

Foreign language anxiety in and outside the classroom: A case of a non-native speaking student living abroad

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Abstract

Speaking in a foreign language, which is often perceived as intimidating by many foreign language learners, has long been associated with foreign language anxiety (FLA), particularly foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA). Although numerous studies have investigated FLA and FLSA, most have focused on the classroom environment, whereas the settings outside the classroom, where learners use the language to communicate with native speakers and foreigners, have been relatively overlooked. Although a foreign language classroom environment can be a significant source of anxiety, an authentic target language environment could also trigger anxiety. This study aims to address this gap by investigating FLA and FLSA in both classroom and non-classroom settings from the perspective of a Turkish student living in London. Unlike traditional questionnaire-based quantitative methods used in previous research, this study employs a qualitative method to better understand these issues from the participant's lived experience in both settings. The interview data revealed that the participant experienced a higher degree of anxiety outside the classroom, with peers having a greater impact on her degree of speaking anxiety than teachers in the classroom.

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking in a foreign language, which is often perceived to be intimidating by many foreign language learners, has long been associated with one of the affective factors in foreign language learning, i.e. foreign language anxiety (henceforth FLA) (Dörnyei, 2005, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Young, 1992). As a common phenomenon among language learners, researchers have focused to explore the degree of FLA in relation to speaking which is often seen as the most anxiety-provoking language learning activity. Burgeoning research has explored foreign language speaking anxiety (henceforth FLSA) in terms of the degree, causes and effects, and its relations to other affective aspects of individual learner differences such as motivation, learning strategies, beliefs, and willingness to communicate (e.g. Aslan & Thompson, 2018; Bárkányi, 2021; Çağatay, 2015; Chou, 2018; Ozdemir & Papi, 2021; Zhang, 2019). However, while FLA has been the most explored trait in SLA (MacIntyre, 2018), most of these studies are conducted by taking the context in language classrooms, and the authentic contexts outside the classrooms where language learners actually use the language to communicate with foreigners and native speakers, not language teachers and other language learners, have received considerably less attention. My research sets out to fill this gap by investigating FLA and FLSA both inside and outside the classroom settings that will be contextualized from the perspective of an EFL Turkish student living in London, the UK.

FLA is an affective factor that may significantly hinder the process of foreign language learning, particularly speaking. Among the first to explore FLA, Horwitz et al.'s (1986) study marked the beginning of a new phase of research on foreign language classroom anxiety, which is later called the specialized approach (MacIntyre, 2018). They defined FLA as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p.127). They added that Foreign language anxiety refers to feelings of discomfort, concern, nervousness, and fear when learning or using a foreign language, exerting a significant impact on foreign language learning. While learners may be skilled at learning other subjects, they may struggle with speaking the foreign language in public due to a “mental block” (p. 125). Further, Horwitz (2010) stated that anxiety is a “multi-faceted” concept (p. 145), identified to have different categories including among others trait anxiety, state anxiety, achievement anxiety, and facilitative-debilitative anxiety. In this case, while FLA is a specific type of anxiety that occurs in a language-learning setting, it is similar to other forms of anxiety such as stage fright or test anxiety (Horwitz, 2010). Individuals may manifest signs of FLA through psycholinguistic effects such as “distortion of sounds, inability to reproduce the intonation and rhythm of the language, ‘freezing up’ when called on to perform, and forgetting words or phrases just learned or simply refusing to speak and remaining silent” Young (1991, p. 430). Other signs of anxiety could also be such behavioral patterns as skipping class, avoiding eye contact, coming to class unprepared, or becoming excessively competitive (Bailey, 1983; Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1992 in Saito & Samimy, 1996).

In addition to its multi-faceted nature, FLA is also dynamic for several reasons (Gregersen, 2020). Firstly, it fluctuates on different time frame moments. Therefore, analyzing this phenomenon in multiple time scales, such as years or any scales in between, provides a more thorough understanding of what influences anxiety (MacIntyre, 2012 in *ibid.*). That is to say, the time we measure the FLA, for instance, after delivering a presentation or when the learner’s proficiency level has moved from beginner to intermediate level, will impact the data collection and its interpretation. Secondly, FLA shapes and is shaped by other “fluctuating variables, whether in cognitive, affective/personal, linguistic or other domains” (Gregersen, 2020 p.70), and therefore, investigating this emotion in isolation from other variables might also affect the interpretation. Thirdly, while FLA is considered a negative emotion, positive emotions that seem contradictory such as foreign language enjoyment might co-exist simultaneously. Last but not least, the reason why FLA is considered a dynamic concept is due to the changes in the system, whether negative and hindering or positive and enabling, that can stimulate the development and transformation of the anxiety level. For these reasons, investigating such a complex construct of FLA might not always lead to consistent results and it takes careful consideration when categorizing FLA into high or low amounts or when drawing conclusions in terms of its relationship with other variables.

Adding to the above points, FLA can also be attributed to learner variables (such as personality, learning style, motivation, and attitudes) and situational variables (such as classrooms and outside classrooms) (Chou, 2018). Accordingly, taking both the learners’ affective variables and the context of where learners perform and use the foreign language into account is necessary when exploring the degree of their anxiety. While foreign language classes can be the most anxiety-provoking environment in language learning (Chen & Hwang, 2020), it has been suggested that an authentic target language environment is a critical exposure to provide learners with meaningful tasks and opportunities to actually practice their language (Golonka et al., 2014; Moeller & Catalano, 2015). Therefore taking these different contexts into consideration when exploring the degree of anxiety level is necessary to provide a more detailed understanding of FLA, particularly speaking anxiety.

Researchers have developed various instruments to statistically measure the level of FLA. One of the most widely used instruments is developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) who designed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to measure the scope and degree of FLA. FLCAS is a 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of 33 statements to analyze communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation in the foreign language classroom. Using this instrument, many researchers have attempted to measure not only the level of FLA but also the

relationship between FLA and other variables. While FLCAS was developed to measure overall foreign language classroom anxiety (Horwitz & Young, 1991), this has a particular emphasis on speaking (Aida, 1994 in Zhang, 2019). The following are reviews of previous studies investigating both FLA and FLSA, and some of them use the FLCAS to collect the data.

Concerning the relationship between FLA and language proficiency level, Frantzen & Magnan (2005) investigated the level of anxiety among true- and false-beginner learners of Spanish and French and concluded that true beginners showed higher anxiety levels. In terms of the relationship between FLA and motivation, Liu & Huang (2011) explored the correlation between these two with 980 Chinese university students. The data from the FLCAS showed that FLA and English learning motivation were significantly negatively correlated with each other. Similar findings were also found by Öztürk (2012) who carried out a quantitative study with around 400 university students in Turkey. The study showed that there was a moderate negative correlation between foreign language learning and motivation. Regarding the instructional conditions, Young (1990) found that students experienced a higher level of anxiety when speaking in front of the class than in smaller groups. Palacios (1998) found that the factors that could reduce students' anxiety were not the instructional activities, but the positive classroom atmosphere, including positive comments from the teachers and relationships among learners. Similarly, Young (1990) added that teachers' positive error correction could also greatly reduce anxiety.

Some studies also have investigated FLA in Turkish contexts, which is similar to this study, using the FLCAS. Tuncer & Doğan (2015) investigated the effect of FLA on foreign language academic achievement and found that as students' anxiety evolved and increased throughout the course, it accounted for academic failure at the end of the course. Similarly, Şenel (2016) also examined the FLA of Turkish students throughout two periods of time and found students' anxiety level was higher four years after they had learned English. In relation to whom the learners communicate with, Çağatay (2015) who examined the speaking anxiety of Turkish students found that their speaking anxiety increased when communicating with native speakers compared to when communicating with classmates.

In terms of the setting where the foreign language learning and speaking activities occur, some studies have investigated the degree of FLA in the classroom context and in target language countries. In the classroom setting, research on this area has been carried out by Jin & Dewaele (2018) by taking into account the emotional support from both teachers and classmates. Involving 144 Chinese second-year university students, their quantitative study revealed that the reason why the learners' anxiety level decreased during the course was mainly due to their classmates' emotional support, which is perceived as a more important factor in reducing the degree of FLA in adult learners than teacher emotional support. This research also found that having a positive attitude towards learning contributes to lowering anxiety in a foreign language classroom and that this positive attitude mediates the connection between feelings of support from classmates and anxiety in the classroom. This suggests that anxiety in a foreign language classroom is influenced not only by an individual's own self-esteem but also by their perceptions of others. In terms of the effect of the language teachers in the classroom, according to a mixed-methods study of 750 foreign language learners from around the world conducted by Dewaele & MacIntyre (2019), FLCA experiences were most often attributed to the learner themselves rather than the teacher. Meanwhile, taking the context outside the classroom environment, Dewey et al. (2018) investigated the language anxiety of 36 adult Arabic learners who took part in a study abroad program in a target language country. The results indicated that learners became more comfortable and experience less anxiety over the period of the program. In a similar vein, Lee (2018) also explored the effect of study abroad programs on language anxiety with 69 Chinese and Korean students who joined the programs in target language countries. The results from the FLCA questionnaire administered before and after the programs showed that the participants' anxiety levels decreased significantly after they took part in the programs.

Despite the insightful findings that the existing studies discussed above have offered, what emerges is that although a fair amount of research has been carried out on FLA and FLSA in particular, the study to address the comparison of these issues experienced by learners both in the classroom and outside the classroom settings merits further investigation. It is important to look at

both settings because some studies revealed that settings, especially the target language settings, could affect the degree of FLA and FLSA to some extent. What remains unexplored is to what extent the same learner experience FLA and FLSA in two different settings, i.e. in and outside the classroom setting in a target language country. This is what the present study aims to address.

This study investigates the degree of speaking anxiety of a pre-intermediate level EFL student by addressing the following research questions.

1. To what extent does the participant experience speaking anxiety in the classroom?
2. To what extent does the participant experience speaking anxiety outside the classroom?
3. In which setting does the participant experience a higher degree of speaking anxiety?

RESEARCH METHOD

The study is a qualitative case study, a commonly used method in this field (Yin, 2018). Case study is used as its purpose to present and analyze intricate aspects of people's language and social interactions by examining and illustrating one or a few specific concrete examples (Duff, 2020) is in line with the purpose of this study. In this with this approach, an interview was utilized as the primary instrument to elicit the learner's perceptions and lived experiences. While this method is not frequently employed in anxiety research, it allows for a nuanced understanding of this phenomenon, capturing unique and salient features that might be overlooked in large-scale methods (Rose et al., 2020).

Participant

The participant, Yasmin (pseudonym), was recruited from a pre-intermediate English class at International House London (IHL) where I was teaching. Prior to inviting her to participate in the study, I provided her with a brief overview of my research and informed her of what would be asked during the interview, as well as the amount of time it would require. I also emphasized that her personal information would be kept confidential and anonymous. I gave her the option to take some time to think about it before committing to the study, but she immediately expressed her willingness to participate.

Yasmin, a Turkish woman in her early thirties, had been studying at IHL for two months and living in London for six months with her husband who has been living in London for ten years. She began with the elementary level and has since progressed to the pre-intermediate level. She speaks Turkish, Spanish, and English, having learned Spanish during her university studies in Turkey four years prior to the study. Spanish was used as a medium of instruction in her third and fourth years of university. As she uses Turkish primarily for everyday conversation with her husband and family, she is more proficient in Spanish than in English. In her country of origin, she previously worked as a Math teacher and now hopes to secure a teaching job in London, which is why she is learning English.

Data Collection Procedure

The interview was conducted at the agreed time and location, which was a café in IHL. It lasted for approximately one and a half hours. Prior to starting the interview, I obtained her consent to record it and explained that it would be transcribed. I also reassured her that her identity would remain anonymous and that she could choose not to answer any questions that made her uncomfortable or ask for further clarification if needed. Following the guides by Dörnyei (2007) and Rolland, Dewaele, & Costa (2020) I used a semi-structured interview approach, asking broad questions about her English learning experience and more specific questions focusing on her speaking anxiety both inside and outside the classroom at IHL. To investigate her anxiety, some of the questions developed in the interview guides were adapted from the FLCAS developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). To avoid making the interview seem like a spoken questionnaire, I selected some key points from the questionnaires instead of using the exact same questions.

Data Analysis

The interview was transcribed immediately after its completion without adherence to any specific transcription convention. Pauses were indicated by dots (...), as Yasmin had several pauses during the interview. Grammatical mistakes were not corrected to maintain the authenticity of the data. Following Rubin & Rubin's (2005) guide, I listened to the recording and typed what was said, making the full transcription version to make it easier to look for themes. I then read, re-read, and coded the transcription by labeling any interesting information using different colors of highlighters to make the codes clear and easy to categorize. The letter code "R" refers to me as the interviewer, and "Y" refers to Yasmin.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings of the study are described based on the data obtained from the participant by means of the context where she uses English, i.e. in the classroom and outside the classroom.

Speaking anxiety in the classroom

Yasmin is a motivated learner and the learning environment in International House London made her enjoy the learning process.

- R : *Are you comfortable at this level?*
Y : *Yeah.. comfortable.. relaxing.. friendly teachers..*

The above extract reveals that the individuals with whom Yasmin was learning English played a significant role in her comfort level. The teachers were not only welcoming and friendly, but also provided her with encouragement throughout the learning process. She expressed that she felt particularly at ease around some of her classmates from Turkey. This strongly supports the conclusions of Young (1990) and Palacios (1998), who found that a positive classroom environment can significantly reduce students' anxiety levels.

However, when asked about her anxiety level in relation to the learning materials and her proficiency level, Yasmin revealed that she experienced a certain degree of anxiety.

- R : *How about the lesson? Do you think it's easy or difficult?*
Y : *Just OK.. one month ago.. in London.. I elementary.. I go to elementary.. so very easy.. very arghhh boring.. maybe intermediate will difficult..*
R : *Why do you think it will be difficult?*
Y : *Yeah.. difficult.. because.. I don't speak.. Speaking is.. not happy.. difficult..*

The above excerpt indicates that upon her first enrollment at IHL, Yasmin was placed in the beginner level which she found too easy and unchallenging. After a month, she decided to transfer to the pre-intermediate level, though she initially had reservations about it, particularly regarding the speaking activities. Yasmin expressed that reading, writing, and listening were easier for her to grasp, but speaking in English made her feel unhappy and uncomfortable. This speaking anxiety can be attributed to her current low proficiency level, as lower proficient students tend to experience more anxiety, as found by Frantzen & Magnan (2005). During the interview, Yasmin struggled with speaking due to her limited vocabulary and sentence structures in English, which differ greatly from her first language.

Despite her struggles, Yasmin made significant progress in her language learning journey. Within a month of her enrollment, she was able to advance to the pre-intermediate level, demonstrating her improvement in English proficiency.

- R : *Do you think your English is getting better in this level?*
Y : *Yeah.. yeah.. difficult.. but better...*

Notwithstanding her improving proficiency level, Yasmin still experienced a degree of speaking anxiety, which is possibly due to the more challenging activities at her current level. This finding supports Zhang's (2019) study, which suggests that language anxiety persists regardless of learners' proficiency levels and should not be disregarded even though their proficiency has improved.

Although Yasmin felt unhappy when speaking in English, she was willing to try whenever the teachers asked her to speak in the classroom, and she was not afraid of making mistakes. Despite feeling that some of her classmates were better than her, she remained fairly confident. However, the following extract indicates that she felt much more comfortable and confident speaking with a partner than speaking in front of the entire class.

- R : *which one is more comfortable, when you speak with your partners, in pairs, or in front of the class?*
Y : *with partners.. yeah.. maybe.. because.. crowded.. maybe.. speak speak.. speak.. I don't understand..*
R : *so it's easier to speak with your partner?*
Y : *easier.. yeah.. I prefer..*

This indicates that instructional activities can influence the level of anxiety, which is consistent with the findings of Young (1990) that students experienced lower levels of anxiety when speaking in smaller groups rather than in a large class. However, unlike Young's (1991) findings, Yasmin did not exhibit many noticeable psycholinguistic signs of anxiety, but instead produced words with incorrect intonation and rhythm. This may be due not only to her anxiety but also to her lower level of proficiency.

Furthermore, when specifically asked about speaking with her classmates, she mentioned feeling a degree of anxiety to some extent because most of them are new to her.

- R : *Do you enjoy talking with your partners in the classroom?*
Y : *Yeah.. yeah.. enjoy.. so.. change class.. change classmates..*
R : *What about the new classmates? Do you feel comfortable or nervous when speaking with them?*
Y : *Nervous.. yeah.. nervous.. nervous.. the old classmates is.. I prefer.. because I speak classmates in one month.. so change the class.. Arrghh.. try.. try to.. uncomfortable..*
R : *so you prefer to speak with classmates that you already know?*
Y : *yeah.. yeah..*
R : *what do you feel when you have new classmates?*
Y : *I feel unhappy.. because.. one month ago in here.. ehmm.. very mix class.. friendly.. I speak english in coffee shop.. we went to coffee shop.. meet.. met.. and I prefer.*

The above excerpt reveals Yasmin's discomfort in speaking with her current classmates due to their recent acquaintance. She expressed feeling uncomfortable being around them and compared her current experience with her previous class where she felt more supported learning together in the classroom, as she and her classmates knew each other well and often socialized outside of class. With her former classmates, Yasmin felt comfortable because she knew them personally, and they were all learners. This finding aligns with Jin & Dewaele's (2018) study, which suggests that emotional support from peers is crucial in reducing anxiety levels in the classroom. Given that most of Yasmin's classmates are new, she has yet to receive emotional support from them.

In contrast, the following extract shows that when speaking with her language teacher in the classroom, Yasmin did not experience speaking anxiety even if the teacher was new.

- R : *Do you enjoy speaking with your language teachers?*
Y : *yeah.. enjoy*
R : *Even when the teacher is new?*
Y : *Yeah.. no problem.. ok...*

The above extract indicates that Yasmin's speaking anxiety in the classroom is barely affected by the teachers. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019), which showed that the teacher's role in foreign language anxiety is not significant. Yasmin also mentioned that even if she has never spoken with her teachers before, she would feel less uncomfortable speaking with them compared to when she has to speak with new classmates. This suggests that the teacher-student relationship may not play a significant role in reducing foreign language anxiety in the classroom.

- R : *What makes you more comfortable in the classroom? Your classmates or your teacher?*
Y : *Classmates depends... but teacher.. yes.. teacher..*

Yasmin used the term "depends" to describe how her classmates would affect her emotional state in the classroom. This suggests that her level of comfort or anxiety when speaking with them would vary depending on her familiarity with them and her perception of them. As she developed better relationships with her classmates, she would feel more at ease speaking with them and receive greater emotional support from them. This finding strongly corroborates the results of Jin and Dewaele's (2018) study, which underscored the emotional impact of classmates on anxiety levels. It also underscores the significance of cultivating peer relationships in foreign language classrooms.

Another interesting finding that also supports Jin & Dewaele's (2018) study is a positive orientation that Yasmin holds towards learning English in IHL. The following extract shows how she is motivated to go to her class despite experiencing a degree of anxiety.

- R : *Have you ever wanted to skip classes?*
Y : *I usually .. every day.. maybe when I am.. I were.. I was ill.. when I was ill. But usually I go every day.. I want learn English.. I feel happy..*

Despite feeling nervous and uneasy when speaking with her current classmates, Yasmin did not exhibit what Horwitz et al. (1986) referred to as "avoidance behavior" (p. 126), such as missing classes, indicating that her level of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) in the classroom environment is moderate or lower. Her positive attitude towards learning English and engaging in English conversation with others in this particular context has a significant effect on reducing her anxiety levels. This case is consistent with previous studies by Liu & Huang (2011) and Öztürk (2012) in terms of the negative correlation between motivation and FLA. With high motivation to learn English and attend classes, she displays a low degree of anxiety.

Speaking Anxiety Outside the Classroom

Despite finding it challenging to speak English in the classroom and often feeling unhappy when doing so, Yasmin's speaking anxiety was comparatively lower in this setting than the anxiety she experienced outside the classroom. When asked about her emotions when speaking in English outside the class, she replied:

- Y : *No.. not afraid.. relaxing in class.. so when I go out.. very afraid.. mix persons in London.. and asks you shopping.. shopping.. I shopping.. she (shopkeeper).. she go to near me (pointing to herself).. ask.. no.. no.. so.. in here (IHL) is relax..*
R : *So you feel uncomfortable when speaking in English to people outside the classroom?*

Y : *Uncomfortable.. yeah.. yeah.. my husband near.. is no problem. (looking up in the dictionary on her phone) beware.. beware..*

Yasmin experienced heightened levels of anxiety when communicating with strangers, particularly with native speakers, to the extent that she used the term "beware" to describe her fear when she had to converse with them in English while outdoors. For instance, when she went shopping, she avoided seeking assistance from shopkeepers as she did not want to engage with them in English. Nevertheless, her anxiety levels were notably lower when accompanied by her husband, who is a fluent English speaker. This finding aligns with the outcomes of Çağatay's (2015) research, which revealed that Turkish students experience greater speaking anxiety when interacting with native speakers than when speaking with their classmates.

Additionally, some interesting findings were seen from the following excerpt.

R : *So, what do you do when a stranger approaches you and starts a conversation in English?*

Y : *yeah.. go away.. I.. prefer stay in house.*

R : *So that you don't need to speak with other people?*

Y : *yeah yeah..*

R : *What if you have to go outside and talk with people?*

Y : *now.. I try.. understand.. few months ago very afraid.. but now try...*

R : *So even though you're still nervous now, it is better compared to a few months ago?*

Y : *Yeah.. yeah...*

The aforementioned excerpt demonstrates that Yasmin's level of speaking anxiety was significantly higher when communicating with individuals outside of the classroom, as opposed to within it. During her initial months in London, she experienced a high degree of speaking anxiety to the extent that she would avoid going outside and prefer to stay indoors to avoid interaction with foreigners. Despite her anxiety, she mentioned feeling less apprehensive about conversing with people than a few months ago. This finding is consistent with the findings of Dewey et al. (2018) and Lee (2018), who assessed the language anxiety of a group of learners participating in study abroad programs. Their participants felt more relaxed and less anxious after immersing themselves in countries where the target language was spoken. Yasmin's lower level of speaking anxiety now compared to the past could be attributed to her improved English, as she had been learning the language since her stay in London. This is contrary to the results obtained in the studies by Şenel (2016) and Tuncer & Doğan (2015), where the anxiety levels of learners increased with their English proficiency level.

In the following excerpt, Yasmin elucidated the cause of her high anxiety levels when conversing with native speakers outside the classroom.

R : *What do you feel when you have to speak with native speakers outside classroom?*

Y : *not comfortable.. panic.. afraid.. now.. maybe I try*

R : *what makes you afraid?*

Y : *very fast.. speak very fast.. because I don't fluent speak..*

R : *you don't speak fluently?*

Y : *Yeah.. fluently.. and.. clean.. clean?*

R : *Clearly?*

Y : *yeah clearly.. don't clearly speak.. I prefer don't speak English..*

It was found that Yasmin experiences more anxiety when conversing with a native speaker in an informal setting than when speaking in front of a classroom audience, despite the fact that her instructors at IHL are also native English speakers. This suggests that her speaking anxiety is not related to the speaker's nationality, but rather to the environment in which the discussion takes place.

Yasmin feels significantly more secure and at ease conversing with native English teachers in a classroom. She attributes her panic and fear when conversing with native speakers outside the classroom to her perception that her speaking abilities are not fluent or coherent, and that native speakers speak too rapidly. Previous research by Çağatay (2015) also proposed that interacting with native speakers could be more intimidating for learners. This finding may be due to the fact that learners view native speakers as impeccable language users, and as a result, feel more self-critical of their own abilities when interacting with them.

CONCLUSION

This article presents extensive findings on the subject of foreign language anxiety (FLA), with a specific focus on foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA), as perceived by a Turkish student residing overseas and studying English at the pre-intermediate level in International House London. The research serves as a valuable contribution towards comprehending FLA and FLSA, both within and beyond the classroom. It was found that the participant's anxiety levels were found to be moderate to high, and were primarily provoked by the communication settings, both inside and outside the classroom. Specifically, the participant experienced a greater extent of anxiety when speaking with native speakers outside of class, which she attributed to her low English proficiency and the rapid pace of native speech. This type of anxiety can be categorized as communication apprehension (Horwitz et al., 1986). The study also found that the participant's anxiety levels decreased as her English proficiency improved, and that she became more willing to engage in conversation outside of the classroom. Additionally, the study revealed that the participant's classmates had a greater impact on her levels of foreign language anxiety (FLA) and foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) than her teachers. While previous research has suggested that teachers can reduce anxiety levels by providing sincere support and interest (Horwitz, 2001; Palacios, 1998), this study highlights the importance of creating a positive classroom environment through cooperative and collaborative learning activities that enhance interactions and intimacy among classmates. In conclusion, this study provides insights into the level and sources of speaking anxiety experienced by a Turkish student learning English in an international higher education context. The results suggest that language learners who experience speaking anxiety can benefit from exposure to communicative situations and opportunities to practice speaking, and that teachers can create a supportive learning environment through collaborative and cooperative learning activities. Moreover, given that students may encounter a higher degree of foreign language anxiety, especially speaking anxiety, beyond the confines of the classroom, teachers could play a crucial role in alleviating this by devising extracurricular activities that encourage interaction with native speakers. By doing so, students would have more opportunities to enhance their speaking abilities beyond the classroom setting.

Despite the aforementioned findings, it is important to understand the complexity, dynamism, and multifaceted nature of foreign language anxiety (FLA). FLA may vary across different occasions and time frames (Gregersen, 2020), and is influenced by a multitude of factors, including affective, cognitive, and performance-related factors (Hanifa, 2018). Moreover, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings, as the study only involved a single participant. Furthermore, since the interview was conducted with a pre-intermediate student, the data collected may not be comprehensive due to the student's limited vocabulary to articulate her true feelings. At times, it was necessary to prompt the student for more detailed responses during the interview. Therefore, the expressions used by the student to describe her views may have been influenced to some extent by the interviewer's prompts, resulting in potential interviewer bias during the data analysis process.

Another limitation of this qualitative study is its reliance on interviews as the sole method of data collection. To strengthen the findings, triangulation of data using other qualitative instruments, such as class observations and diaries, could provide a more valid and comprehensive understanding of the degree of foreign language anxiety (FLA) and foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) experienced by the participants in both classroom and non-classroom settings. Future research could

benefit from a larger sample size involving multiple participants. Additionally, exploring the role of other factors and affective variables that affect FLA and FLSA would also be beneficial.

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