THE SUBTYPES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY

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Abstract
Though foreign language anxiety is widely recognized as a mental block against foreign language learning and conceived as its obvious factor, yet there are many inconsistent concepts mixing psychological and linguistic perspectives. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to present a systematic linguistic classification of the subtypes of foreign language anxiety.

Key words
foreign language anxiety, classification, language systems, language skills

Introduction
After the mid-20th century researchers began realizing that the affective factors are equally relevant in learning as the cognitive factors. As there is a growing acceptance of learners’ feelings and reflections in the learning process within the foreign language teaching and learning community (Lengyelfalusy, 2000), one of the most highly examined variables in the field of foreign language learning is foreign language anxiety (FLA) (Horwitz, 2001).

The early 1970s descriptive studies were focused mostly on the definition of FLA and examined its nature, symptoms, causes and consequences (e.g., Kleinmann, 1977; Eysenck, 1979). The early correlational studies produced rather inconsistent results in determining the relationship between FLA and achievement in a foreign language – some studies found negative relationship between the anxiety and achievement; others found positive relationship, while others found no relationship at all.

Scovel (1978) was the first who acknowledged such inconsistent results. Chastain’s (1975) findings of positive, negative and insignificant correlations between FLA and foreign language achievement within one study are cited as an example of such inconsistency. Scovel’s (1978) study “The Effect of Affect on Foreign Language Learning: A Review of the Anxiety Research” is recognized as a turning point in the study of FLA which led to the need of more precious conceptualization of FLA and a step towards measuring instruments specificity.

Since 1980s when Krashen (1981) hypothesized that the affective factors (anxiety, motivation and self-confidence) correlate with the success in foreign language learning, one of the most examined affective variables in the field of foreign language learning was foreign language anxiety.

The pioneer in studying affective variables in foreign language learning – R. C. Gardner (1985) – hypothesized that anxiety specific to foreign language learning is related to foreign language achievement. He introduced the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) to measure affective factors...
significant in foreign language learning such as motivation, attitude and anxiety.

Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986) made a valuable contribution not only to the theory but also to the measurement of FLA by their milestone work “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety”. They developed the most frequently used and adopted self-report tool to measure FLA in a classroom setting – the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The thirty-three item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale scored on a 5-point Likert scale has been already used in a large number of research projects in different foreign language contexts (Horwitz, 2001). It has been found to have high internal reliability, test-retest reliability and construct validity (Horwitz, & Young, 1991; Aida, 1994; Cheng, Horwitz, Schallert, 1999).

Several relevant instruments for general anxiety measurement had been developed before FLCAS, e.g., Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene’s (1970) self-report scale The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory to assess anxiety as a central construct in the theories of personality; Sarason’s (1978) assessment of anxiety by the Cognitive Interference Questionnaire or Spielberger’s (1980) Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI).

The structure of FLCAS was developed from foreign language students’ reports, clinical experience of the authors and a review of related instruments, e.g., Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (McCroskey, 1984). Horwitz’s (1986) subsequent paper reported the reliability and validity of FLCAS and concluded non-significant relationship between FLA and communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and trait anxiety.

The universal scale by Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986), has been later adjusted by other researchers according to the language or cultural background where the research has been conducted. As FLA has been studied mostly in classrooms where English was taught as a second/foreign language, the English Learning Anxiety Scale (ELAS) (Papamihiel, 2002) has been created for learners of English as a second language and reported homogeneous results in anxiety level.

Firstly, the majority of research has been conducted in Western countries. Later on, more and more research results have been coming from Asian countries using modified scale versions. Moreover, in Saudi Arabia, the Arabic Foreign Language Anxiety Questionnaire (AFLAQ) (Al-Saraj, 2011) has been developed. To examine anxiety among non-native teachers the Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety (TFLAS) scale was developed (Horwitz, 1996). Today, the web-based versions of evaluation scales are frequently used (Wilson, Dewaele, 2010).

Besides FLCAS and its adaptations, FLA is frequently measured by behavioral tests, subjects’ self-reports, observations or by physiological tests. Physiological measures have long been used as a reliable quantificator of subjects’ emotional state but there is an enormous variation in psychological reactions and physiological responses among individuals. Tests of behavior, self-reports and observation are not as easily quantifiable, but they seem to be more precise in focusing on a specific affective construct (Scovel, 1991). Most studies use self-report because of its practicality and availability.
Anyway, Beeman, Martin, Meyers (1972) concluded that the correlation between these measurements of FLA remains low. Studies of FLA used mostly quantitative methods, applying correlational analysis where questionnaires and scales have been proved to be reliable instruments (e.g., FLCAS, TFLAS, and ELAS). From the qualitative methods, mostly interviews of anxious learners were performed. It seems the correlational studies only will not provide a valid and reliable answer and in-depth understanding of FLA complexity. The investigation thus should not be limited to either quantitative of qualitative methods. FLA as a complex human phenomenon needs to be explored in a holistic perspective and the solution seems to be the mixed methods research.

The studies on FLA have developed from the beginning descriptive studies to the experimental studies increased considerably in 1990s. They looked more at the causes and factors of FLA and its effect under various learning conditions and aspects of language learning – skills and language levels (e.g., Young, 1990; Koch, Terrell, 1991; Oh, 1992).

Most FLA research took place in the classroom setting in a non-English speaking environment. Nevertheless, Gardner, MacIntyre (1993) reminded that FLA can appear not only in a learning and classroom situation but also when using a foreign language in any other context. On the contrary, learning a foreign language outside the classroom can be even more stressful. Whatever a learner says in a foreign language is no longer excused as a part of the learning process but considered to be the learner’s legitimate representation (Clarke, 1976).

There are fewer studies examining studying foreign languages in a distance context (e.g., White, 2003). White (2003) claimed that distance learners apply metacognitive and affective learning strategies more than classroom learners in their need for self-direction. Hauck, Hurd (2005) compared FLA in face-to-face language learning settings and virtual distance setting as both having their pros and cons. Moreover, Horwitz (1996) using the Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (TFLAS), was the first researcher to propose that non-native teachers and student teachers may experience feelings of FLA as well.

Nevertheless, the research on foreign language teachers and student teachers’ feelings of anxiety remains very limited to this day. Teachers’ FLA can have a number of undesirable effects on foreign language education (Horwitz, 1996). As the number of non-native foreign language teachers increases by the year, it is clear that more research is desperately needed in this area. Intensive research in the area of FLA made anxiety one of the most highly examined variables in psychology and education (Horwitz, 2001). Most of them proved the debilitating effect on foreign language competence and performance (MacIntyre, Gardner, 1994). Negative correlation between FLA and foreign language achievement has been well established in literature (e.g., Horwitz, 1986; Young, 1991; MacIntyre, Gardner, 1991; Aida, 1994; Horwitz, 1996; Kunt, 1997; Mac Intyre, 1999; Kitano, 2001; Yan, Wang, 2001; Liu, Zhang, 2013).

Researchers have mostly focused on the negative side of foreign language learning for a long time with FLA being one of the most studied topics. The
current trend of positive psychology (Frederickson, 2003) interested in positive emotions in foreign language learning has been increasing only in recent years. Positive psychology is considered to have the potential to become a significant factor in foreign language learning as it moves toward activating learners’ strengths and self-regulated learning (MacIntyre, Gregersen, Mercer, 2016). Similarly as the new conceptual framework EMPHATIC developed by Oxford (2016), Dewaele, MacIntyre (2014) introduced the concept of Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) and concluded that positive emotions (Foreign Language Enjoyment) and negative emotions (Foreign Language Anxiety) are related, though independent, but not opposite phenomena in foreign language learning. In line with this trend, the latest studies introduced and verified the effectiveness of various intervention strategies in foreign language learning. Dewaele, MacIntyre (2016) as first created and applied the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (FLES) containing twenty-one items divided into two dimensions FLE-Social and FLE-Private evaluated in a five-point scale. FLA has been a great concern in foreign language research over the last decades and triggered many intensive debates. Although the opinions on many issues are different, it does not mean they exclude or reject each other (Tran, 2012). On the contrary, the challenges play a vital role in the research of such a complex phenomenon as FLA is.

1 The Subtypes of Foreign Language Anxiety

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 its obvious factor, yet there are many inconsistent concepts mixing psychological and linguistic perspectives. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to present a systematic linguistic classification of the subtypes of foreign language anxiety.

The 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 the negative emotional reactions of the learners towards foreign language acquisition (Horwitz, 2001). 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). When classifying FLA in relation to specific language aspects, the skills-based and the systems-based subtypes of FLA can be distinguished.

1.1 Skills-Based Foreign Language Anxiety
The FLA research has been dominantly focused on language skills – such as reading (e.g., Oh, 1992; Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999; Sellers, 2000; Argaman, Abu-Rabia, 2002), listening (e.g., Goh, 2000; Kim, 2000; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Zhai, 2015), writing (e.g., Cheng, Horwitz, Schallert, 1999; Hilleson, 1996; Cheng, 2002), and speaking (e.g., Steinberg, Horwitz, 1986; Young, 1990; Woodrow, 2006).

Until the Hilleson’s (1996) study on reading and writing anxieties, researchers associated FLA mostly with speaking and listening as the skills most affected by anxiety. This anticipated the research on skill-specific anxieties and most studies provided evidence for the existence of skill-specific FLA. Pae (2013) indicated significant intra-relations and independent inter-relations of FLA types related to all four language skills with general FLA. In general, learners feel more comfortable about receptive skills than about the productive skills (Kim, Kim, 2004).

Many authors created and used a skill-specific instrument to measure FLA, for example Second Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (SLSAS) (Woodrow, 2006); Speaking Anxiety Scale (Pae, 2013); Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) designed by Kim (2000); Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) developed by Saito, Horwitz, Garza (1999) and Writing Anxiety Scale by Daly, Miller (1975).

Woodrow’s (2006) results indicate that FLA is the most crucial predictor of foreign language oral performance. As regards speaking, more anxious students produce less personal and interpretive speech (Steinberg, & Horwitz, 1986); smaller continuous speech and make longer mid-clause pauses (Djigunovic, 2006). Gregesen, Horwitz (2002) reported different reactions in foreign language oral communication between anxious learners who tried to avoid mistakes and non-anxious learners who continued talking in spite of mistakes.

Negative correlation was observed between the sustained attention levels during conversation tasks and the levels of FLA in classroom condition (Chang, Fang, Yang, Luo, Chew, Chen, 2017). Interestingly, the authors detected positive correlation between the attention levels and the states of FLA in real-world situated conditions.

MacIntyre, Clement, Dorney, Noels (1998) conceptualized and offered a model of the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in a foreign language as an alternative concept to FLA explaining the influence of FLA on foreign language oral production. MayIntyre (2007) suggested that FLA and WTC should be viewed as state, situation-specific, and trait characteristics and he formulates the essential question of the WTC model and the critical decision for foreign language learning: “Does a learner choose to communicate when the opportunity arises?” (p. 567).

Dixson (1991) found out that while listening, anxious students had difficulty to comprehend the content of the target language. Zhai (2015) stated significant negative correlation between FLA and listening comprehension and put forward some useful suggestions to enhance listening proficiency of foreign language learners (Birova, Mockova, Simkova, Kralova, Lipkova, 2017).
Sellers (2000) investigated the relationship between anxiety and reading and concluded that anxious students do not understand the tasks correctly and tend to recall less passage content while reading than their less anxious mates. Saito, Horwitz, Garza (1999) revealed that reading anxiety increased with learners’ perception of the difficulty of reading. Argaman, Abu-Rabia (2002) found significant relationships between FLA and achievement in foreign language writing comprehension tasks. Cheng’s (2002) regression analysis results indicated that perceived writing competence predicts writing anxiety better than writing achievement does.

1.2 Systems-Based Foreign Language Anxiety
Though the correlational studies of FLA and proficiency at different language levels have been by far outnumbered by skill-specific studies, there was also found the negative relationship between FLA and foreign language vocabulary and grammar across studies (Van Patten, & Glass, 1999; Sheen, 2007). For instance, learners were concerned about their lack of vocabulary and less concerned about grammar and not concerned about the limited knowledge of foreign language culture (Birova, Barancova, Simkova, 2016; Kim, Kim, 2004).

Foreign language pronunciation anxiety appears to be significantly related to the learners’ willingness to communicate (Price, 1991; Phillips, 1992; Baran-Lucarz, 2011; 2014) as one of its most immediate determinants, because speaking, listening and pronunciation are closely related. Since pronunciation is the most salient aspect of the language ego (Guiora, Beit-Hallahmi, Brannon, Dull, Scovel, 1972) and difficult to acquire in a new language, it is strongly related to human identity and the learner’s level of self-confidence. Moreover, pronunciation plays a dominant role in the way we view our communication partners (Lev-Ari, Keysar, 2010), therefore the apprehension of one’s ego being endangered in front of significant others can be rather a strong cause of FLA among foreign language learners (Szyszka, 2011; Baran-Lucarz, 2014).

The study of Guiora, Beit-Hallahmi, Brannon, Dull, Scovel (1972) on changes in ego states induced by the ingestion of alcohol on pronunciation ability in a foreign language is one of the most cited experiments within foreign language learning in the popular press. Nevertheless, it proved the hypothesized psychological inhibitions as the most significant factor in achieving foreign language pronunciation.

Early arguments relating the relationship of foreign language pronunciation and FLA come from Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986). Concerned the nature of FLA related to the communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope, 1986) we can expect foreign language pronunciation to be a significant variable of the overall FLA.

However, a few experiments studying the foreign language pronunciation anxiety (Baran-Łucarz, 2013) and verifying the strategies of its reduction (Shams, 2005; Kralova, Skorvagova, Tirpakova, Markechova, 2017) have been conducted so far. Baran-Łucarz (2013) investigated the effect of anxiety on learning foreign language phonetics (Phonetics Learning Anxiety) –
which represents an interesting step in understanding the impact of affective factors on pronunciation learning. She points out that no instrument has been designed yet to examine specifically the pronunciation anxiety and she introduced the Measure of Pronunciation Anxiety (Baran-Łucarz, 2016).

Shams (2005) compared the effectiveness of two FLA-reducing approaches in pronunciation training (training in a listening laboratory and in a computer laboratory).

Kralova, Skorvagova, Tirpakova, Markechova (2017) tested the psychosocial training as a strategy reducing foreign language pronunciation anxiety among non-native pre-service teachers of a foreign language. The authors created and applied the Foreign Language Pronunciation Anxiety Scale evaluated in a 6-point Likert scale as an instrument to measure this subtype of anxiety.

The studies proved, among other things, that pronunciation training combined with an intervention strategy resulted not only in the improvement of foreign language pronunciation but also in reducing FLA which is an important contribution to discussing the idea that FLA anxiety may be the result as well as the cause of insufficient command in a foreign language (Sparks, Ganschow, 1991).

Conclusions
Certainly, the information presented above is neither exhaustive nor definite to understand the system of FLA subtypes. However, it is hoped that this article will add more systematized information to the study of such a multifaceted phenomenon as FLA undoubtedly is.

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