

Causes and consequences of foreign language anxiety

Zdena Kralova – Gabriela Petrova

DOI: 10.18355/XL.2017.10.03.09

Abstract

There is a great deal of research focusing on foreign language anxiety (FLA). Though it is widely conceived as an obvious factor in foreign language learning, yet there are many inconsistent conclusions. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to summarize the most relevant information and research findings on FLA causes and consequences from the very beginning of its study in 1970s up to the present day.

Key words: anxiety, foreign language, factors

Introduction

The fact that some learners are more successful at acquiring a foreign language than others even though the circumstances of their learning are almost identical has led to investigations of individual characteristics as predictors of successful foreign language learning, most of them agreeing with the following categories (Oliveras-Cuhat, 2010):

- a) cognitive factors (e.g., language aptitude, learning strategies);
- b) affective factors (e.g., attitudes, motivation, anxiety);
- c) metacognitive factors;
- d) demographic factors.

Researchers had to accept the fact that personality traits such as self-esteem, inhibition, anxiety, risk-taking and extraversion, may well shape the ultimate success in mastering a foreign language (Dorney, 2005). As there is a growing acceptance of learners' feelings and reflections in the learning process within the foreign language teaching and learning community, one of the most highly examined variables in the field of foreign language learning is foreign language anxiety (FLA), sometimes called also the second language anxiety (Horwitz, 2001).

There is a great deal of research focusing on FLA which is necessarily interdisciplinary as FLA is rather a multidimensional and multifactorial construct representing human complexity. Though it is widely recognized as a mental block against foreign language learning and conceived as an obvious factor in foreign language learning, yet there are many inconsistent conclusions.

The differences between studies over several decades in design and methodology and the complexity of individual differences in foreign language learning, have led to the limited amount of research findings about the influence of various factors on foreign language learning that could be generalized (Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to summarize the most relevant information and research findings on FLA causes and consequences from the very beginning of its study in 1970s up to the present day and to introduce FLA to a general audience of researchers, learners and teachers who are interested in this multi-faceted phenomenon.

1 Foreign Language Anxiety

1.1 Definition and Classification

Anxiety can be defined as a mental and physical state characterized by specific emotional, physical, cognitive and behavioral symptoms. It is an adaptive reaction

which mobilizes the organism and helps it defend, attack or avoid an anxiety stimulus. The stimulus can be a previous external or internal antecedent or trigger. To state the definite causes of anxiety can be rather complicated as it is influenced by many factors – biological, psychological, social or other (Doubek, Anders, 2013).

Spielberger (1972: 482) defines anxiety as “an unpleasant emotional state or condition which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry”. Scovel (1991: 18) further states, that “anxiety is a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object”.

When anxiety is limited just to a specific situation, such as using a foreign language, we use the term specific anxiety. On the other hand, the term general anxiety is used with those who are generally anxious in various situations (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

Traditional psychological classification of anxiety types (Horwitz, 2001) distinguishes anxiety of people who are generally anxious in a variety of situations (trait anxiety) from those who are anxious only in specific situations (state anxiety). Trait anxiety is a relatively stable personality characteristics (Scovel, 1978) while state anxiety is a temporary response to a particular stimulus (Spielberger, 1983).

Anxiety when associated with learning a foreign language is termed as “second/foreign language anxiety” related to negative emotional reactions of learners towards foreign language acquisition (Horwitz, 2001). FLA is generally viewed as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to foreign language learning (Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope, 1986).

There are two approaches to identifying foreign language anxiety (Horwitz & Young, 1991):

1. transfer approach – where FLA is viewed as a manifestation of other forms of anxiety;
2. unique approach – where foreign language achievement is correlated with FLA but not with other types of anxiety.

FLA can be viewed both as a stable characteristic trait and the temporary state caused by various factors. The classical study of Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope (1986) introduced a construct of FLA as a situation-specific anxiety aroused by a specific type of situation or event (MacIntyre, Gardner, 1991).

Two approaches to the description of FLA can thus be distinguished:

1. The broader construct of anxiety as a basic human emotion that may be brought on by numerous combinations of situational factors (McIntyre & Gardner, 1989; McIntyre, 1995).
2. The combination of other anxieties that create a separate form of anxiety intrinsic to language learning (Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope, 1986).

Two models of FLA emerged from Tobias’s (1986) research:

1. an interference retrieval model,
2. an interference model of anxiety,

An interference retrieval model relates to anxiety as inhibiting the recall of previously learned material at the output stage, whereas the interference model is a skills deficit model. It relates to problems at the input and processing stages of learning as a result of poor study habits, or a lack of knowledge. The research in foreign language learning has provided support for both models (e.g., MacIntyre, Gardner, 1994; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, Daley, 2000).

1.2 Causes

When understanding the cause as something that produces an effect and the factor as something that contributes to the production of an effect (Merriam-Webster

Thesaurus) we should deal with the primary causes and influencing factors of FLA separately, though they are often confused and used as synonyms in literature.

In a situation perceived as threatening and beyond one's ability to deal with the threat, anxiety is a natural consequence. Guiora (1983: 8) said that foreign language learning itself is a "profoundly unsettling psychological proposition" because it threatens learner's self-concepts and world-concepts which are rarely challenged when communicating in a native language.

Learners' self-expression is limited by their imperfect command of a foreign language. Inability to present oneself according to one's self-image can set a learner into the cycle of negative self-evaluation as language and the self are intimately bound. Probably no other field of study implicates such a disparity between the "true self" and the "limited self" as foreign language learning (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

Most foreign language learners report strong speaking anxiety and indicate their inadequate speaking ability as the strongest barrier in foreign language communication (Bila, 2005). They are afraid of being ridiculed and not accepted as an authority. Speaking in a foreign language is often sensed as a "threat to peoples' self-concept, self-identity, and ego, which they have formed in their first language as reasonable and intelligent individuals" (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

According to Bennett (1998), when our internal and consistent beliefs are threatened by any external stimulus, we activate our defense mechanisms to overcome such a "cognitive inconsistency" and foreign language learning inevitably requires learners to go through constant change or reconstruction.

The starting point of the "chicken and egg" discussion about the causal relationship of the FLA and foreign language achievement was the article of Sparks, & Ganschow (1991). They viewed FLA as a natural result of difficulty and poor achievement in foreign language learning.

On the other hand MacIntyre (1995) states that FLA anxiety is a well-established impediment to learning of all types. The debate whether anxiety is a cause or a consequence of poor language command has continued and still continues.

Nevertheless, it cannot be definitely stated so far whether the self-perceived unsatisfactory level of foreign language competence (the knowledge and the ability to use a foreign language) leads to FLA or FLA affects the level of mastering the foreign language. The causal issue of FLA and foreign language proficiency remains controversial and FLA and foreign language achievement seem to be "communicating vessels" with causality in either direction (cf. Sparks, Ganschow, 1991; MacIntyre, 1995; Kralova, Skoryagova, Tirpakova, Markechova, 2017).

Horwitz (2001) examined and reviewed the literature on FLA and foreign language achievement which is very helpful not only in documenting the relationship but also for our understanding of this multi-faceted phenomenon.

Although the results of researches were similar in demonstrating the presence of anxiety in classrooms and its negative effect on foreign language achievement, more studies need to be done in this area to investigate the interplay of various contributing variables as the exact nature of this relationship is still blurry and may be influenced by various concomitant factors.

1.3 Factors

Attempting to understand the overall process of foreign language learning, researchers have investigated the relationship of language learning and different lingual (related to the language system) and extra-lingual (related to the language learning process) variables (Kralova, 2016).

Lingual factors can be subdivided into the categories intra-lingual and inter-lingual. Intra-lingual factors result from the system of a foreign language itself while the inter-lingual factors result from the contact of two language systems (mostly a native language and a foreign language) (Kralova, 2009).

Several studies concluded that the typological distance between languages (as one of the intra-lingual factors) increases FLA, for example – Turkish (Kunt, 1997), Chinese (Yan, 1998), Spanish (Sellers, 2000), Japanese (Kitano, 2001), Arabic (Alrabai, 2015) or Mandarin (Yan, Wang, 2001). Sparks, Ganschow, Javorsky (2000) consisted on the fact that learners with poor first (native) language skills are naturally anxious in a foreign language.

Kralova (2010) stated that the contrastive approach (comparison of a foreign language and a native language phonic systems) in teaching foreign language pronunciation resulted in better pronunciation and closer approximation to foreign language vowels than the application of monolingual (foreign language only) approach.

Nevertheless, FLA is considered more of a psychological (identity-based) construct than a linguistic (competence-based) construct (Alrabai, 2015), and it most likely stems from the learner's perception of "self" (Scovel, 1991), where self-perceptions, perceptions of others, perceptions about foreign language learning and performance play important roles (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Gardner, MacIntyre, 1993; Yon Yim, 2014).

The extra-lingual factors are thus believed to affect FLA more intensively than the lingual factors. Numerous studies trying to identify the learning-related variables of FLA most frequently recognized the categories of personal (intra-personal and inter-personal) and impersonal determinants (e.g., Bailey, 1983; Gardne, MacIntyre, 1993; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999; Kralova, 2009; Paradowski, Dmowska, Czasak, 2015; Kralova, Skovragova, Petrova, Tirpakova, Markechova, forthcoming).

The intra-personal determinants of FLA result from the learners' personal characteristics, their beliefs and attitudes within foreign language learning, while the inter-personal ones are bound to the inter-personal interactions (learner-teacher or learner-learner) during the learning process. The impersonal factors are related to non-personal aspects of foreign language learning.

From the temporal perspective, the static and the dynamic variables affecting FLA can be further distinguished within the extra-lingual factors. The static factors involve rather stable characteristics (gender, nationality, native language, type of personality, etc.) and the dynamic factors (such as language proficiency, motivation, or stay in a foreign language country) can change over time.

Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope (1986) explained that FLA mostly shows up in its strongest form in testing situations. Learners commonly report various kinds of evaluative situations in which their knowledge and performance of a foreign language is monitored by people around them, as the most stressful situations contributing to FLA. They fear to make mistakes and as a result get corrected by the teacher in front of their classmates.

Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope (1986) established three related situation-specific performance anxieties:

1. communication apprehension,
2. test anxiety,
3. fear of negative evaluation.

Communication apprehension is defined as the anxiety to communicate with people, including both the production apprehension (talking in front of others or in groups), and the reception apprehension (receiving and responding spoken message). Despite the fact that communication apprehension leads to fear of speaking, it also

causes the fear of not being able to understand the others' speech or not to be understood.

Test anxiety, arises out of the fear of failing to perform. It can be explained through the high demands that learners put on themselves to be perfect masters of the foreign language. Fear of negative evaluation is explained as the learners' expectation to be evaluated negatively by others in any kind of situation (Worde, 2003).

Even though the three anxiety-related concepts were often named differently across studies (e.g., examination anxiety, criticism anxiety – Park & Lee, 2005), some of the authors suggested the four-factor model (Al-Shboul, Ahmad, Nordin, Rahman, 2013) and sometimes, test anxiety is refuted as the concept related to general anxiety (Aida, 1994), they more or less support the Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope's (1986) model.

However, Aida (1994) in his factor analytic study argues that number of scholars misinterprets the communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation as the underlying subcomponents of FLA while Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986) suggested them as analogies to FLA.

Young (1990) listed six potential factors of FLA – personal and inter-personal anxieties, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures, and language testing.

Aida (1994) identified four factors causing anxiety within a foreign language classroom environment: speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, fear of failing, comfortableness in speaking and negative attitudes towards the class.

In exploring the causes of FLA, Horwitz (1983) emphasized considering learners' emotional reactions to language learning. In order to identify adult students' beliefs about language learning, Horwitz (1983) created an instrument called the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI).

Several studies support Horwitz (1983) in emphasizing the important role of learners' beliefs in foreign language learning. For example, Peacock (2001) conducted a longitudinal research on learners' beliefs and Altan (2006) administered the questionnaire Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) to measure foreign language learners' beliefs.

The studies concluded that some beliefs are derived from unrealistic conceptions about language learning, for example learners' great concern for speaking with a native-like accent or their belief that language learning is just memorization and translation. The clash of learners' beliefs and reality is often one of the potential sources of anxiety.

Bailey (1983) was the first who examined FLA from learners' point of view and he claimed that their competitive nature can lead to anxiety because students tend to compare themselves or idealize their self-images. Moreover, low-esteem causes worry and fear of the negative responses or evaluation from the classmates.

MacIntyre, Clement, Dorney, & Noels (1998) suggested a close correspondence between FLA and self-evaluation and considered them as a single construct – self-confidence. Self-confidence was indicated as a key variable of foreign language performance in several other studies (e.g., Matsuda & Goebel, 2004).

Gardner & MacIntyre (1993) reported significant relationship between learners' foreign language self-rating and their level of FLA. It appears that anxious learners often underestimate their actual language proficiency. Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley (1999) confirmed that highly anxious learners have negative perception of both their scholastic competence and their self-worth.

Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986) also state that over-studying is an FLA related phenomenon. Although students devote a lot of time to studying, they still do

poorly in tests or oral exams. They become even more frustrated when they realize they do the same mistakes repeatedly as FLA has a cyclical nature (as learners experience more failure, their FLA level may increase even more).

Ohata (2005) indicated that teachers' perceptions play an important role in learners' FLA as teacher is the person in the classroom who can regulate the atmosphere, search for the signs of anxiety and help students overcome it. The classroom that follows traditional learning styles, its strictness and formality was declared as the major source of stress.

As teachers and learners constantly interact, the emotions of one group cannot be considered separately from the emotions of the other group. Morton, Vesco, Williams, Awender (1997) studied the correlation of student-teachers' FLA and concluded that their demographic, experiential and dispositional variables may contribute to FLA, psychological disposition being the strongest predictor.

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings of the research focused on FLA differed according to the level of instruction is that advanced learners and learners who have lived or stayed in a foreign language country are more susceptible of FLA (Saito, Samimy, 1996; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, Daley, 1999; Kitano, 2001; Gregersen, Horwitz, 2002). On the contrary, Matsuda & Gobel (2004) concluded that learners with experience in a foreign language country were less anxious speaking the foreign language.

Among other factors that received attention are undoubtedly individual characteristics such as extraversion, verbal intelligence (Kralova, 2009), emotional intelligence, perfectionism (Gregersen, Horwitz, 2002) or tolerance to ambiguity (Dewaele, Shan Ip, 2013).

Kralova (2011) examined the correlation of several personality characteristics and the level of foreign language pronunciation of learners applying the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) (Cattell, Cattell, Cattell, 1997). She detected significant positive relationship in sensitivity, perfectionism and openness to change and significant negative proportion in vigilance, tough-mindedness and anxiety.

Kitano (2001) found a relationship between gender and FLA – male learners, who perceived themselves as less competent in a foreign language, suffered from FLA more than female learners. Dewaele, MacIntyre, Boudreau, Dewaele (2016) revealed that female learners reported more fun in their foreign language class than male learners. On the other hand, they experienced higher FLA than their male peers. However, most of gender-related studies yielded rather conflicting results.

Cultural and social environment, mainly the environment where learning takes place may influence the learners' level of anxiety. Other causes of anxiety may be learners' own concerns about their ethnicity, foreignness, social status, relations within the class or gender (Hashemi, Abbasi, 2013).

Clement (1986) adds another perspective to the psycho-social dimension of foreign language learning. He argues that some foreign language learners in a multi-cultural setting can suffer from an emotional dilemma between the need to learn a foreign language and weakening their ethnic identity more than learners learning a foreign language in their native language and cultural setting.

Learning can thus be a threat not only for learners' self-identity but also for their cultural or social identity. In Woodrow's research (2006) it is stated that English language learners from countries such as China, Korea and Japan were more anxious than other ethnic groups.

Further, Al-Saraj (2011) explains why Saudi Arabian culture creates a social and cultural setting for examining FLA. The educational system in Saudi Arabia is free for all levels, where male and female students are separated, typically attending segregated schools. The combination of factors such as the importance of learning

English, the educational system and conservative culture create an environment for FLA.

Larger social circumstances such as the availability of supportive conversational partners and foreign language role models may play a role in helping learners overcome their FLA (Dewaele, Petrides, Furnham, 2008). Krashen (1985) contends that the affective filter can be lowered by learner's "target language group identification" when learner feels to be a member of a particular foreign language group.

Spitalli (2000) found a significant negative relationship between FLA level and attitudes toward people from different cultures. In this context, Schumann's (1978) Acculturation Model suggests that learners' perceived "social distance" to a foreign language group can affect their interaction in the foreign language.

Social status of interlocutors can considerably influence the level of FLA especially when communicating with someone having better command of foreign language. Unequal language competencies are often reported as very stressful.

In addition to the above-mentioned influences, many other factors have received research attention: age; length of foreign language study; self-perceived foreign language proficiency; academic achievement (e.g., Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, Daley, 1999; Kunt, Tum, 2010; Hashemi, Abbasi, 2013); perfectionism (Gregersen, Horwitz, 2002); competitiveness among learners and evaluation coming from the classmates (Bailey, 1983); societal interference and lack of preparation (Wei, 2014); error correction techniques (Young, 1991; Gregersen, 2003); and self-presentation concerns (Cohen, Norst, 1989).

Moreover, English plays an important role in the global market as it is a communication language of business, education, science and technology and an effective oral communication is seen as a socially valued skill. This fact may, on the one hand, serve as a motivator for learners, but on the other hand, it may be perceived by learners as pressure and consequently negatively contribute to English language anxiety (Tran, Moni, Baldauf, 2012).

Nevertheless, the factors involved in FLA as its inhibitors or activators are numerous and the list of potential sources of FLA can be rather long. However, Horwitz (2016) added that the components of FLA likely vary in different learner populations depending on their culture and proficiency.

1.4 Consequences

FLA has the same clinical picture and symptoms as any other types of anxiety (Horwitz, 1986) – sweating, palpitations, trembling, apprehension, worry, fear, threat, difficult concentration, forgetfulness, freezing, going blank, and avoidance behavior (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

In the research conducted by Hashemi and Abbasi (2013) the participants described their own signs of FLA such as blushing, perspiration, headaches, tension and pain in any part of the body, abnormal verbal behavior, such as staggered voice, either too fast or too slow speed of speech, rubbing the palms, squirming, fidgeting, playing with hair or clothes, touching objects, stuttering or stammering, poor performance, less interpretativeness, less eye contact because of reading from the paper or screen while giving presentations, etc.

Language learning is a cognitive activity that relies on encoding, storage and retrieval processes and FLA can interfere with each of these by causing a divided attention situation (MacIntyre, 1995). Eysenck (1979) explained the negative effects of anxiety in foreign language learning saying that anxious people divide their attention between task-related cognition and self-related or emotion-related cognition,

making cognitive performance less efficient on all three stages of cognitive processing: input, processing (mental planning) and output (MacIntyre, Gardner, 1991)

The “socio-affective filter” constructed by Dulay and Burt (1977) is considered to be a source of the well-known Krashen’s (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis. An affective filter makes learner unreceptive to foreign language input. Some other psychological concepts related to FLA include the Concept of Social Distance (Schumann, 1978), the Theory of Clash of Consciousness (Clarke, 1976) or the Concept of Language Ego (Guiora, 1972).

Various consequences of FLA may appear at any phase of learning. At the input stage learners might pretend to be sick, hide in the last rows, or miss the classes to alleviate their anxiety. During the processing stage some of them tend to give up, procrastinate, or avoid studying which in the output stage results in freezing-up or memory lapses.

Students often claim that they know and understand the given foreign language phenomenon, but they tend to “forget” it when it comes to test or oral exercise, when many foreign language points must be recalled at the same time. Doing persistent errors in morphology, syntax or spelling due to nervousness is very common (Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope, 1986).

According to the above mentioned researches, anxiety, which is present among learners of foreign languages, negatively influences their acquisition and further performance in a foreign language. Learners are very individual and therefore, the signs may differ in their manifestation or severity. That is, some learners may completely forget what they have learnt and be unable to perform in any way (oral or written) and some learners need only a small hint, help or motivation to be able to perform with imperceptible signs of anxiety.

However, facilitating anxiety is hardly being mentioned in literature (Kleinmann, 1977) and its effect has rarely been documented (Phillips, 1992). It was considered to occur in later stages of learning process (Beeman, Martin, Meyers, 1972). Scovel (1991) considers facilitating and debilitating anxiety working in tandem – one arouses, the other depresses.

It has been suggested that some little anxiety may improve performance (Scovel, 1978). Similarly to the Yerkes-Dodson Law (Smith, Sarason, Sarason, 1982), Eysenck (1979) describes a curvilinear relationship between FLA and foreign language performance as a function of task difficulty.

Conclusions

Foreign language learning is a life-long commitment (Horwitz, 1996), so it should be the main objective of foreign language methodologists to find the most efficient methods for foreign language learning and teaching (Birova, Andrejckakova, 2010). They should take into consideration the real needs of foreign language learners and teachers, thus making the acquisition of foreign language more effective, enjoyable and less frustrating.

The multifactorial nature of FLA and the demand on communication in modern language learning pose a challenge to researchers to help foreign language learners. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of FLA cannot be defined in a linear way, it should be better understood as a complex psychological phenomenon influenced by many different factors. As every human is individual and distinct in their character, the above mentioned factors influence each learner in a different way and intensity.

It is human and natural to feel stress or anxiety in certain situations. However, it is important to be able to cope with negative feelings so that they do not affect one’s life, learning and performance. Because an anxious foreign language learner is a less effective foreign language learner (Horwitz, 1996).

Certainly, the information presented above is neither exhaustive nor definite to understand the entire phenomenon of FLA variables. However, it is hoped that this study will add more systematized information to the causes and consequences of anxiety among foreign language learners which could prove to be of interest for foreign language teaching methodology (Mala, Gadusova, Zelenicky, 2008).

Bibliographic references

- AIDA, Y. 1994. Examination of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's construct of foreign language anxiety: The case of students of Japanese. In: *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 78, n. 2, pp. 155-167.
- ALRABAI, F. 2015. The influence of teachers' anxiety-reducing strategies on learners' foreign language anxiety. In: *Innovation in Language and Teaching*, vol. 9, n. 2, pp. 163-190. ISSN 1750-1229.
- AL-SARAJ, T. M. 2011. Foreign Language Anxiety: What Is It? Paper presented at 4th Bloomsbury Student Conference in Applied Linguistics. London: University of London.
- AL-SHBOUL, M. M. – AHMAD, I. S. – NORDIN, M. S. – RAHMAN, Z. A. 2013. Foreign language anxiety and achievement: systematic review. In: *International Journal of English Linguistics*, vol. 3, n. 2, pp. 32-45. ISSN 1923-869X.
- ALTAN, M. Z. 2006. Beliefs about language learning of foreign language-major university students. In: *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, vol. 31, n. 2, pp. 45-52. ISSN 1835-517X.
- BAILEY, K. M. 1983. Competitiveness and anxiety in adult second language learning: Looking at and through the diary studies. In: H. W. Seliger, & M. H. Long (Eds.), *Classroom Oriented Research in Second Language Acquisition*, pp. 67-102. Rowley: Newbury House. ISBN 0883772671.
- BEEMAN, P. – MARTIN, R. – MEYERS, J. 1972. Interventions in relation to anxiety in school. In: C. D. Spielberger (Ed.), *Anxiety: Current Trends in Theory and Research*, pp. 40-50. New York: Academic Press. ISBN 10:1483246787.
- BENNETT, M. J. 1998. Intercultural communication: A current perspective. In: M. J. Bennett (Ed.), *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication: Selected Readings*, pp. 1-34. Boston, ME: Intercultural Press. ISBN 13: 978-1877864629.
- BILA, M. 2005. The Phonic Perception of Reduced Input by Non-native Speakers in Comparison with Native Speakers and Immigrants. Presov: FHPV. ISBN 80-8068-378-6.
- BIROVA, J. – ANDREJČAKOVA, M. 2010. La compétence phonologique en français chez les locuteurs slovaques: Aspects linguistiques et méthodes pédagogiques. Paris: OEP. ISBN 978-2-9537299-0-0.
- CATTELL, R. B. – CATTELL, A. K. – CATTELL, H. E. P. 1997. The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF). (5th ed.). Bratislava: Psychodiagnostika, a. s.
- CLARKE, M. A. 1976. Second language acquisition as a clash of consciousness. In: *Language Learning*, vol. 26, pp. 377-389.
- CLEMENT, R. 1986. Second language proficiency and acculturation: an investigation of the effects of language status and individual characteristics. In: *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, vol. 5, n. 4, pp. 271-290. ISSN 0261-927X.
- COHEN, Y. – NORST, M. J. 1989. Fear, dependence and loss of self-esteem: Affective barriers in second language learning among adults. In: *RELJ Journal*, vol. 20, n. 2, pp. 61-77. ISSN 0033-6882.
- DEWAELE, J-M. – PETRIDES, V. – FURNHAM, A. 2008. Effects of trait emotional intelligence and sociobiographical variables on communicative anxiety and foreign

- language anxiety among adult multilinguals: A review and empirical investigation. In: *Language Learning*, vol. 58, n. 4, pp. 911-960. ISSN 0023-8333.
- DEWAELE, J.-M. – SHAN IP, T. 2013. The link between foreign language classroom anxiety, second language tolerance of ambiguity and self-rated English proficiency among Chinese learners. In: *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, vol. 3, n. 1, pp. 47-66. ISSN 2083-5205.
- DEWAELE, J. M. – MACINTYRE, P. – BOUDREAU, C. – DEWAELE, L. 2016. Do girls have all the fun? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. In: *Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition*, vol. 2, n. 1, pp. 41-63. ISSN 2451-2125.
- DOUBEK, P. – ANDERS, M. 2013. *Generalizovaná úzkostná porucha*. Praha: Maxdorf. ISBN 978-80-7345-346-6.
- DÖRNEY, Z. 2005. *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. ISBN 13:978-0805847291.
- DULAY, H. – BURT, M. 1977. Remarks on creativity in language acquisition. In M. Burt, H. Dulay, & M. Finnochiaro (Eds.), *Viewpoints in English as a Second Language*, pp. 95-126. New York: Regents.
- EHRMAN, M. E. – LEAVER, B. L. – OXFORD, R. L. 2003. A brief overview of individual differences in second language learning. In: *System*, vol. 31, n. 3, pp. 313-330. ISSN 0346-251X.
- EYSENCK, H. J. (1979). Anxiety, learning and memory: a reconceptualisation. In: *Journal of Research in Personality*, vol. 13, n. 4, pp. 363-385.
- GARDNER, R. C. – MACINTYRE, P. D. 1993. A student's contribution to second-language learning. Part II: Affective variables. In: *Language Teaching*, vol. 26, n. 1, pp. 1-11. ISSN 0261-4448.
- GREGERSEN, T. S. – HORWITZ, E. K. 2002. Language learning and perfectionism: Anxious and non-anxious language learners' reactions to their own oral performance. In: *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 86, n. 4, pp. 562-570. ISSN 0026-7902.
- GREGERSEN, T. S. 2003. To err is human: A reminder to teachers of language-anxious students. In: *Foreign Language Annals*, vol. 36, n. 1, pp. 25-32. ISSN 0015-718X.
- GUIORA, A. Z. 1972. Construct validity and transpositional research: Toward an empirical study of psychoanalytic concepts. In: *Comprehension Psychology*, vol. 13, n. 2, pp. 139-150.
- GUIORA, A. Z. 1983. The dialectic of language acquisition. In: *Language Learning*, vol. 33, n. 5, pp. 3-12.
- HASHEMI M. – ABBASI M. 2013. The role of the teacher in alleviating anxiety in language classes. In: *International Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences*, vol. 4, n. 3, pp. 640-646. ISSN 2251-838X.
- HORWITZ, E. K. 1983. *Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas.
- HORWITZ, E. K. – HORWITZ, M. B. – COPE, J. A. 1986. Foreign language classroom anxiety. In: *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 70, n. 2, pp. 125-132. ISSN 0026-7902.
- HORWITZ E. K. – YOUNG D. J. 1991. *Language Anxiety: From Theory and Research to Classroom Implications*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. ISBN 13: 978-0135237960.
- HORWITZ, E. K. 1996. Even teachers get the blues: Recognizing and alleviating teachers' feelings of foreign language anxiety. In: *Foreign Language Annals*, vol. 29, n. 3, pp. 365-372. ISSN 0015-718X.
- HORWITZ, E. K. 2001. Language anxiety and achievement. In: *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, vol. 21, pp. 112-126. ISSN 0267-1905.

- HORWITZ E. K. 2016. Factor Structure of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale: Comment on Park (2014). In: *Psychological Reports*, vol. 119, pp. 71-76. ISSN 0033-2941.
- KITANO, K. 2001. Anxiety in the college Japanese language classroom. In: *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 85, n. 4, pp. 549-566. ISSN 0026-7902.
- KLEINMANN, H. 1977. Avoidance behavior in adult second language acquisition. In: *Language Learning*, vol. 27, n. 1, pp. 93-107.
- KRALOVA, Z. 2009. *Factors of English Phonic Competence*. Zilina: EDIS. ISBN 978-80-554-0051-8.
- KRALOVA, Z. 2010. *Qualitative Approximation in the System of Slovak and English Short Vowels*. Usti nad Labem: PF UJEP. ISBN 978-80-7414-268-0.
- KRALOVA, Z. 2011. The correlation of extraversion and L2 pronunciation quality. In S. Pokrivcakova (Ed.), *Current Issues in Teaching Foreign Languages*, pp. 162-191. Brno: Masaryk University. ISBN 978-80-210-5608-4.
- KRALOVA, Z. 2016. Classification of factors of foreign language phonic competence. In: *XLinguae*, vol. 9, n. 4, pp. 92-99. ISSN 1337-8384.
- KRALOVA, Z. – SKORVAGOVA, E. – TIRPAKOVA, A. – MARKECHOVA, D. 2017. Reducing student teachers' foreign language pronunciation anxiety through psycho-social training. In: *System*, vol. 65, pp. 49-60. ISSN 0346-251X.
- KRALOVA, Z. – SKORVAGOVA, E. – PETROVA, G. – TIRPAKOVA, A. – MARKECHOVA, D. (forthcoming). *Personality factors and foreign language pronunciation anxiety: the effect of psycho-social training*.
- KRASHEN, S. D. 1981. *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- KRASHEN, S. D. 1985. *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. Torrance, CA: Loreda Publishing.
- KUNT, N. 1997. *Anxiety and beliefs about language learning: A study of Turkish-speaking university students learning English in North Cyprus*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Austin: The University of Texas.
- KUNT, N. – TUM, D. O. 2010. Non- feelings of foreign language anxiety. In: *Procedia, Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 2, n. 2, pp. 4672-4676. ISSN 1877-0428.
- MacINTYRE, P. D. – GARDNER, R. C. 1991. Language anxiety: Its relation to other anxieties and top-processing in native and second languages. In: *Language Learning*, vol. 41, n. 4, pp. 513-534. ISSN 1467-9922.
- MacINTYRE, P. D. – GARDNER, R. C. 1994. The subtle effects of language anxiety on cognitive processing in the second language. In: *Language Learning*, vol. 44, n. 2, pp. 283-305. ISSN 1467-9922.
- MacINTYRE, P. D. 1995. How does anxiety affect second language learning? A Reply to Sparks and Ganschow. In: *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 79, n. 1, pp. 90-99. ISSN 0026-7902.
- MacINTYRE, P. D. – CLEMENT, R. – DORNEY, Z. M. – NOELS, K. A. 1998. Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: a situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. In: *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 82, n. 4, pp. 545-562. ISSN 0026-7902.
- MALA, E. – GADUSOVA, Z. – ZELENICKY, L. 2008. *New Competencies in Slovak Teacher Training Programmes*. In: B. Hudson, P. Zgaga (Eds.), *Teacher Education Policy in Europe: a Voice of Higher Education Institution*, pp. 313-324. Umea: University of Umea. ISBN 978-91-7264-600-1.
- MATSUDA, S. – GOBEL, P. 2004. Anxiety and predictors of performance in the foreign language classroom. *System*, 32, 21-36. ISSN 0346-251X.

- MERRIAM-Webster Thesaurus www.merriam-webster.com
- MORTON, L. L. – VESCO, R. – WILLIAMS, N. H. – AWENDER, M. A. 1997. Student teacher anxieties related to class management, pedagogy, evaluation, and staff relations. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 67, 69–89.
- OHATA, K. 2005. Potential sources of anxiety for Japanese learners of English: Preliminary case interviews with five Japanese college students in the U.S. In: *TESL-EJ*, vol. 9, n. 3, pp. 1-21. ISSN 1072-4303.
- OLIVARES-CUHAT, G. 2010. Relative importance of learning variables on L2 performance. In: *Linguistik Online*, vol. 43, n. 3, pp. 99-116. ISSN 1615-3014.
- ONWUEGBUZIE, A. J. – BAILEY, P. – DALEY, C. E. 1999. Factors associated with foreign language anxiety. In: *Applied Psycholinguistics*, vol. 20, n. 2, pp. 217-239. ISSN 0142-7164.
- ONWUEGBUZIE, A. J. – BAILEY, P. – DALEY, C. E. 2000. Cognitive, effective, personality and demographic predictors of foreign language achievement. In: *The Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 94, n. 1, pp. 3-15. ISSN 0022-0671.
- PARADOWSKI, M. – DMOWSKA, K. – CZASAK, D. 2015. Conquering foreign language anxiety related to speaking. In: M. B. Paradowski (Ed.), *Productive Foreign Language Skills for an Intercultural World. A Guide (not only) for Teachers*, pp. 33-62. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. ISBN 978-3-631-64879-7.
- PARK, H. – LEE, A. R. 2005. L2 Learners' Anxiety; Self-Confidence and Oral Performance. Paper presented at The Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics (PAAL), Japan.
- PEACOCK, M. 2001. Pre-service ESL teachers' beliefs about second language learning: a longitudinal study. In: *System*, vol. 29, n. 2, pp. 177-195. ISSN 0346-251X.
- PHILLIPS, E. M. 1992. The effects of language anxiety on students' oral test performances and attitudes. In: *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 76, n. 1, pp. 14-25. ISSN 0026-7902.
- SAITO, Y. – SAMIMY, K. K. 1996. Foreign language anxiety and language performance: A study of learner anxiety in beginning, intermediate, and advanced-level college students of Japanese. In: *Foreign Language Annals*, vol. 29, n. 2, pp. 239-251. ISSN 0015-718X.
- SCHUMANN, J. H. 1978. The acculturation model for second language acquisition. In: R. C. Gingras (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition and Foreign Language Teaching*, pp. 26-50. Arlington, VA: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- SCOVEL, T. 1978. The effect of affect: A review of anxiety literature. In: *Language Learning*, vol. 28, n. 1, pp. 129-142.
- SCOVEL, T. 1991. The effect of affect on foreign language learning: A review of the anxiety research. In: E. K. Horwitz, & D. J. Young (Eds.), *Language Anxiety: From Theory and Research to Classroom Implications*, pp. 15-24. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. ISBN 13: 978-0135237960.
- SELLERS, V. D. 2000. Anxiety and reading comprehension in Spanish as a foreign language. In: *Foreign Language Annals*, vol. 33, n. 5, pp. 512-521. ISSN 0015-718X.
- SMITH, R. E. – SARASON, I. G. – SARASON, B. R. 1982. *Psychology: The Frontiers of Behavior*. New York: Harper & Row.
- SPARKS, R. L. – GANSCHOW, L. 1991. Foreign language learning differences: Affective or native language aptitude differences? In: *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 75, n. 1, pp. 3-16. ISSN 0026-7902.
- SPARKS, R. L. – GANSCHOW, L. – JAVORSKY, J. 2000. Deja vu all over again: A response to Saito, Horwitz, and Garza. In: *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 84, n. 2, pp. 251-255. ISSN 0026-7902.
- SPARKS, R. – YOUNG, D. J. 2009. Language learning and disabilities, anxiety and special needs. In: *Foreign Language Annals*, vol. 42.1. ISSN0015-718X.

- SPIELBERGER, C. D. 1972. Conceptual and methodological issues in anxiety research. In: C. D. Spielberger (Ed.), *Anxiety: Current Trend in Theory and Research* (Vol. 2), pp. 3-19. New York: Academic Press.
- SPIELBERGER, C. D. 1983. *Manual for the State-Trait Anxiety (From Y)*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- SPITALLI, E. J. 2000. *The Relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Attitudes toward Multiculturalism in High-School Students*. Master thesis. Lisle, IL: Benedictine University.
- TOBIAS, S. 1986. Anxiety and cognitive processing of instruction. In: R. Schwarzer (Ed.), *Self-Related Cognition in Anxiety and Motivation*, pp. 35-54. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- TRAN, T. T. T. – MONI, K. – BALDAUF, R. B. Jr. 2012. Foreign language anxiety and its effect on students' determination to study English: To abandon or not to abandon? In: R. Jackson (Ed.), *TESOL in Context: Special Edition S3*, pp. 1-14. Leichhardt: Australian Council of TESOL Associations. ISSN 1030-8385.
- WOODROW, L. 2006. Anxiety and speaking English as a second language. In: *RELC Journal*, vol. 37, n. 3, pp. 308-328. ISSN 0033-6882.
- WORDE, V. R. 2003. Students' perspectives on foreign language anxiety. *Inquiry*, 8. <http://www.vccaedu.org/inquiry/inquiry-spring2003/i-81-worde.html>
- YAN, X. 1998. *An Examination of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety: Its Sources and Effects in a College English Program in China*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin.
- YAN, J. X. – WANG, P. 2001. The impact of language anxiety on students' Mandarin learning in Hong Kong. In: *Language Teaching and Research*, vol. 6, pp. 1-7. ISSN 1798-4769.
- YON YIM, S. 2014. An anxiety model for EFL young learners: A path analysis. In: *System*, vol. 42, pp. 344-454. ISSN.
- YOUNG, D. J. 1990. An investigation of students' perspectives on anxiety and speaking. In: *Foreign Language Annals*, vol. 23, pp. 539-553. ISSN0015-718X.
- YOUNG, D. J. 1991. Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment: What does the anxiety research suggest? In: *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 75, n. 4, pp. 426-439. ISSN 0026-7902.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by the Scientific Grant Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (VEGA 1/0062/17).

Words: 6588

Characters: 44900 (24.94 standard pages)

Zdena Kralova
 Gabriela Petrova
 Faculty of Education
 Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
 Drazovska cesta 4
 949 74 Nitra
 Slovakia
 zkralova@ukf.sk
 gpetrova@ukf.sk