lack of objectivity by observing the subjects’ classroom performance and behaviour on a regular basis, which was possible with the action research type of study.

Another potential limitation is related to the fact that some of the research tools were in English. Consequently, there is likelihood that some of the items may not have been completely clear to the participants. I always explained or translated the vocabulary items that seemed to be above intermediate level. Nevertheless, there could have been some other words that weaker students did not know. Even though I encouraged questions, more anxious students may have felt uncomfortable to ask them, as they may have been afraid of losing face. An additional reason why some of the questionnaires were administered in English was to turn them into a language exercise. Since all of the research took place during lesson time, I thought it would be fair to administer some of them in English. This way the learners did not get the impression that their lesson time was wasted. Nevertheless, in order to obtain more accurate results, all of the items could have been translated into the participants’ mother tongue. However, this would have been difficult in the case of participants from China, Moldova and Ukraine.

APPENDICES

**Appendix 1**

**The FLCAS**

Bardzo dziękuję za poświęcenie czasu na wypełnienie poniższego kwestionariusza. Będzie on wykorzystany w mojej pracy doktorskiej, dotyczącej lęku towarzyszącemu przyswajaniu i posługiwaniu się językiem obcym. Kasia Budzińska

IMIE I NAZWISKO (LUB ADRES E-MAIL)…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

WIEK……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

WYKSZTAŁCENIE…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

ZNAJOMOŚĆ INNYCH JĘZYKÓW OBCYCH (SŁABA/ŚREDNIA/DOBRA/BARDZO DOBRA W MOWIE/ W PIŚMIE)………………...........................................................................................................................................

DŁUŻSZE POBYTY ZA GRANICĄ W TYM STUDIA, NP. ERASMUS……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

PRACA WŁASNA Z JĘZYKIEM OBCYM (JAKIE FORMY?)…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………........................................

**PROSZĘ WYBRAĆ JEDNĄ, NAJWŁAŚCIWSZĄ ODPOWIEDŹ, WSTAWIAJĄC X W ODPOWIEDNIĄ RUBRYKĘ**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **ZDECYDOWANIE TAK** | **RACZEJ TAK** | **RACZEJ NIE** | **ZDECYDOWANIE NIE** |
| 1 Martwię się, że popełniam błędy na zajęciach języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 2 Drżę, kiedy wiem, że mam być wywołany/a do odpowiedzi na zajęciach języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 3 Przeraża mnie, kiedy nie rozumiem, co mówi nauczyciel na zajęciach języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 4 Chciałbym/abym uczęszczać na zajęcia jeszcze innych języków obcych. |  |  |  |  |
| 5 Na zajęciach języka obcego przyłapuję się na tym, że myślę o rzeczach, które nie mają nic wspólnego z kursem. |  |  |  |  |
| 6 Myślę, że inni uczestnicy kursu są lepsi ode mnie. |  |  |  |  |
| 7 Jestem na luzie podczas sprawdzianów z języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 8 Wpadam w panikę, kiedy muszę mówić bez przygotowania na zajęciach języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 9 Martwię się konsekwencjami niezaliczenia kursu języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 10 Zastanawiam się, dlaczego niektórzy są zestresowani na zajęciach języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 11 Na zajęciach języka obcego tak bardzo się denerwuję, że zapominam rzeczy, które wiem. |  |  |  |  |
| 12 Wstydzę się zgłosić do odpowiedzi na zajęciach języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 13 Stresowałbym/abym się, gdybym miała rozmawiać z rodzimym użytkownikiem języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 14 Frustruję się, kiedy nie rozumiem poprawek nauczyciela. |  |  |  |  |
| 15 Nawet gdy jestem dobrze przygotowany/a na zajęcia języka obcego, i tak jestem niespokojny/a. |  |  |  |  |
| 16 Boję się, że mój nauczyciel języka poprawi każdy błąd, który popełnię. |  |  |  |  |
|  | **ZDECYDOWANIE TAK** | **RACZEJ TAK** | **RACZEJ NIE** | **ZDECYDOWANIE NIE** |
| 17 Czuję, że mocno bije mi serce, kiedy jestem wywołany/a do odpowiedzi na zajęciach języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 18 Im więcej uczę się do sprawdzianu z języka obcego, tym bardziej wszystko mi się miesza. |  |  |  |  |
| 19 Czuję presję, aby bardzo dobrze przygotowywać się do zajęć języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 20 Wydaje mi się, że inni słuchacze mówią lepiej ode mnie w języku obcym. |  |  |  |  |
| 21 Zajęcia języka obcego mają tak szybkie tempo, że boję się, iż pozostanę w tyle. |  |  |  |  |
| 22 Jestem bardziej spięty/a na zajęciach języka obcego niż na innych zajęciach. |  |  |  |  |
| 23 Denerwuję się, kiedy wypowiadam się na zajęciach języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 24 W drodze na zajęcia języka obcego czuję się zrelaksowany/a. |  |  |  |  |
| 25 Martwię się, że nie rozumiem wszystkich słów nauczyciela. |  |  |  |  |
| 26 Jestem przytłoczony/a ilością reguł, które trzeba poznać, aby mówić w obcym języku. |  |  |  |  |
| 27 Boję się, że inni słuchacze będą się ze mnie śmiać, kiedy będę mówić w obcym języku. |  |  |  |  |
| 28 Prawdopodobnie czułbym/abym się komfortowo w towarzystwie rodzimych użytkowników języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 29 Jestem zestresowany/a, kiedy nauczyciel języka obcego zadaje mi pytania, na które nie przygotowałem/am wcześniej odpowiedzi. |  |  |  |  |
|  | **BARDZO CZĘSTO** | **DOŚĆ CZĘSTO** | **RACZEJ**  **RZADKO** | **BARDZO RZADKO** |
| 30 Jestem pewny/a siebie, kiedy wypowiadam się na zajęciach języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 31 Mam ochotę nie przyjść na zajęcia języka obcego. |  |  |  |  |
| 32 Bardzo się wstydzę, gdy mam mówić w języku obcym przed innymi słuchaczami. |  |  |  |  |

☺

**Appendix 2**

Listening, Reading And Writing Anxiety Scale

**Name or e-mail address:** …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**4-strongly agree, 3-agree, 2-disagree, 1-strongly disagree**

**Listening Anxiety Scale**

1. I have difficulty understanding oral instructions given to me in English.

2. I get annoyed when I come across words that I don’t understand while listening to English.

3. When listening to English, it is difficult to differentiate the words from one another.

4. I keep thinking that everyone else except me understands very well what an English speaker is saying.

5. I find it difficult to understand unfamiliar English accents.

6. When listening to English, I often understand the words but still can’t quite understand what the speaker means.

7. When listening to English, I usually end up translating word by word without understanding the content.

8. It’s difficult for me to listen to English when there is even a little bit of background noise.

9. When a person speaks English very fast, I worry that I might not understand all of it.

10. I am nervous when I am listening to English if I am not familiar with the topic.

**Reading Anxiety Scale**

1. It bothers me to encounter words I can’t pronounce while reading in English.

2. I would be happy just to learn to speak English rather than having to read as well.

3. I usually end up translating word by word when I’m reading in English.

4. I get upset whenever I encounter unknown grammar when reading in English.

5. When reading in English, I often understand the words but still can’t quite understand what the author is saying.

6. When reading in English, I get nervous and confused when I don’t understand every word.

7. I am nervous when I am reading a passage in English when I am not familiar with the topic.

8. When I’m reading in English, I get so confused I can’t remember what I’m reading.

9. I panic whenever I see a whole page of English in front of me.

10. I get upset when I’m not sure whether I understand what I am reading in English.

**Writing Anxiety Scale**

1. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.

2. I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.

3. I am afraid that my English compositions would be rated as very poor.

4. I worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others’.

5. I am afraid that the other students would criticise my English composition if they read it.

6. While writing in English, I am nervous.

7. If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.

8. While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.

9. I don’t enjoy what I write in English.

10. I panic when I want to use a word in my composition, but I don’t know it in English

**Appendix 3**

Style Analysis Survey

http://www.uky.edu/~jrouhie/sas.html

**ACTIVITY 1: HOW I USE MY PHYSICAL SENSES TO STUDY OR WORK**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | I remember something better if I write it down. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 2 | I take lots of notes. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 3 | I can visualize pictures, number, or words in my head. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 4 | I prefer to learn with video or TV more than with other media. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 5 | I underline or highlight the important parts I read. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 6 | I use color-coding to help me as I learn or work. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 7 | I need written directions for tasks. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 8 | I get distracted by background noises. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 9 | I have to look at people to understand what they say. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 10 | I am more comfortable when the walls where I study or work have posters or pictures. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 11 | I remember things better if I discuss them out loud. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 12 | I prefer to learn by listening to a lecture or a tape, rather than by reading. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 13 | I need oral directions for tasks. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 14 | Background sounds help me think. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 15 | I like to listen to music when I work or study. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 16 | I can easily understand what people say even if I can't see them. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 17 | I remember better what people say than what they look like. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 18 | I easily remember jokes I hear. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 19 | I can identify people by their voices. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 20 | When I turn on the TV, I listen to the sound more than watching the screen. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 21 | I'd rather just start doing things rather than pay attention to directions. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 22 | I need frequent breaks when I work or study. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 23 | I move my lips when I read silently. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 24 | I avoid sitting at a desk when I don't have to. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 25 | I get nervous when I sit still too long. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 26 | I think better when I can move around. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 27 | Manipulating objects helps me to remember. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 28 | I enjoy building or making things. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 29 | I like a lot of physical activities. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 30 | I enjoy collecting cards, stamps, coins or other things. | 0 1 2 3 |

**ACTIVITY 2: HOW I DEAL WITH PEOPLE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | I prefer to work or study with others. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 2 | I make new friends easily. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 3 | I like to be in groups of people. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 4 | It is easy for me to talk to strangers. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 5 | I keep up with personal news about other people. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 6 | I like to stay late at parties. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 7 | Interactions with new people give me energy. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 8 | I remember people's names easily. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 9 | I have many friends and acquaintances. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 10 | Wherever I go, I develop personal contacts. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 11 | I prefer to work alone or study alone. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 12 | I am rather shy. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 13 | I prefer individual hobbies and sports. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 14 | People view me as more detached than sociable. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 15 | In a large group, I tend to keep silent. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 16 | Gatherings with lots of people tend to stress me. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 17 | I get nervous when dealing with new people. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 18 | I avoid parties if I can. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 19 | Remembering names is difficult for me. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 20 | It is hard for most people to get to know me. | 0 1 2 3 |

**ACTIVITY 3: HOW I HANDLE POSSIBILITIES**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | I have a vivid imagination. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 2 | I like to think of lots of new ideas. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 3 | I can think of many different solutions of a problem. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 4 | I enjoy considering future events. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 5 | I like multiple possiblities and options. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 6 | Following a step-by-step procedure bores me. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 7 | I like to discover things rather than have everything explained. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 8 | I consider myself original. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 9 | I am an ingenious person. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 10 | It feels fine if the teacher or boss changes the plan. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 11 | I am proud of being practical. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 12 | I behave in a down-to-earth way. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 13 | I am attacted to sensible people. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 14 | I prefer realism to new, untested ideas. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 15 | I prefer things presented in a step-by-step way. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 16 | I want a clas or work session to follow a clear plan. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 17 | I like concrete facts, not speculation. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 18 | Finding hidden meanings is frustrating or irrelevant to me. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 19 | I prefer to avoid too many options. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 20 | I feel it is useless for me to think about the future. | 0 1 2 3 |

**ACTIVITY 4: HOW I APPROACH TASKS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | I reach decisions quickly. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 2 | I am an organized person. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 3 | I make lists of things I need to do. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 4 | I consult my lists in order to get things done. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 5 | Messy, unorganized environments make me nervous.I get places on time. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 6 | I start tasks on time or early. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 7 | I get places on time. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 8 | Deadlines help me organize work. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 9 | I enjoy a sense of structure. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 10 | I follow through with what I have planned. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 11 | I am a spontaneous person. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 12 | I like to just let things happen, not plan them. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 13 | I feel uncomfortable with a lot of structure. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 14 | I put off decisions as long as I can. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 15 | I have a messy desk or room. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 16 | I believe deadlines are artificial or useless. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 17 | I keep an open mind about things. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 18 | I believe that enjoying myself is the most important thing. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 19 | Lists of tasks make me feel tired or upset. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 20 | I feel fine about changing my mind. | 0 1 2 3 |

**ACTIVITY 5: HOW I DEAL WITH IDEAS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | I prefer simple answers rather than a lot of explanations. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 2 | Too many details tend to confuse me. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 3 | I ignore details that do not seem relevant. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 4 | It is easy for me to see the overall plan or big picture. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 5 | I can summarize information rather easily. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 6 | It is easy for me to paraphrase what other people say. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 7 | I see the main point very quickly. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 8 | I am satisfied with knowing the major ideas without the details. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 9 | I can pull together (synthesize) things easily. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 10 | When I make an outline, I write down only the key points. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 11 | I prefer detailed answers instead of short answers. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 12 | It is difficult for me to summarize detailed information. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 13 | I focus on specific facts or information. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 14 | I enjoy breaking general ideas down into smaller pieces. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 15 | I prefer looking for differences rather than similarities. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 16 | I use my logical analysis to solve problems. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 17 | I become nervous when only the main ideas are presented. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 18 | I focus on the details rather than the big picture. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 19 | My written outlines contain many details. | 0 1 2 3 |
| 20 | When I tell a story or explain something, it takes a long time. | 0 1 2 3 |

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SUMMARY

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY IN A FURTHER EDUCATION CONTEXT**

As an educator with twenty years’ experience in one foreign language, as well as a learner of several others, the present writer has observed how strongly L2 acquisition and use may be affected by the anxiety which can accompany the process of learning. While apprehension frequently occurs in educational domains, it seems to be particularly prevalent in FL acquisition. This is largely attributable to the fact that language learning is a personal process, closely connected to the learner’s ego. Foreign language learners endeavour to express themselves authentically with the limited resources at their command. The apprehension related to the delicate nature of language learning becomes much more severe when an insensitive teacher adds to inherent anxiety by making students perform in front of others so they are evaluated by both the instructor and their peers. Another factor contributing to foreign language classroom anxiety is the tense atmosphere created by an authoritarian teacher who uses harsh error correction methods and does not create an environment of mutual support and acceptance.

As Jin *et al.* (2015) point out, research into the stability of FL anxiety, particularly diachronic stability is only in its infancy. The colleagues also claim that longitudinal studies related to FL anxiety are rare. Garrett and Young (2009) highlighted that previous longitudinal research exclusively focused on learners’ development of linguistic ability or communicative competence. Thus, as Jin *et al*. state, the scarcity of research into anxiety over time partly results from a traditional neglect of changes of learners’ inner feelings. Moreover, they claim that there has been dearth of research into the synchronic changes of FL anxiety as well.

The present study is hoped to fill the gap in the existing diachronic research into stability of language anxiety. It is longitudinal research involving application of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), designed by Horwitz *et al.* (1986) at two points: at the beginning and the end of a semester of an English course in the further education context. Furthermore, between the two points, qualitative data, i.e. student written narratives, were collected on a regular basis. The changes in the intensity of FL anxiety were investigated as stress-free, student-centred instruction was provided.

In addition, the present study reflects the growing position of positive psychology (PP) within the modern SLA field. As MacIntyre and Mercer (2014: 154) state, PP is “the empirical study of how people thrive and flourish; it is the study of the ordinary human strengths and virtues that make life good”. Positive psychology addresses three main topic areas: positive emotions, positive character traits associated with good living and positive institutions that enable people to flourish.

The social turn in SLA, as MacIntyre and Mercer (2014) propound, means that the field is taking seriously the contexts in which language learning takes place. The researchers also observe that conducting studies of positive institutions has been the weakest link for PP. Even though more attention has recently been paid to describing the contexts in which language learning occurs, particularly at classroom level, there is need for studies of the institutions that enable success and promote positive language learning environments. The present work is hoped to fill the gap by studying the further education context in Poland, which meets the criteria of a positive institution.

What is more, as MacIntyre and Mercer (2014) state, alongside standard, large-sample methods, there has been interest in describing the complexity of individual cases. The present study is an example of an individual-level, mixed method approach, since triangulation was employed and qualitative data (student journals) was used as well as quantitative data. The journals, thanks to their personal nature, provided the insight into the complexity of individual cases.

This study is divided into five chapters. The first three chapters are theoretical. Nevertheless, they include pedagogical implications as well as the remaining two chapters. This is because the present writer has been a practising teacher for over twenty years and all of the described classroom situations are close to her heart, as she has personally experienced them with her students. Chapter One describes socio-affective factors in human behaviour, and how they relate to language acquisition. Variables such as student motivation, attitudes, beliefs, self-esteem, self-efficacy or inhibition are considered. Even though language aptitude plays the primary role in SLA, this factor is stable and hence, cannot be augmented by instructors. Therefore, I have selected other factors that can be boosted by teachers in the classroom. The focal part of the chapter deals with motivation, since it is the second most important variable, after language aptitude and is believed to override any negative factors, e.g. FL classroom anxiety.

Chapter Two describes emotions experienced by students during the process of language learning. Positive emotions, facilitating SLA are addressed as well as negative ones that hinder foreign language attainment. In line with positive psychology, the chapter focuses on what can be done to increase strengths and attributes such as resilience, enjoyment or optimism, rather than concentrate on negative emotions. A large part of the chapter deals with the phenomenon of unwillingness to communicate and includes implications for encouraging communication in the target language.

Chapter Three is the focal part of the thesis analysing the phenomenon of FL anxiety in depth. It describes different anxiety types and defines the concept. Sources, manifestations and language anxiety effects are presented. Moreover, the present writer looks into the role of anxiety in all aspects of foreign language learning, i.e. grammar, vocabulary pronunciation, speaking, listening, reading and writing. Possibilities for reducing apprehension related to each component are put forward. An important part of the chapter is the relationship between anxiety and what happens in the classroom. It focuses on the teacher’s role in alleviating anxiety, for example by proximity, community building, or emphatic behaviour.

The empirical part of the thesis aims to investigate foreign language anxiety and its stability in the further education context in Poland. It was a longitudinal study carried out over one semester of an Intermediate English language course. It took the form of action research, i.e. researching one’s own practice (Loughran *et al.*, 2002; Whitehead and McNiff, 2006; Norton, 2009). This means that the study was conducted on the present writer’s own students during their lesson time and the implications that arose were immediately put into practice. The participants were adults and young adults, i.e. middle school age and above. In order to obtain the most reliable results, the researcher employed methodological triangulation (Wilczyńska and Michońska-Stadnik, 2010) and used a wide range of data collection tools.

Chapter Four concentrates on analysing the results of quantitative data obtained by employing various types of tools. The most prominent instrument was the classic FLCAS (Horwitz *et al.*, 1986) and its post-test. Apart from measuring the importance of language anxiety in the further education context, the stability of the variable was investigated. Other instruments utilised for obtaining quantitative data included: Listening, Reading And Writing Anxiety Scale, An Inventory Assessing Anxiety Level Generated By Typical Language Class Activities, The Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory – BALLI and Style Analysis Survey.

Chapter Five, on the other hand, features qualitative data analysis. The data were collected using ‘Self’ Questionnaire and Student Journals, which contain extracts from the subjects’ narratives. The chapter includes the analysis of the narratives, my self-reflections and action points for improving the researcher’s teaching in order to ensure that it is not anxiety-provoking. Owing to the fact that the data were not anonymous, I got insight into the emotions of individual participants and was able to observe how their emotions evolved throughout the course of the study.

STRESZCZENIE

**LĘK TOWARZYSZĄCY PRZYSWAJANIU JĘZYKA OBCEGO W NAUCZANIU POZASZKOLNYM**

Z lękiem językowym oraz jego negatywnym wpływem na efektywność uczenia się autorka spotkała się zarówno jako nauczycielka języka z ponad dwudziestoletnim doświadczeniem, jak i osoba, która sama uczyła się kilku języków. Mimo iż lęk jest częstym zjawiskiem w szkolnictwie, dotyczy on jednak w szczególny sposób uczących się języków obcych. Dzieje się tak głównie dlatego, że nauka języka obcego jest procesem osobistym, wpływającym bezpośrednio na ego ucznia. Uczący się języka obcego usiłują wyrazić swoją osobowość za pomocą ograniczonego środka, co może powodować ich frustrację. Chcieliby rozmawiając w języku obcym być tak samo dowcipni, błyskotliwi czy perfekcyjni jak podczas rozmów w mowie ojczystej. Niepokój uczniów związany z trudnościami wyrażenia siebie samych w obcym języku pogłębia się na skutek konieczności wypowiadania się w klasie na forum, a co za tym idzie - bycia poddanym krytyce zarówno nauczyciela, jak i innych uczniów. Kolejnym istotnym czynnikiem, mającym wpływ na poziom lęku językowego może być napięta atmosfera na zajęciach, wytworzona przez surowego nauczyciela, który krytykuje uczniów i ostro reaguje na błędy. Często lektorzy nie zdają sobie sprawy z tego, iż dla efektywnego przyswajania języka konieczna jest przyjazna atmosfera, w której uczniowie czują się dobrze, wspierają i akceptują się nawzajem. Jeszcze lepsze rezultaty mogą być osiągnięte, kiedy nauczyciel ma dobry kontakt z grupą, a uczniowie lubią się i z przyjemnością przychodzą na zajęcia. W takich warunkach uczniowie nie boją się eksperymentować, popełniać błędów i mówić w języku obcym, co jest konieczne aby nauczyć się biegle nim posługiwać.

Pomimo udowodnionego badaniami negatywnego wpływu lęku na przyswajanie języka, nauczyciele wciąż za mało starają się, aby mu zapobiec. Często wynika to z ich nieświadomości, że pewne działania nauczyciela mogą wywoływać wśród uczniów strach lub zamknięcie się w sobie. Zasadnicza część pracy badawczej oparta jest na wewnętrznych przemyśleniach i odczuciach słuchaczy autorki. Dotyczą one szerokiej gamy aspektów związanych z przyswajaniem języka. Te bardzo osobiste zwierzenia uczniów pokazują jak uczyć, respektując uczucia słuchaczy i tym samym zapewnić im optymalne warunki do przyswajania języka.

Głównym celem pracy jest badanie czynników socjo-afektywnych oraz afektywnych, w szczególności lęku językowego, oraz ich wpływ na przyswajanie języka obcego. Odkrycie zjawiska lęku językowego nie jest rzeczą nową. Od pojawienia się artykułu „Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety” (Horwitz et al., 1986) wiele badań zostało przeprowadzonych w tej dziedzinie. Celem rozprawy jest pogłębienie tego dorobku. To, co wyróżnia badania przeprowadzone przez autorkę, to fakt, iż ma ono formę „action research”, to znaczy, że autorka bada różne aspekty lęku językowego na swoich uczniach, od razu wprowadzając w życie implikacje związane z obniżaniem lęku. Badanie jest prowadzone w naturalny sposób podczas zajęć, bez ingerencji osób z zewnątrz lub użycia sprzętu medycznego, lub kamer.

Jak twierdzą naukowcy, n.p. Jin et al. (2015), dotychczas było niewiele badań podłużnych lęku językowego. Stabilność lęku językowego również była rzadko badana. Praca ta wypełnia tę lukę z uwagi na to, iż zawiera zarówno badania podłużne, jak i badania nad stabilnością lęku językowego. Co więcej, rozprawa odzwierciedla wzrastające obecnie znaczenie pozytywnej psychologii w nauczaniu języków obcych, w szczególności zajmuje się jednym z jej trzech filarów, tzn. „pozytywnymi instytucjami”, czyli takimi miejscami nauczania, które sprzyjają dobremu opanowaniu języka. Według MacIntyre i Mercer (2014) filar ten jak dotąd był najmniej badany przez naukowców. Autorka dowodzi, iż kontekst nauczania pozaszkolnego, w którym przeprowadza swoje badania, spełnia kryteria pozytywnej instytucji i tym samym wypełnia niszę. Kontekst pozaszkolny, pomimo iż odgrywa priorytetową rolę w nauczaniu języków obcych w Polsce, nie był jak dotąd tak często wykorzystywany do badań jak wyższe uczelnie czy szkoły publiczne.

Ci sami badacze wskazują na obecne zainteresowanie opisem indywidualnych przypadków w przeciwieństwie do dużych grup badawczych. Obecne badanie było przeprowadzone na stosunkowo małej grupie, a dzięki braku anonimowości, triangulacji i różnorodności badań ilościowych i jakościowych pozwoliło na wyłonienie i bliższą analizę indywidualnych przypadków i ocenę stabilności lęku dla danych uczestników. Na wyróżnienie zasługuje zastosowanie dzienników do przeprowadzenia badań jakościowych, ponieważ ich osobisty charakter pozwolił na wniknięcie w głąb psychiki poszczególnych uczestników.

Praca ta podzielona jest na pięć rozdziałów, z których pierwsze trzy są teoretyczne, a ostatnie dwa empiryczne. Nie mniej jednak implikacje metodyczne pojawiają się we wszystkich z nich. Dzieje się tak, ponieważ autorka jest praktykującym nauczycielem od ponad dwudziestu lat i wszystkie opisane sytuacje są bliskie jej sercu, gdyż osobiście doświadczyła ich wraz ze swoimi uczniami.

Rozdział pierwszy skupia się na czynnikach socjo-afektywnych oraz ich związku z przyswajaniem języków obcych. Opisane są czynniki takie jak motywacja, nastawienie, poglądy, wiara w siebie, poczucie własnej wartości oraz zahamowania. Pomimo iż zdolności językowe odgrywają najważniejszą rolę w przyswajaniu języków obcych, czynnik ten jest stały i nauczyciele nie mają na niego wpływu. Dlatego też autorka wybrała inne czynniki, które mogą ulec zmianie pod wpływem działania nauczyciela podczas lekcji języka. Dużą część tego rozdziału stanowi opis motywacji jako najważniejszego zmienialnego czynnika, który według niektórych może przewyższyć brak zdolności językowych oraz inne negatywne czynniki, np. lęk językowy. Autorka przedstawia teorie motywacji, definicje oraz wielorakie strategie motywacyjne.

Rozdział drugi opisuje emocje przeżywane przez uczniów języków obcych. Przedstawione są zarówno emocje pozytywne, korzystnie wpływające na przyswajanie języka, oraz negatywne, zakłócające ten proces. Podążając za pozytywną psychologią rozdział ten skupia się na pozytywnych uczuciach, takich jak radość czy optymizm. Dużą część tego rozdziału stanowi opis zjawiska zwanego niechęcią do komunikowania się oraz prezentacja sposobów na zwiększenie chęci do komunikacji.

Rozdział trzeci jest centralną częścią rozprawy i analizuje lęk językowy. Opisuje różne typy lęku oraz definiuje ten koncept. Zaprezentowane są źródła, symptomy oraz efekty lęku językowego. Ponadto autorka przygląda się roli lęku we wszystkich aspektach nauczania języków obcych, takich jak gramatyka, słownictwo, wymowa, mówienie, słuchanie, czytanie i pisanie. Zaprezentowane zostają sposoby obniżania lęku dla każdego z tych aspektów. Ważną częścią rozdziału jest przedstawienie związku pomiędzy lękiem językowym a tym, co dzieje się na lekcjach. Rozdział ten skupia się na roli nauczyciela przy obniżaniu lęku językowego, na przykład poprzez dobry kontakt z grupą, budowanie relacji wewnątrz grupy oraz empatyczne zachowanie.

Część empiryczna pracy bada lęk językowy oraz jego stabilność w kontekście pozaszkolnym w Polsce. Przeprowadzono badanie podłużne w trakcie trwania jednego semestru kursu językowego na poziomie średniozaawansowanym. Zastosowano metodę action research, co oznacza, że autorka badała swoich własnych uczniów podczas zajęć, a implikacje metodyczne, wynikające na bieżąco, były natychmiast wprowadzane w życie. Uczestnikami byli dorośli i młodzież ucząca się w gimnazjum i liceum. W celu uzyskania jak najbardziej wiarygodnych wyników, zostały zastosowane triangulacja oraz duża ilość różnorodnych narzędzi badawczych.

W rozdziale czwartym autorka opisuje narzędzia, za pomocą których przeprowadziła badanie na swoich uczniach oraz prezentuje pytania badawcze, charakter badania oraz próbę badawczą. Przedstawia również analizę wyników badań ilościowych. Głównym zastosowanym narzędziem był klasyczny kwestionariusz do badania lęku językowego, FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) oraz jego post-test, co pozwoliło na ocenę stabilności lęku. Inne wykorzystane instrumenty badawcze to: kwestionariusz stwierdzający lęk podczas słuchania, czytania i pisania, ankieta sprawdzająca lęk wywołany typowymi ćwiczeniami wykorzystywanymi na zajęciach językowych oraz kwestionariusz badający poglądy dotyczące nauki języków obcych.

Rozdział piąty zajmuje się analizą badań jakościowych. Dane zostały uzyskane przy pomocy kwestionariusza „Self” oraz dzienników uczestników, zawierających odczucia studentów związane z zajęciami języka angielskiego, koncentrując się wokół zjawiska lęku językowego. Rozdział zawiera fragmenty z dzienników uczniów i ich analizę, a ponadto refleksje autorki nad własnymi metodami nauczania wywołane emocjami opisanymi przez uczestników badania oraz implikacje dotyczące udoskonalenia sposobów nauczania w celu ograniczenia lęku językowego.

Wyniki badania mogą okazać się bardzo przydatne dla nauczycieli, którzy nie wiedzą jak pomóc uczniom zmagającym się z lękiem językowym. Wiedza uzyskana w wyniku badania może mieć praktyczne zastosowanie, gdyż dzięki niej nauczyciele będą zwracali więcej uwagi na uczucia uczniów, co ma niebagatelny wpływ na zdobywanie przez nich wiedzy i umiejętności językowych. Implikacje metodyczne wynikające z badania mogą również okazać się przydatne przy podejmowaniu dalszych działań o podobnym charakterze.

1. Self-efficacy will be discussed further in subchapter 1.4 Self Esteem. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “When I must talk about precise things and I am not certain of the exact terminology”. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The subjects’ comments In English have been kept in the original version and therefore may contain errors. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Learning styles will also be dealt with in the empirical part of this thesis in section 4.6.6. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Flanders and Havumaki (1960) carried out an experiment (reported by Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001: 125) to find out teacher influence on student friendship. The experiment demonstrated that students praised by teachers were more popular with their peers than students who received no praise. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Similarly, the original, English version of FLCAS was designed for English speaking learners of other languages. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The original version of the BALLI has been included above in Section 1.3. Learner Beliefs [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Apart from the reversed statements [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The researcher took into account the statement with which the subjects both agree and strongly agree with. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The statements that the subjects agree and strongly agree with were added. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. As above [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. This is the sum of the students both agreeing and agreeing strongly with the statement. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. They either agree or strongly agree with the statement. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See section 5.2.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The subjects who were not Polish had the word Poles replaced by their nationalities (Ukrainians, Moldovans, Chinese). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The figures include the subjects who learn equally well alone as with other students. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The figure includes the subjects who have the ability to learn in either an intuitive-random or a concrete-sequential manner. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. This chapter analyses my students’ reflections, perceptions and feelings related to my own teaching . The subjects reveal their hidden needs and fears, which makes this chapter different from the previous, more factual one. Consequently, I am personally involved in its analysis. For this reason, using the pronoun I seems natural and hence, appropriate. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Potrzebny będzie na studiach. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Żeby nie być zacofanym nieukiem. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Dla własnej satysfakcji. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Pomagać np. w rodzinie dzieciom w odrabianiu lekcji/tłumaczeniu czegoś. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Czytać książki i oglądać filmy w oryginalnej wersji, a także rozumieć teksty piosenek w języku angielskim. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Wydaje mi się, że chciałabym porozumiewać się i używać tego języka biegle, tak jak ojczystego. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Chciałbym dobrze sobie radzić z porozumiewaniem się z innymi ludźmi po angielsku, nie wstydzić się rozmawiać w tym języku i popełniać mniej błędów. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Chciałabym, żeby zrozumieli mnie inni i żebym potrafiła wyrazić swoje myśli. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Moje wyobrażenie: Sprawnie rozmawiam z innymi w języku angielskim, mówię płynnie i mam bogate słownictwo. Doskonale rozumiem zarówno innych, jak i wszystkie teksty pisane w języku angielskim bez żadnych problemów. Posługiwanie się językiem angielskim jest dla mnie tak samo naturalne jak mowa polska. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Potrafię porozumiewać się z obcokrajowcami, potrafię zrozumieć to, co do mnie mówią. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Chcę wyjechać za granicę i spokojnie porozmawiać z osobami stale mieszkającymi w anglii. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Wyobrażam sobie, że wyjeżdżam do Wielkiej Brytanii i rozmawiam z Gordonem Ramseyem. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Wyobrażam sobie, że będę płynnie porozumiewać się językiem. Jeśli zdobędę pracę, w której język angielski będzie wymagany będę potrafiła napisać jakieś pismo lub emaila. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Chciałbym bez problemów móc porozumiewać się z obcokrajowcami pracującymi na budowach w Polsce. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Whenever the subjects wrote their journal entries in English, I kept them in the original version. Consequently, a number of them contain mistakes. Polish entries have been translated into English, with the original emoticons. The original, Polish entries have been placed in the footnotes. They contain original mistakes in the subjects’ mother tongue. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Chcę posługiwać się biegle, rozumieć innych żeby mogła spokojnie czytać książki w tym języku, może nawet używać w publicznych wystąpieniach. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Myślę, że jeśli moje zaangażowanie w naukę było maksymalne, to osiągnę to, co bym chciała. Zależy to od chęci i czasu. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Wydaje mi się, że uda mi się opanować język, ponieważ bardzo bym tego chciała. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Jeżeli człowiek się do czegoś przyłoży to to osiągnie. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Wiem, że tylko własną pracą i chęciami mogę to osiągnąć i nic mi w tym nie może przeszkodzić. ☺ [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Nie obawiam się tego, ponieważ cel, który sobie wyznaczyłam nie jest wcale wysoko postawiony. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Nie, ponieważ i tak nie nauczę się mówić bardzo dobrze. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Mam nadzieję, że osiągnę taki poziom, aby komunikować się płynnie. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Nie obawiam się tego z tak dobrym wykładowcą. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Oczywiście, że się tego obawiam. Czasami brak czasu i natłok obowiązków powoduje, że nie skupiam się na nauce języka tak, jakbym chciała, ale staram się to jakoś pogodzić. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Obawiam się z powodu braku wytrzymałości w dążeniu do celu, oraz z braku czasu. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Obawiam się tego, ponieważ nie mam wystarczająco dużo czasu, który mogłabym poświęcić na bardziej intensywną pracę w domu. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Bo nie mam dobrej pamięci i nie umiem. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Obawiam się że nie nauczę się tak język angielskiego, jaki poziom potrzebuje, ponieważ ma słabe zdolności językowe. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Każdy człowiek jest inny. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Nie mam zdania. To zwykli ludzie tacy jak my. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. The Learning Skills Center at the University of Texas. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Myślę, że najbardziej stresujące dla mnie jest mówienie, rozmowa gdy wszyscy słuchają. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Cały stres się nasila w momencie, gdy mam publicznie wypowiedzieć się przed całą grupą – nie ważne czy znam ich jeden dzień czy trzy lata. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Najbardziej stresujące jest według mnie wypowiadanie się na forum klasy. Trochę się denerwuję, że mówienie może mi nie wyjść tak dobrze, jakbym chciał. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Najbardziej stresującym ćwiczeniem jest dla mnie SPEAKING ponieważ nie potrafię mówić po angielsku. Nie potrafię myśleć po angielsku i w związku z tym mam problemy z rozmowami. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Mówienie na forum grupy jest troszkę stresujące, czuję że robię się czerwona ☺ I to chciałabym unikać ☺ :P [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Dla mnie najbardziej stresującym ćwiczeniem jest mówienie. Dla tego że nie mogę od razu zorientować się co chcę powiedzieć, zapominam słowa i wiem, że mówię z błędami. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Często bywa podczas odpowiedzi ustnej że brakuje mi słów, które tak naprawdę znam, ale w tej chwili zapomniał. W takiej sytuacji mój stres gwałtownie wzrasta i strach do kontynuowania rozmowy. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Rozmowy z ludźmi wydają mi się najbardziej stresujące, ponieważ trzeba komunikować się z innymi osobami. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Stresujące są dla mnie ćwiczenia, w których opowiadamy coś w parach lub grupie, a później musimy powiedzieć co inna osoba mówiła, a nie zawsze rozumiem lub pamiętam odpowiedź innej osoby, ponieważ zbytnio skupiam się na własnej wypowiedzi. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Najbardziej stresujące jest dla mnie streszczanie tego co powiedział ktoś inny. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Według mnie najbardziej stresujące jest, kiedy najpierw rozmawiamy w parach, a później trzeba opowiedzieć o tym, co mówiła druga osoba. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Zgadywanie słów – losujemy kartkę ze słowem i całej klasie musimy opisać co to jest, z czym to jest związane – opisujemy wyraz innymi, swoimi słowami. Bardzo stresuje mnie tego typu zabawa, gdyż obawiam się, że źle mogę zrozumieć/wytłumaczyć innym dane wyrażenie/słowo. Bardzo możliwe, że chodzi tu o presję, jaka spoczywa na mnie, aby dobrze coś wytłumaczyć, a czasami w wyniku stresu brakuje mi słów i nie potrafię składnie się wyrazić. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Słuchanie wydaje mi się najbardziej stresujące, ponieważ mam trudności ze zrozumieniem wszystkich szczegółów. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Stresujący wydaje się najbardziej listening. Wymaga dużego skupienia, by „wyłapać” ważne informacje. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Może jeszcze słuchanie gdyż czasami jest ono dla mnie trudne, ponieważ nie zawsze rozumiem co lektor mówi. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Jeszcze jedna rzecz, która jest bardzo stresująca to to, że jeśli wiem że na test mamy ograniczony czas (nie całe zajęcia) denerwuję się, że nie uda mi się w czasie rozwiązać wszystkich zadań. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Sprawdziany, kartkówki: stresuję się nimi ponieważ boje się, że nie zalicze i nie zdam tego kursu. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Sprawdziany są dla mnie najbardziej stresujące, ponieważ trzeba dużo umieć. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Żadne z ćwiczeń nie są dla mnie stresujące, ale jeśli musiałabym jednak coś wybrać to byłoby ćwiczenie gramatyki, gdyż często popełniam błędy, zwykle wynika to z nieuwagi, a nie braku wiedzy, więc denerwuję się, gdy nadchodzi moja kolej, ponieważ nie chcę „na szybko” powiedzieć coś źle. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Czasami jest też problem z ćwiczeniem, w którym musimy tworzyć zdania z określonymi słówkami, a nie tłumaczymy ich na j. polski. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Nie wolałbym uniknąć rozmów w parach gdyż to pomaga w pokonaniu barier. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Wiem, że muszę próbować mówić, bo tylko praktyka pomoże mi się tego nauczyć. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Najbardziej stresujące jest według mnie wypowiadanie się na forum klasy. Mimo wszystko nie chciałbym tego unikać, ponieważ wiem jak bardzo jest to przydatne, wspomaga to co najważniejsze, czyli rozmawianie. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Nie chcę tego unikać, tylko ćwiczyć. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Chciałabym jeszcze więcej mówić i wypowiadać się, gdyż to pomogłoby mi jeszcze śmielej to robić. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Ćwiczenia w mówieniu wydają się być najmniej stresujące. Komunikowanie się w nowym języku, odmiennym od tego używanego na co dzień, jest ciekawe i interesujące. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Najmniej stresujące są dla mnie ćwiczenia w parach, gdy mogę swobodnie rozmawiać lub też w grupie. Nie jest wówczas tak, że cała uwaga skupia się na mnie, dlatego też nie martwię się aż tak powiedzeniem czegoś niewłaściwego. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Najmniej stresujące jest dla mnie mówienie, ponieważ uwielbiam rozmawiać, a dzięki tym ćwiczeniom mogę dodatkowo ćwiczyć komunikowanie się z innymi ludźmi w j. angielskim, poznawać ich i świetnie się przy tym bawić. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Ćwiczenie, które wydaje mi się najmniej stresujące to rozmowa z drugą osobą o czymś (o czym kolwiek). Lubie rozmawiać z ludźmi i się z nimi śmiać. Przez rozmowy zawiązują się nowe znajomości i przyjaźnie. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Najbardziej odprężające są zdecydowanie prace pisemne. Nie muszę się martwić o wymowę i mogę przemyśleć dokładnie każde zdanie i użyć w nim wielu słówek. Są one najłatwiejsze i najprzyjemniejsze. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Jeżeli chodzi o ćwiczenia nie tylko w klasie, to najmniej stresują mnie wypracowania. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Najmniej stresująca jest rozgrzewka, ćwiczenia wprowadzające do zajęć w postaci gier, pobudzające wyobraźnię. Można się wtedy pośmiać i zrelaksować. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Najmniej stresujące wydają mi się konkursy związane ze słówkami – lubię rywalizację. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Rywalizowanie między grupami wydaje mi się fajne i zabawne. Dużo też można wtedy zapamiętać. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Ćwiczenia ze zgadywaniem słówek są najmniej stresujące, są wręcz zabawne, łatwe i przyjemne. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Sposób zajęć wpływa na mój stres, jeżeli jest przyjazna atmosfera podczas zajęć, nie boję się popełniać błędów itp. Co zmniejsza mój stres podczas zajęć. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Jestem osobą, której stres towarzyszy w życiu codziennym. W związku z tym stresuję się także na zajęciach z języka angielskiego. Podejście prowadzącego oraz sposób realizowania zajęć wpływa na stres, jednakże w przypadku naszych aktualnych zajęć prowadząca jest zawsze uśmiechnięta i pozytywnie nastawiona w stosunku do studentów w związku z czym stresuję się mniej. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Sposób prowadzenia zajęć na pewno ma wpływ na stres. Uważam, że jeśli nauczyciel jest negatywnie nastawiony to i uczniowie tak reagują. Duże znaczenie ma podejście z sympatią do każdej osoby z osobna i na naszych zajęciach tak jest. Osobiście miło zaskoczyła mnie pani mailem podczas gdy nie było mnie na zajęciach. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Sposób prowadzenia zajęć jest na tyle płynny i dobrze dobrany, że nie wpływa na mój poziom stresu. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Dobrze czuję się na zajęciach. Nie stresuję się. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Nie lubię gdy Pani mnie pyta a ja czegoś nie umiem, dlatego stresuje się podczas lekcji aby się nie ośmieszyć. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Moja nauka angielskiego była najgorszym przeżyciem w całym liceum i pozostawiła wielką traumę na przyszłość. Naukę młoda pani anglistka, tuż po studiach, uprzykrzała przez całe 4 lata, nie odpuściła nawet w 4 klasie kiedy z nienawiści do niej i języka musiałam zrezygnować z pisania matury. Lekcje odbywały się w strachu, aż do tego stopnia, że wszystko nauczone idealnie zapominaliśmy. Nauczycielka zastraszała w każdej minucie lekcji, za każdą rzecz powiedzianą źle lub bez żadnej odpowiedzi była ocena negatywna-jedynka. W trakcie zajęć potrafiła postawić jednemu uczniowi nawet kilka. Skutkowało to nie zaliczaniem semestru lub nie zdawaniem do następnej klasy… [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Pamiętam jak pani krzyczała gdy ktoś nie zrobił pracy domowej lub dzwoniła do rodziców. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. *Nauczyciel nie odpowiadał na pytania, nie wyjaśniał wątpliwości, nie sprawdzał prac domowych etc.* [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Moje poprzednie negatywne doświadczenia związane są z nauczycielką, która wogóle nie umiała prowadzić zajęć i cały czas robiła jakieś zabawy przez co poziom nauki angielskiego był niski i beznadziejny. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Mój lęk jest z pewnością związany z negatywnymi doświadczeniami z czasów liceum i studiów. Nigdy nie byłam orłem z języków obcych i odstawałam od grupy. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Obawiam się tego, że inne osoby mogą wypowiadać się na dany temat dużo lepiej i płynniej niż ja, co powoduje, że tracę pewność siebie. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Czasem się denerwuję i to może być z powodu tego, że nie jestem śmiałą osobą. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Inne przyczyny mojego lęku to brak wiary w siebie, brak umiejętności i wiedzy. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Jestem osobą dość lękliwą. Nie lubię wypowiedzi kiedy wszyscy mnie słuchają i wyłapują moje błędy. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Innym powodem mojego lęku jest niepewność siebie – cecha charakteru. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Innymi powodami mojego lęku mogą być perfekcjonizm i wygórowane oczekiwania wobec siebie. Stresuję się, kiedy coś mi nie wychodzi tak, jak chciałabym żeby było. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Przyczyny mojego lęku? Na pewno stres przed tym, że nie potrafię mówić w takim stopniu jakbym chciała. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Sądzę, że w moim przypadku przyczyną moich lęków jest to, że za wysoko podnoszę sobie poprzeczkę. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Jestem wobec siebie raczej krytyczna i ciężko znieść mi myśl, iż mimo moich wysiłków, nie idzie mi tak dobrze jak bym tego chciała. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Powodem mojego lęku są z pewnością wygórowane oczekiwania i bycie jak najbardziej poprawnym a przy okazji kreatywnym wpływa podświadomie na lęk odczuwany w trakcie zajęć. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Przyczynami mojego lenku są moje negatywne doświadczenia, moja osobowość i depresja. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Czasami stresuję się wypowiadać w parze tuż przed samym nauczycielem. Jest to spowodowane tym, że nauczyciel mnie poprawia i jestem świadoma tego, że popełniam wiele błędów, jednak wiem, że takie działanie nauczyciela ma na celu to, bym tych błędów nie popełniała i mówiła poprawnie (Nie jest to wina nauczyciela, tylko mojego charakteru) [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Nie, lubię pracować ze wszystkimi a najbardziej ze starszymi od siebie, gdyż dowiaduję się dużo ciekawych rzeczy. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Grupa jest wyrównana poziomem, dlatego nie stresuję się. Jeśli ktoś znacznie byłby lepszy stresowałabym się. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Tak, stresuję się, jeśli wiem, że ktoś jest dużo lepszy ode mnie. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Praca z niektórymi studentami stresuje mnie bardziej niż z innymi, ponieważ są lepsi ode mnie. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Czasami stresuję się bardziej pracując z niektórymi studentami niż z innymi. Gdy jestem w grupie/parze z osobą która dużo lepiej mówi w języku obcym to „głupio mi”, że musi pracować z osobą, z którą za dużo nie porozmawia. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Gdy znam kogoś dłużej, to lepiej mi się z nim pracuje. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Każdy z nas jest inny i nie z każdym można nawiązać wspólny język i cieszyć się pracą w grupie. Są to często osoby nieśmiałe, które nie są zbyt wylewne. Z takimi osobami pracuje się dużo ciężej. Dużo łatwiej rozmawia mi się z osobą, która potrafi żartować, śmieje się i jest sympatyczna i otwarta. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Bardziej stresuje mnie jeśli ktoś mi przerywa podczas wypowiedzi Lu nie pozwala się samodzielnie wypowiedzieć. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Stresuje mnie jeżeli student zbyt często narzuca swoje zdanie/opinie. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Dostaję wątpliwości, kiedy wypada mi pracować w parze z Klaudiuszem z naszej grupy. Jest to spowodowane moim zmartwieniem, co do jego predyspozycji pracowania w grupie. Chciałabym mu pomóc, ale sama do końca nie wiem jak się do tego przyczynić. Nie wynika ze stresu, raczej z empatii. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Nie stresuje mnie bardziej praca z jednymi studentami niż z innymi, a właściwie z jednym małym wyjątkiem (chłopak który nie potrafi, a bynajmniej ma bardzo ciężko ze skupieniem się na zajęciach). [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Stresuję się, jeżeli muszę polegać tylko na sobie, ze względu na brak zainteresowania współpracą innych członków grupy. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Stresujący może być też brak współpracy innej osoby. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Tak, jest zdecydowana różnica między osobami. Stresujące jest to kiedy nie wiem co odpowiedzieć, gdy inna osoba zadaje pytania/odpowiada niewyraźnie, za cicho so jest dla mnie niezręczną sytuacją, bo wychodzi na to, że ja czegoś nie wiem / nie umiem a ja po prostu nie rozumię czyjejś wymowy lub nie słyszę. Jest to bardzo stresujące. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Tak, jeśli temat zajęć dotyczy rzeczy mi dalekich, mało znanych, następuje lekki stres. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Tak. Bo nie podoba się mi ten temat lub nie znam co powiedzieć. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Tak, ponieważ niektóre są trudniejsze. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Mój stres nie ma związku z tematem, chociaż jest wiele tematów które są dla mnie dosyć trudne nawet w języku polskim, dlatego trudno mi „rozmawiać”. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Gdy się stresuję i mam obawy, nie wypowiadam się publicznie nawet gdy znam odpowiedź, co oznacza, że w dość dużym stopniu jestem ograniczona przez samą siebie. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Uważam, że stres mnie ogranicza. Mógłbym być bardziej śmiały w rozmowach po angielsku. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Gdybym się mniej denerwował byłbym lepszy w rozmowach z nieznajomymi, mówiącymi biegle w języku angielskim. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Stres przeszkadza mi w odpowiedzi ustnej. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Stres powoduje zapominanie nauczonego materiału. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Nie denerwuję się zbyt często, ale myślę, że gdyby stres odpuściłby mi, gdy odpowiadam na dość poważny egzamin ustny, to poszedłby mi zawsze o wiele lepiej. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Duży stres jest blokujący i trudno jest odnaleźć się w słownictwie, gramatyce. Szczególnie jest to widoczne u mnie w nauce języka. Kiedy jestem rozluźniona, wszystko idzie gładko ☺ [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Uważam, że zrobiłabym większe postępy gdybym się mniej denerwowała. Gdy się denerwuje to źle się czuje. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Gdybym się mniej denerwowała nauka angielskiego była by mniej stresująca. Przynajmniej fizycznie. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Mówienie na forum całej grupy też jest troszkę stresujące, czuję że robię się czerwona i tego chciałabym unikać :) [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Stres w niektórych wypadkach działa mobilizująco. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Uważam, że zrobiłabym większe postępy jeśli bym się bardziej stresowała. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Uważam, że stres nie jest bardzo złą sytuacją jeżeli pojawia się sporadycznie. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Nie, nie uważam, że zrobiłbym większe postępy ponieważ nie stresuję się na zajęciach. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Nie zdarza mi się unikać wypowiedzi, ponieważ nie boję się tego, wiec nie zdarza mi się to wgl. Lubię się wypowiadać i jest to jedna z moich ulubionych części lekcji/zajęć. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Staram się pokonać strach i jednak odważyć się na odpowiedź, mimo błędów. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Nie, raczej nie unikam wypowiedzi więc nie mogę powiedzieć jak często. Po prostu stawiam czoło wyzwaniom. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Nie udaje mi się unikać mówienia ponieważ nauczycieli nie interesuje czy ktoś się boi czy nie. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Praca w grupach wydaje mi się najmniej stresująca ponieważ można także swobodnie porozmawiać. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. Zdarza mi się unikać wypowiedzi z powodu „lęku” przed śmiesznością, błędami akcentu, szczególnie wymowy słów. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. Tak, zdarza mi się, ponieważ boję się, że powiem coś głupiego, nielogicznego czy nie poprawnego gramatycznie. Niestety zdaża mi się to dość często, ale staram się unikać takich sytuacji. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Tak, czasami unikam wypowiedzi, ponieważ boję się, że zrobię w zdaniu błąd gramatyczny lub nie będę umiała wytłumaczyć po angielsku o co mi chodzi. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Czasami zdarza mi się unikać wypowiedzi, szczególnie jak wcześniej popełniłem błędy. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. Często unikam wypowiedzi z powodu lęku. Jestem osobą, która jest chętna do zabrania publicznie głosu tylko wtedy, gdy jestem pewna, że moja wypowiedź jest składna i nie jest chaotyczna. Wśród grupy trzymam się więc na uboczu i to im pozwalam na zabranie głosu. Rzadko kiedy mam ochotę, aby samodzielnie zabrać głos. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Myślę, że czasami zdarza mi się taka sytuacja, że ze stresu nie potrafię znaleźć w głowie odpowiednich słów, zwrotów i złożyć ich w całość. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. Czasami unikam wypowiedzi, ponieważ nie rozumiem pytania lub nie znam słówek aby odpowiedzieć. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Nie unikam ćwiczeń pisemnych. Uważam, że to jest dużo łatwiejsze od wypowiedzi ustnych, ponieważ mogę się dłużej zastanowić. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. Nie unikam żadnych innych ćwiczeń lub poleceń. Jedynym, a może najgorszym ćwiczeniem jest mówienie. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. Innych ćwiczeń nie unikam oprócz prac pisemnych ☺ do których długo muszę się zmuszać żeby napisać. ☺ [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. Tak, nieraz zdarzyło mi się uniknąć pracy pisemnej. Pisanie jak i mówienie jest dla mnie trudne i zawsze odkładam tą pracę, myśląc, że zrobię później. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. Zajęcia nie są stresujące, dlatego nic bym nie zmieniała. Wszelkiego rodzaju quizy, gry i zabawy na rozgrzewkę rozluźniają atmosferę. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Zajęcia mnie nie stresują. Korzystam z kursu najlepiej jak się da. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. Nic by nie zmieniałam, bo już naprawdę nie stresuję i wszystko mi podoba się. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Zajęcia nie są stresujące na tyle by trzeba było coś zmieniać. Myślę, że są prowadzone w dobry sposób i nie mam zastrzeżeń. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Myślę, że ten kurs nie należy do bardzo stresujących ponieważ pani lektor nastawiona jest bardzo przyjacielsko. Oczywiście czasami stresuję się np. gdy nie wiem co odpowiedzieć na zadane pytanie, ale winowajcą tutaj jest jedynie mój brak wiedzy. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Aby uczynić zajęcia mniej stresujące ograniczyłabym przepytywanie na lekcji. Korzystałabym z kursu dużo mniej [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Stresuję się rozmowami, ale jestem pewna, że ich usunięcie z kursu nie przyniosłoby mi żadnych korzyści. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. Aby uczynić zajęcia mniej stresujące robiłabym mniej speakingów, ale wtedy nie ćwiczylibyśmy komunikatywności. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. Żeby lekcje były mniej stresujące, użyłbym więcej różnego rodzaju gier. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. Pomagała uczniom, uczyła ich zabawą, bez ustnych odpowiedzi, punkty ze sprawdzianu mówiła bym na osobności. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. Zastosowałbym więcej pomocy wizualnych typu filmy, quizy rysunkowe. Na pewno bym na tym skorzystał. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. Zaproponowałbym więcej zajęć polegających na swobodnym dialogu oraz ćwiczenia ze słuchu. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. Może zmieniłabym coś co byłoby związane z ćwiczeniem słówek nie tylko na bieżąco ale tez które wcześniej. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. Nie odczuwam stresu na zajęciach. Oczywiście na moje samopoczucie ma wpływ grupa w jakiej się znajduję. Osoby, z którymi pracuję są bardzo sympatyczne i nie oceniają negatywnie moich prób działania w języku angielskim. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. Czuję się mniej zestresowany, ze względu na lepszy kontakt z osobami z grupy. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. pewniejsza [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. Czuję się mniej zestresowana niż na początku bo znam lepiej ludzi z grupy i jest mi łatwiej komunikować się z nimi. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. *[zapoznać się ze sobą ☺ (nie wiem jak to napisać ☹)]* [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. Teraz czuję się mniej zestresowana na zajęciach niż na początku roku, ponieważ znam już moją grupę i wiem, że jesteśmy na podobnym poziomie. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. Czuję się zdecydowanie mniej zestresowana na zajęciach. Bardzo możliwe, że jest to spowodowane faktem, zżycia się z osobami z grupy i poznania ich umiejętności językowych. Dzięki temu czuję się bardziej pewna siebie i nie obawiam się zbytnio wypowiadać na zajęciach. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. pewny [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. Czuję się mniej zestresowana, systematyczne chodzenie na ang pozwala na większe „ osłuchanie się” z językiem, lepsze rozumienie słów i łatwość w formuowaniu zdań. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Nie czuję się mniej zestresowana niż na początku, ponieważ nigdy się tak nie czułam ☺. Co więcej, czuję się tu bardzo dobrze i z chęcią przychodzę na zajęcia. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. Czuje się tak samo, mam tyle samo chęci itd. Lubie spędzać czas w grupie, a w dodatku jeśli przez ten czas się ucze jest naprawdę fajnie [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. Nie czuję się mniej zestresowana niż na początku, ponieważ widze na jakim poziomie są rówieśnicy a jakim ja, boje się, że się ośmiesze. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. The group was designer and run by Elaine K. Horwitz and Jo Ann Cope Powell at the University of Texas at Austin. The group had regular sessions over six weeks and consisted of study skills instruction, anxiety management and group support. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. Dobra atmosfera sprzyja obniżeniu stresu. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. Myślę, że jestem mniej zestresowana niż na początku. Dla mnie duże znaczenie ma atmosfera na zajęciach oraz podejście lektora do słuchaczy. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. The elements of stress-free instruction that were employed by the teacher have been described throughout this dissertation, beginning with chapter one. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. See the introduction [↑](#footnote-ref-186)