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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**



**An Investigation into the Causes and Effects of Language Anxiety on English as a  
Foreign Language Learners' Speaking Performance:  
The Case of Third Year Students of English at Biskra University**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in partial  
fulfilment for the requirements for a **Master Degree in Sciences of Language**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Anfel **SILABDI**

**SUPERVISED BY:**

Ms. KENZA **MERGHMI**

**Board of Examiners**

Dr. Tarek <b>ASSASSI</b>	(Chairperson)	(University of Biskra)
Dr. Ahmed Chaouki <b>HOADJLI</b>	(Examiner)	(University of Biskra)
Ms. KENZA <b>MERGHMI</b>	(Supervisor)	(University of Biskra)

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### **Dedication**

Every challenging work needs self efforts as well as guidance especially from those who are close to our hearts. My humble effort i dedicate to

My loving parents.

My mother and my greatest teacher

My father whose children are his pride. His children are his greatest triumph

To my family, my brother and my sisters

To the memory of my late uncle

To my cousins whom i look up to

To my loving companion, Salsabil, my friend, my classmate, and my inspiration for her affection, love, encouragement, and support for the past years

To my friends, my second family

Thank you

~

hassna, amun, zahra, wail, meriem, inasse, aya, ryan, hanine, nassa, kaouther, zack, seif,

djalil, and sals

To everyone suffering in silence.

take this time as a way to nurture.

~

take care and maintenance

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### **Abstract**

Language anxiety is an occurring phenomenon among language learners, which can result in a variety of problems in the EFL Classroom. The most common of these include learners' reluctance and hesitation concerning their oral performance. Therefore, the present study attempts to explore the issue of language anxiety when speaking inside oral classes, aiming to establish an understanding of this human behaviour and uncover its possible reasons and effects on the speaking performance. To attain these objectives, this research-led study opted for a qualitative approach along with a case study research design. The participants of this study were randomly selected from the population of 3rd year EFL students at Biskra University to form a sample that consists of 20 students, and 4 oral expression teachers. Data is collected from both perspectives by distributing online questionnaires and conducting interviews. The findings revealed that reasons for anxiety vary from one student to another depending on their feelings and emotional experiences inside the classroom. Anxiety was found to have a dual effect on students', motivating them at times and triggering them into experiencing negative emotions at others. Further results showed that making mistakes can play a double part in being a potential cause as well as an effect of language anxiety. As a result, mental health was found to be the underlying thread responsible for these emotional experiences, either positive or negative. It can be recommended to spread awareness about the importance of this factor in learning through normalising talking about it and initiating communication especially between teachers for creating a more healthy learning environment.

*Keywords:* EFL classroom, language anxiety, mental health, speaking performance.

**List of Abbreviations**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**FLCAS:** Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

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ملخص الدراسة

## **General Introduction**

Given a privileged status, English has been the most widely used language and the dominant medium of interaction of people all over the world. However, up to the present time, English is still considered as a foreign language in Algeria and has minimal use in everyday life. In the Algerian EFL context, English is taught as a foreign language and therefore; it is rarely used in social, professional, and academic lives. Algerian students get exposed to the English language for the first time when they go to middle school; this late exposure may result in the lack of fluency to effectively communicate and function in the language, especially if the spoken form of this language is never applied in real-life situations. In other words, what students learn inside the classroom is rarely utilised outside the classroom.

Teaching a foreign language can be challenging, and yet for many years, the approach that many Algerian schools had taken to teach a foreign language, was mainly the focus on the writing skill. The speaking skill is not given as much importance; particularly where, for about seven years, the focus of assessment is not on students' speaking abilities but on their written content. This prevents students from improving their communicative abilities in the target language.

When students get to universities, they are expected to have proper speaking abilities in the sense of expressing their thoughts and ideas accurately and fluently using correct grammatical forms and clear pronunciation. Such expectations can be overwhelming to students and may lead them to be anxious when speaking English in the classroom environment especially in front of an audience.

The feeling of anxiety and pressure that students face in their everyday school life could worsen with time if overlooked, and may gradually become a serious mental health

issue. This is why it is critical to spread awareness about the existence of such issues. The existence of Language Anxiety demonstrates the nature and role it plays in the EFL context. This role, in return, could uncover the possible reasons and effects anxiety has on the learning process. Having the general understanding and the sufficient awareness, could make it easier for everyone involved in the teaching/learning environment to spot the early signs of anxiety, and allow them to take precautions to overcome or avoid experiencing such emotions.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

Ever since the existence of mankind, there has been a basic need for communication, and this need has been met in a variety of ways, but speaking has always been the simplest and most powerful means of communication; It is a linguistic ability that human beings learn in infancy and use regularly to express themselves. However, learning a language, one that is foreign to the mother tongue, can be challenging. EFL learners encounter many obstacles in their learning journey; these obstacles could be factors that influence foreign language acquisition and get in the way of the learning process; therefore, it is necessary to consider these factors and challenging issues. One of these factors observed in EFL students at the University of Mohamed Khider Biskra, is anxiety, especially when it comes to classes that require a speaking performance and oral communication.

Most English Major students at the University of Biskra suffer from communication anxiety which explains students' tendency to turn away and refrain themselves from classroom discussion and remain reluctant to participate, and when asked to communicate, they demonstrate moderate to extreme anxiety. According to previous research, anxiety is regarded as a natural response to a stressful situation, a condition that could hinder the success of foreign language performance; Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), label speaking as the most affected skill of language anxiety. Regardless of the considerable amount of

studies conducted, there still is a lack of understanding and awareness from teachers, students, and practitioners in the education sector about the existence of the anxiety factor in the Algerian EFL context. This study, therefore, is an attempt to better understand and clear the concept of anxiety in the Algerian EFL context through highlighting its possible sources, aspiring to remedy the foreign language learning experience to ensure success that requires a psychological state free of factors such as anxiety, creating a mentally healthier learning environment which qualifies Algerian EFL learners to communicate without reluctance.

## **2. Literature Review**

In the EFL area of research, anxiety has become of a great concern over the years. Many studies had been conducted investigating the anxiety factor in the EFL context; these studies stem from the first theory of Foreign Language Anxiety introduced by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, which emphasises the specific nature of foreign language anxiety. Scientifically, anxiety seems to be a general term for a range of disorders, all of which with similar symptoms. This explains Scovel and Gardner's insistence and suggestion that researchers should be specific to what type of anxiety to be studied. Therefore, taking Foreign Language anxiety as the independent variable, we decided to divide our literature review into three main sections: 1) Foreign Language classroom anxiety; 2) Causes of Foreign Language anxiety; 3) Effects of Foreign Language anxiety.

### **2.1. Foreign Language classroom anxiety**

Throughout the years, research has shown that anxiety is a common factor in almost all disciplines of learning. Cassady (2010) introduced the term "academic anxiety" describing it as: "a unifying formulation for the collection of anxieties learners experience while in school" (p.1). To understand foreign language anxiety in a broader scope, psychologically, there are three aspects of anxiety: Trait anxiety, State anxiety, and Situation-specific anxiety.

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope were the first to distinguish and eventually conceptualise foreign language anxiety (FLA) as “a phenomenon related to but distinguishable from other specific anxieties” (p.129). In their theory of foreign language anxiety (1986), the latter claimed that FLA is a different and unique type of anxiety specific to the foreign language learning experience. According to Horwitz et al., although students with general anxiety may experience FLA, it is not unusual for students who excel in other subjects to feel frustrated in learning a foreign language. Therefore, there must be something special and unique to the language learning experience that makes students anxious. On this account, the “specific anxiety reaction” can be interpreted to mean that FLA is a form of situation-specific anxiety-induced/influenced by external factors in the classroom itself, such as: activities, peers, and fear of being judged by others.

Prior to the theory's existence, research has been unable to determine a clear link or connection between anxiety and foreign language achievement; Horwitz et al. suggested that a possible reason to this failure was the lack of anxiety measures specific to FLL. Scovel (1978) also recognized the inconsistency of the findings in the earlier anxiety research, and thus suggested that researchers should be specific to what type of anxiety to be studied.

However, some researchers challenged Horwitz et al. 's theory of FLA standing to their view that the anxiety factor is a consequence rather than a cause of poor language performance. According to Sparks and Ganschow (1995): ‘one cannot discuss anxiety without inferring a cause’ (p.236). Responding to Sparks and Ganschow, and in support to Horwitz et al.'s position, MacIntyre (1995) argued by indicating that anxiety is more likely to be a cause rather than a consequence of poor language performance since it plays a role in creating individual differences in second and foreign language learning; He backed up his argument by using an example of the student who knows the answer, but “freezes up” on a test. His view was further supported by Horwitz (2000) by stating that Sparks and

Ganschow's theory fails to explain why also successful students experience a level of anxiety. Sparks and Ganschow then commented that these differences and opposing viewpoints are a chicken and egg phenomenon.

Although all the aforementioned researchers agree on the fact that anxiety is a factor that hinders EFL learners' performance, one may get surprised when knowing that some sort of anxiety is needed to accomplish a task successfully, known as the "facilitating anxiety"; Researchers have emphasised the positive correlation that exists between anxiety and language learning. On the other hand, Brown (2007) indicated in his book titled "Principles of Language Learning and Teaching" that students lacking this facilitating anxiety that keeps one poised, alert, and motivated may lead to another kind of anxiety known as the "debilitating anxiety" which gets in the way of the learning process acting as a mental block during the three cognitive stages: input, processing, output.

## **2.2. Causes of Foreign Language Anxiety**

Horwitz et al.(1986) distinguished three components being the significant well-springs of language anxiety related to performance, these three sources are: 1) Test anxiety, 2) fear of negative evaluation, 3) communication apprehension.

These findings are in line with a recent study (2021) aimed to understand undergraduate students' learning anxiety, and their achievements in ESL classrooms, investigating a link between the anxiety factor and its effects on the learning process, hoping to create a better learning environment; this study followed a quantitative approach using questionnaires as a research tool on 163 students from one of the public universities of Malaysia. The findings revealed that the reasons leading undergraduate students to experience anxiety in an ESL classroom were: 1) Fear of tests, 2) Fear of comprehension, 3) And fear of negative evaluation by peers. Besides, the results also showed that undergraduate

students feel less anxious when teachers provide a comfortable, non-threatening learning environment in the classroom, resulting in a mentally healthier learning experience.

Hashemi (2011) also investigated the factors behind language anxiety among 60 EFL students in Iran from the University of Islamic Azad; using qualitative, semi-structured interviews and focus groups, the results showed that most students experienced a high level of anxiety due to the formal atmosphere in the classroom, leading students to be fearful of using incorrect or unclear English. The participants of the study, however, revealed that when engaging in learning activities that involve a collaboration between teachers and students, provided a less anxiety-provoking learning experience.

In his thesis done at The University of Texas at Austin, Kim (1998) identified that students in Asian EFL classrooms manifest less anxiety reactions in reading sessions compared to conversation sessions; which leads to the inference that classrooms requiring oral or verbal communication are found to be more anxiety-provoking than those requiring less speaking.

In another study aimed to explore factors enhancing the development of EFL learners' speaking skills; through interviews conducted in his qualitative study, Boonkit (2010) revealed that students are not able to speak English with confidence especially in real-life situations (with native or international speakers) because they're anxious about making errors, or losing the natural feeling of meanings of what has been spoken. Therefore, FLA has been proven to have a link to EFL language performance. The effects vary depending on each individual's level of anxiety in different learning circumstances (Young, 1986; Horwitz & Young, 1991; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Philips, 1992; and Aida, 1994).

### **2.3. Effects of Foreign Language Anxiety**

Undoubtedly, research has shown a negative correlation that exists between the anxiety factor and language performance; this language performance can be manifested in

many forms, but mainly through the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Focusing on the speaking performance of the foreign language, Udomkit (2003), in his study conducted on students from one of the military schools of the Royal Thai Army, stated that the communication anxiety of officers in the English classroom was caused by the insufficient opportunity for students to participate in classroom communication. This can be reflected in my personal experiences as a student in both middle school and high school; the way we were exposed to English as a foreign language was through: listening, writing, and sometimes, very rarely, through reading. The lack of oral/verbal participation between students and teachers took away the opportunity to speak English in real-life situations, or even the chance to make mistakes and learn from them. Then, when students go to universities or take on their professional careers, they're expected to speak proper English, use correct grammar and the perfect pronunciation, or even sound native-like. This will eventually put a lot of pressure on students resulting in the majority, if not all students experiencing a certain level of anxiety while speaking English, especially in front of an audience. Consequently, students' reactions to experiencing anxiety would showcase the effects anxiety has in the EFL context; these effects can be manifested on many levels: First, personally. Anxious students will reveal physical and emotional reactions such as: worry, sweat, shaky, dread and other symptoms. Second, academically. Experiencing high levels of anxiety can lead to poor academic achievements which may lead students to drop out. Third, socially. Research showed that high-level anxious students can be unwilling to communicate in English with others; thus, we may hypothesise that students will code-switch when speaking. Finally, affectively. Since anxiety is one of the affective factors in language acquisition, it may negatively influence the other factors such as: students' attitude and motivation in speaking English in classrooms.

### 3. Research Objectives

The general aim of this study is to familiarise teachers and students with the existence of Language Anxiety in the EFL context, and to tackle the issue in relation to speaking performance.

This research aims to explore the possible causes and the most anxiety-provoking sources that lead EFL students at the University of Biskra to the feeling of anxiety.

Another aim is to investigate the influence of the anxiety factor on foreign language performance; specifically, EFL learners' speaking performance.

The last objective of this study is to examine EFL teachers' and students' attitudes and perceptions of language anxiety in the oral class.

### 4. Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1:** What are the causes of foreign language anxiety, among EFL university students of Biskra, especially when speaking English in the classroom?

**RQ2:** How does anxiety affect EFL learners' speaking performance?

**RQ3:** How can hindering factors such as anxiety interrupt the success of foreign language academic achievement/performance?

### 5. Research Methodology

This research study is of a descriptive nature; therefore, it will follow a qualitative approach and research design since it fits the process of understanding foreign language anxiety by showcasing its causes and influence on EFL learners' speaking performance in English oral session classes at the University of Biskra.

The sample of this study targets the population of Third year EFL students at the University of Biskra, by which the participants will be randomly selected. The decision to tackle the issue of language anxiety in relation to 3rd year students was in accordance with MacIntyre and Gardner's (1991) claim that anxiety occurs as a result of repeated negative experiences. Because this is not the first time learning English for Third year students, their feelings of anxiety might be due to better valid factors rather than the overwhelm of performing such practices for the first time in oral classes. We also believe that this population would contribute in providing more truthful and balanced data.

The data of this case study will be gathered through two main research tools, interviews and questionnaires. Classroom observations, in which the researcher gets to observe this human behaviour firsthand, were also to be among data collection tools but were eliminated due to time constraints. Besides, these instruments will be used on the perspectives of both teachers and students in order to gain better insight and understanding of this problem. By interviewing teachers, we seek to investigate their awareness concerning foreign language anxiety in the classroom; and by distributing questionnaires to students, we hope to discover the possible causes and effects anxiety has on the speaking performance.

## **6. Significance of the Study**

This study can be worth doing since it is an attempt to deliver an understanding of the role anxiety plays in the EFL context, as well as raise awareness about the importance of mental health in educational contexts. Mental health is underestimated and rarely talked about in both the Algerian society and its education system alike. Mental health issues tackle the mind, which is the most fundamental organ in the learning process; thus, we must look after it and take care of learners' mental wellbeing to ensure successful learning that requires a good psychological condition. The findings of this research could be an encouragement to

teachers, students and even practitioners in the education sector, to normalise talking about mental health in the learning/teaching environment, so as to eliminate these debilitating factors and provide a better, healthier learning experience.

## 7. Operational Definitions

**Language Anxiety:** A situation-specific type of anxiety that students may experience when learning a foreign language. This type of anxiety is related to specific situations such as participating in class.

**Speaking Performance:** Refers to students' communicative and oral reproduction inside the classroom, which includes physical demonstration of spoken English.

**EFL Classroom:** Refers to the instructional setting in which English is taught and learnt as a foreign language.

**Mental Health:** Students' mental and psychological state that can affect the way they think, feel, and act inside the classroom. Students' mental wellbeing is their ability to think positively, feel confident, and act calmly.

## 8. Structure of the Dissertation

The following outline guides the organisation of this dissertation:

**Chapter One** gives an overview of the speaking aspect of the English language as well as its pedagogical situation in Algeria as a foreign language. This chapter also highlights some of the challenges students encounter in learning this skill and possible psychological factors that may hinder the process.

**Chapter Two** provides a description and an overview of the concept "language anxiety" including its definition, types, and its possible sources and effects. In light of the

effects of language anxiety, this chapter also discusses the importance of mental health in academic learning and success.

**Chapter Three** portrays the process of data analysis. It seeks not only to display and describe, but also to analyse and interpret data retrieved in order to draw conclusions about the findings.

## **Chapter One: Speaking in the EFL Classroom**

### Introduction

#### **1.1 English Learning in the Algerian Context**

##### **1.1.1 Defining Foreign Language**

##### **1.1.2 English as a Foreign Language**

##### **1.1.3 Foreign Language Learning**

##### **1.1.4 Foreign Language Classroom**

#### **1.2 The Speaking Skill**

##### **1.2.1 Classroom Speaking.**

##### **1.2.2 The Importance of Speaking**

##### **1.2.3 Students' Challenges in Learning The Speaking Skill**

##### **1.2.4 Speaking Skill Activities**

#### **1.3 Psychological Factors Influencing The Speaking Performance**

##### **1.3.1 Motivation in Foreign Language Learning**

###### **1.3.1.1 Intrinsic motivation**

###### **1.3.1.2 Extrinsic motivation**

##### **1.3.2 Lack of Self-esteem**

##### **1.3.3 Shyness**

##### **1.3.4 Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis**

#### **1.4 Definition of Communicative Competence**

#### **1.5 Components for Effective Speaking**

##### **1.5.1 Grammatical Competence**

##### **1.5.2 Discourse Competence**

##### **1.5.3 Sociolinguistic Competence**

##### **1.5.4 Strategic Competence**

Conclusion

## **Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the pedagogical situation in Algeria regarding the teaching and learning of the English language, with respect to the cultural and social aspect of Algerian society. To better understand the pedagogical situation, we first distinguished the concept of “Foreign Language”, then depicted the status of English as a foreign language within the Algerian society, before moving on to the EFL classroom environment. Because our study tackles the issue of language anxiety in relation to students’ oral performances, this chapter, therefore, focuses on the speaking aspect of language learning. In this regard, we highlighted the nature of EFL classroom speaking as well as its importance within the learning process. On this matter we also documented some of the challenges and the psychological factors that affect the speaking skill. In addition, because communicative competence is a crucial part in communication, a view regarding its definition and components will be documented in this chapter.

### **1.1. English Learning in the Algerian Context**

Keeping in view the privileged role of English across the globe, learning this language, especially in academic settings, is an asset for establishing universal communication and keeping pace with recent research. The pedagogical situation in Algerian schools led to prioritising the emphasis on teaching and learning certain subjects such as Mathematics and Science over Languages, which are regarded as secondary or additional subjects unequal in importance and recognition. However, in recent years, there has been a growing concern devoted to teaching and learning English in schools as a foreign language on part of the Algerian government and its Ministry of National Education, improving the understatement of the English Language in academic as well as social settings.

### **1.1.1. Defining Foreign Language**

In their Handbook of Research on Computer-Enhanced Language Acquisition and Learning, Felicia Zhang & Beth Barber (2008), indicated that “the terms “foreign language,” “second language,” “target language,” and “language” are used interchangeably to refer to languages other than English taught as an academic subject.” (p. 163).

In simple terms, a foreign language is an unofficial language that is unspoken in a society of a given country but is studied in schools in addition to one’s mother language. A foreign language is neither widely spoken nor native to a speaker of a particular community, society, or country which makes it distinguishable and different from the mother tongue that is normally used by members of society, thereby providing a natural environment for the unconscious and effortless acquisition of language. On the other hand, a foreign language is consciously learnt in formal settings through formal education.

### **1.1.2. English as a Foreign Language**

The teaching and learning of a language, regardless of whether it is foreign or second, is a process by which a person learns a language that is considered non-native to them. That is, one which does not exist in the community where the person’s native language is typically spoken (Al-oglah, 2018). In the case of Algeria, the English language is taught in a controlled setting such as a classroom and is not spoken by the community, therefore, is considered a foreign language. Al-oglah (2018), addressed the major difference between what is considered a foreign and what is considered a second language; he defined a second language as one learned while living in a community where the language is commonly used and spoken.

Despite having French and English as first and second foreign languages in Algeria, one is still more widely used than the other. Slimani (2016) asserted that English does not

play an important role in the national and social life of the Algerian people. In contrast to the French language, English is introduced to Algerian students later on at about the age of thirteen with little exposure to the language in the natural environment prior to their school life. Furthermore, apart from being a little old for the sufficient acquisition of the language, and in addition to the little amount of English heard, spoken, written or read by Algerian students, Slimani (2016) expressed that this language is most of the time absent from students' daily lives, due to the nature of this foreign language in relation to the social aspects. In other words, English plays an insignificant role in the social life of an average Algerian person because it does not revolve around the historical components of the Algerian cultural identity; therefore, people do not turn to this language to live their intellectual or social life. This can explain the power dynamic that exists between the two languages, with French being the dominant language in comparison to English, despite the latter's importance as a foreign language both at the national as well as the international levels.

In equal contrast, Hayenne (1989, p. 43), stated that English is considered by some Algerians as "a language of an ex-colonial and imperialist country".

In spite of all these challenges encountered by the English language, the Algerian political and educational authorities have managed to undertake the rehabilitation of the status of this language. Because of the technical and economic exchanges all over the world, English is now occupying a better position in the Algerian educational system. Hence, most of the Algerian students and even their parents are becoming more conscious of its importance as an international language 'par excellence.'

### 1.1.3. Foreign Language Learning

From a scientific point of view, research has explored the human mind and its ability to learn other languages, looking into foreign language acquisition and what it means for non-native speakers. Foreign language learning had to be associated with linguistics and sociology (Al-oglah, 2018).

The role of English within a nation's daily life, as seen by Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, & Pincas (1978), is influenced by geographical, historical, cultural and political factors; however, the role of English at a given point in time must affect both the way it is taught and the impact it has on the individual's daily life. In line with Slimani (2016), they stated that even if there is no regional variety of English which embodies a given country's, such as Algeria's, cultural identity, it is nonetheless taught among others in schools as a universal language. Therefore, in foreign language situations of this kind, the teaching instruction in schools, according to Broughton et al. (1978), tends to serve an educational purpose with a clear instrumental intention.

Slimani (2016), mentioned the linguistic unfamiliarity of the English language system and structure to the Algerian mother tongue, pointing out that English is not the natural communicative environment for students. Furthermore, any difficulties in learning this foreign language may be due to the late integration of English into schools, which could impede the sufficient acquisition and make communicating in real-life situations using the target language difficult.

Such linguistic and cultural deprivation, according to Slimani (2016), might have hindered foreign language learning and teaching in Algeria. The latter issued a brief historical background of the teachers of English in Algeria since the independence, and revealed that according to Hayenne (1989), 84.6% of foreign language teachers in 1968 were cooperators serving on a volunteer basis abroad; they were mostly French whose knowledge, experience,

and expertise were about French students in a French learning environment. In addition, when teaching Algerian students, these cooperating teachers used the same curriculum and textbooks used back in France. Slimani (2016), argued against the use of such a curriculum noting that the time allotted to English sessions in France and English in Algeria is not the same, with French students given seven years and Algerians only five. He also commented that these teachers' ignorance of the "intricacies" of the Algerian social, educational, economic and political context is detrimental to the learning process.

#### **1.1.4. Foreign Language Classroom**

Foreign language classrooms provide a unique learning environment that usually entails interaction. For that reason, the nature of the classroom may present a matter of sensitivity in the sense that teachers' and learners' perceptions towards the learning environment influence how they learn and teach (Sağlam & Salı, 2013).

In their book "Teaching English as a Foreign Language", Broughton et al. (1978) asked the following five important questions needed for professional English teaching inside a foreign language classroom: 1) What is the nature of the social interaction that is taking place? 2) What is the nature of the language activity that is taking place? 3) What is the mode by which the teacher is teaching? 4) What materials is the teacher using? 5) How is it possible to tell whether one lesson is in some way 'better' than another?. Similarly, Schmuck and Schmuck (1978) portrayed the learning environment as all that takes place during teacher-student and student-student interaction. In this, they drew attention to elements such as interpersonal relationships, emotional and structural aspects of teaching style and classroom organisation, teacher expectations of students and attitudes towards them, level of teacher control, disciplinary problems, the gender and age of the students. In the same vein,

Entwistle et al. (2003) expanded the concept to include several other aspects of the learning environment such as staff-student relationships and student cultures.

The quality of the learning environment inside the classroom is in the hands of the teacher; it is their role to teach a classroom as a whole, to involve all students in learning, and to make it a collective process. Zedan (2010), described the desirable learning environment as being “supportive, egalitarian, democratic and organized according to pre-determined rules and regulations” (p. 76). In fact, A positive and supportive environment in the classroom, pervaded by a sense of unity, social cohesion and belonging, mutual help and consideration, will encourage students to learn more about this foreign language outside of the classroom. It is the learning environment after all, as suggested by Miller, Ferguson, and Byrne (2000), that influences students’ learning behaviour. In light of this, Sağlam and Salı (2013), concluded that the learning environment is a broad and multi-layered phenomenon involving socio-psychological, socio-cultural, pedagogical and physical domains.

## **1.2. The Speaking Skill**

It has been pointed out by Broughton et al. (1978) that both the receptive skills of listening and reading, as well as the productive skills of speaking and writing share much in common. In real communication, the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are theoretically interrelated and interactive (Nan, 2018). In a study examining the interrelationship among four language skills, Chengyu Nan (2018) discovered that the four language skills have a close and strong impact on one another; the latter also stated that improving overall language ability does not result from a simple combination of the four skills, but rather from the interaction and coordination of the four skills. In light of this, Nan (2018) believed that in language acquisition, listening comes first as the process of input, while speaking comes second as the process of output; thus, the more input of linguistic

material, the more accurate, fluent, and diverse the speaking will be. She argued that listening and speaking prerequisite each other and that the communication goal cannot be achieved by speaking without listening or listening without speaking. In contrast, Broughton et al. (1978) believed that no matter how good a student is at listening and understanding, it does not necessarily follow that he will be able to speak well: “A discriminating ear does not always produce a fluent tongue” (p. 76).

Speaking is a crucial part in the process of language learning, with communicative efficiency being one of the major goals behind teaching this skill (Bahrani & Soltani, 2012). Speaking is, after all, the first way to interact and communicate with others in a social community. Besides, the success in learning a language is most of the time measured by students’ ability to speak in the foreign language (Zuhriyah, 2017; & Nunan, 1991).

### **1.2.1. Classroom Speaking**

Although speaking is at the heart of foreign/second language learning, it has been undervalued and somewhat ignored in classroom instruction according to Egan (1999). On the other hand, Bahrani and Soltani (2012) claimed that one of the main concerns of most language teachers is how to improve learners’ language proficiency; speaking proficiency, in this regard, has received the most attention from both teachers and learners. Despite this, students’ lack of speaking participation inside the classroom is a common argument among language teachers.

Given that the classroom environment, as aforementioned, includes different aspects such as socio-psychological and socio-cultural factors, Bahrani and Soltani (2012) suggested breaking this cultural barrier and establishing a classroom culture in which speaking out loud in English is the norm.

Astorga (2015) suggested a list of classroom activities to stimulate communication among EFL students, among the activities listed were: imitative oral tasks, dialogue completion, and role-play. This supports Brown's (2004) claim that the learning process, for EFL students, is focused more on accuracy rather than communication. In other words, the focus is on reformulating utterances and messages instead of understanding them. Furthermore, the counterproductive effects of controlled classroom speaking, which aims to give students limited freedom for spontaneous dialogue, are highlighted by Broughton et al. (1978). In their view, structuring students' utterances is a mistake since it reduces the probability of making errors, given that making errors and learning from them is a natural part of the learning process. Therefore, they insist on moving to a "freer oral production" which is plausible to enable students to naturally produce the target language and "say what they want rather than what they are channelled into saying" (p. 83).

Equally plausible, it may also enable EFL students to converse, think and reason in the target language. A series of experiments led by Boaz Keysar and his team (2012) exploring whether decision making in a foreign language would be the same as in the native tongue, found that thinking in a foreign language makes decisions less biased, automatic, and more rational. Keysar and his team (2012) believed that these effects arise as a result of a foreign language providing a greater cognitive and emotional distance than a native tongue. In line with this is Ayçiçeğ'i and Harris's (2004) who claim that words in a foreign language lack the emotional associations of words in a native language. Therefore, using a foreign language may weaken emotional reactions, allowing for analytical thinking and reducing bias. In other words, biased decisions that are emotionally charged should be less manifest in a foreign language (Keysar, Hayakawa & An, 2012). The preceding studies resonate with Michael West's statement in 1953 (as cited in Broughton et al., 1978, p. 8):

The foreigner is learning English to express ideas rather than emotion: for his emotional expression he has the mother tongue.... It is a useful general rule that intensive words and items are of secondary importance to a foreign learner, however common they may be.

### **1.2.2. The Importance of Speaking**

Language is used in a variety of situations as a tool for communicating, sharing, and receiving ideas and thoughts from others. This language use can take many forms, but it is mainly manifested through verbal communication because we, as humans, spend far more time interacting orally with language than we do writing it (Leong & Ahmadi, 2016). For that reason, the speaking skill appears to be the standard for measuring the success or failure of language learning among EFL learners (Zuhriyah, 2017; & Nunan, 1991). When most people come to learn a language, their aim is to put it to use and be able to speak and communicate in that language. To coin Nunan's (1991) phrase: "To most people, mastering the art of speaking is the single most important factors of learning a second or foreign language and success is measure items of the ability to carry out a conversation in the language" (p. 39).

Besides the vital role the speaking skill plays in the daily activities of a person in terms of communication and interaction, Leong and Ahmadi (2016) indicated the significance of speaking with the integration of the other language skills. According to them, speaking helps improve learners' vocabulary and grammar skills which in turn helps improve their writing skills. Further to that, speaking ensures the creative use of language (Nan, 2018).

### **1.2.3. Students' Challenges in Learning The Speaking Skill**

Attaining another language in addition to one's mother tongue is widely known as the process of second/foreign language acquisition. A second/foreign language can be acquired in

two contexts, one in which the target language is not the native language, and the other in which the target language is frequently spoken by members of society (Longcope, 2009). Therefore, it is important to recognise the correlation between foreign language contact and acquisition because EFL learners are more dependent on the amount of language contact they have with the foreign language (Astorga, 2015). To illustrate, the biggest challenge for EFL learners in Algeria is a lack of English contact, input, and output which creates a limited learning environment and leads to difficulties understanding interlocutors.

Another challenge facing EFL learners in learning the speaking skill could be the existence of an interrelationship between the four language skills. Nan (2018) has divided the four language skills into two aspects of communication; one involving listening and reading is labelled as “linguistic comprehension”, and the other involving speaking and writing is labelled as “linguistic production”. Accordingly, it has been claimed that linguistic comprehension is the basis for linguistic production because only adequate understanding can lead to effective expression. For example, when a communicative activity is performed, certain language skills are used such as listening and speaking which are interconnected and share the same channel of communication. Rivers (1966) has argued that “Speaking does not of itself constitute communication unless what being said is comprehended by another person” (p. 196). Moreover, Krashen (1988) examined the relationship between listening and speaking skills, and stated that when students speak, it demonstrates and provides evidence that they have acquired the language. Nan (2018) has concluded that “Listening is the basis for speaking, reading is a source for listening, listening and speaking facilitate reading and writing, and vice versa.” (p. 422).

On the basis of this reasoning, it can be difficult to learn the speaking skill in isolation. To master this skill, EFL learners should be capable of using all four skills of language.

#### **1.2.4. Speaking Skill Activities**

The primary goal of foreign language teachers, more precisely, oral expression teachers, is to boost students' oral performance and increase classroom interaction with a focus on communicative efficiency. To help students develop communicative efficiency in speaking, Bahrani and Soltani (2012) suggested using an activities approach that combines language input and communicative output. For example, teacher talk, listening activities, reading passages, and language heard and read outside of class all contribute to language input; it provides students with the material they need to begin producing language on their own. In addition, communicative output activities such as: drama or role plays, and discussions allow students to practice using all their linguistic knowledge in situations that resemble real-life settings; these activities will motivate students to work together in order to solve a problem or complete a task. Atas (2014) reported that introducing drama in students' speaking classes helped them to reduce tension and thereby improved confidence. Besides, assigning roles puts students in situations that they may eventually encounter in the future; thus, expanding the range of language functions that can be used outside the classroom (Bahrani & Soltani 2012).

Less formal and more friendly activities will encourage students to experiment and innovate with the language while also creating a supportive atmosphere in which there is room for making mistakes without fear of embarrassment. This will also boost students' self-confidence as speakers and motivate them to learn more (Bahrani & Soltani 2012).

### **1.3. Psychological Factors Influencing the Speaking Performance**

Speaking can be the most challenging aspect of learning a foreign language because it goes beyond the linguistic ability; it requires specific and certain abilities to master this skill and use it properly in different situations. EFL learners still face difficulties in speaking

English during oral classes which is not only a result of the lack of linguistic rules but also of psychological factors that affect their speaking (Bekhairi, 2017). According to Bekhairi (2017), low achievements in speaking productions, as claimed by EFL learners, is associated with having “a mental block, a barrier, a real wall against learning a foreign language, although they are good learners in other disciplines, strongly motivated, and hold a positive attitude towards the target language” (p. 5).

Although there are different psychological reasons why many learners fail to speak in classrooms, Horwitz (2001), MacIntyre & Gardner (1991), and Krashen (1985) identified motivation, self-esteem, shyness and debilitating anxiety to be the main psychological factors affecting learners’ oral performance.

### **1.3.1. Motivation in Foreign Language Learning**

Motivation and emotions play a critical role in learning and performance (Goetz, Pekrun, Hall, & Haag, 2006; Op’t Eynde, Corte, & Verschaffel, 2006; Pekrun, 1992; Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002 ). In fact, research has proved motivation and emotions to be inseparable in the contexts of learning and performance (Op’t Eynde, 2006). According to Op’t Eynde et al. (2006), in order to understand educational experiences, emotions and motivation need to be considered alongside cognition. The interplay among emotions, motivation, and cognition as well as how emotions influence one’s motivation to act in a certain way can be understood in terms of intentions and goals. For example, intentions to pursue a goal can promote positive emotions and sustain motivation whereas intentions to avoid a goal such as avoiding speaking performances in class can promote negative emotions and poor motivation (Kim, & Pekrun, 2014). Therefore, emotions and motivation are enacted while striving to pursue or avoid goals (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Op’t Eynde & Turner, 2006). In other words, emotions and motivation interact with each other and make each other

"activated" or "deactivated", which directs behaviours (Op't Eynde & Turner, 2006; Op't Eynde et al. 2006). In another perspective, behavioural or action tendencies result from discrete emotions that create specific action impulses; for example, a physical attack (an action) driven by anger (an emotion) is intended to cause harm to someone (a motivational intention). Buck (1985) used the analogy of energy and matter in physics to explain the relationship between emotions and motivation: "Just as energy is a potential that manifests itself in matter, motivation is a potential that manifests itself in emotion. Thus motivation and emotion are seen to be two sides of the same coin, two aspects of the same process" (p. 396).

Generally, motivation is separated into two different types: intrinsic (arising from internal factors) and extrinsic (arising from external factors).

#### **1.3.1.1. Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic motivation is defined as a behaviour driven by internal rewards. In other words, the motivation to engage in an activity arises from within the individual because it is naturally satisfying and enjoyable to them. Goon and Mitterer (2010) offered the following definition:

Intrinsic motivation occurs when we act without any obvious external rewards. We simply enjoy an activity or see it as an opportunity to explore, learn, and actualize our potentials. (p. 62)

This goes in line with Dorney (2011) in saying: "intrinsic motivation which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable." (p. 62).

According to the Very Well Mind website (2019), although one's motivations for engaging in an activity, in this case, arise entirely from within rather than out of a desire for external rewards such as prizes or money, it doesn't necessarily mean that intrinsically

motivated behaviours do not come with their own rewards. These rewards involve instilling internal satisfaction as well as positive emotions within the individual.

#### **1.3.1.2. Extrinsic Motivation**

In contrast with intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation involves engaging in a behaviour in order to earn external rewards or avoid punishment. In learning contexts, for instance, productivity can be increased by using extrinsic rewards like extra grades. However, the quality of the learning performance is influenced by intrinsic factors (Very Well Mind, 2019).

On a different note, research has discovered that offering external rewards or reinforcements for an already internally rewarding activity can actually make the activity less intrinsically rewarding. This is referred to as the “overjustification effect”. In his book *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* (2017), author Richard A. Griggs explained that:

A person's intrinsic enjoyment of an activity provides sufficient justification for their behavior, with the addition of extrinsic reinforcement, the person may perceive the task as overjustified and then attempt to understand their true motivation (extrinsic versus intrinsic) for engaging in the activity. (p. 154)

Therefore, it is suggested that people are more creative when they are intrinsically motivated. Similarly, Kim and Pekrun (2014) also suggested that in order to promote optimal learning and performance, instructional designers must consider not only the content to be learnt, but also students' needs related to academic emotions and motivation in ways that highlight intrinsic learning tasks, for autonomy-supportive learning environments increase learners' curiosity and desire to take on a challenge.

### **1.3.2. Lack of Self-esteem**

Self-esteem refers to the level of self-confidence or self-image an individual has, which is a psychological variable that has the potential to influence the learning process either positively or negatively. In a foreign language classroom, learners with low self-esteem often tend to withdraw from participating in any type of group work; they generally prefer to protect themselves from exposure to others because they believe they are less capable than their peers. Learners' perceptions of their capacities are closely related to the way they interact and see themselves. Thus, low self-esteem has generally been found to have a negative effect on performance when learning a foreign language (Koka, Islam, & Osman, 2019). "No successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of self-esteem" (Brown, 2001, p.145).

### **1.3.3. Shyness**

Learners' personalities can vary from one student to another; many different personality types can co-exist in a single foreign classroom from introverts, extroverts, to shy personalities. Shyness is another psychological factor that may have impacts on the learning process. Moreover, it is an emotional state that many EFL learners suffer from when required to participate or speak inside the classroom. Pilkonis (1977) defined shyness to be "a tendency to avoid social interactions and to fail participating appropriately in social situations" (p. 596). This can put shy students at a great disadvantage because of the communicative nature of the foreign classroom that makes speaking in front of others a difficult task for them. Feelings of shyness may result in students experiencing hesitation, withdrawal, forgetting what to say, and making a lot of pauses which affects their speaking performances and eventually their achievements.

#### **1.3.4. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis**

Stephen Krashen's affective filter hypothesis (1985) can be the meeting point where all of the above-mentioned factors intertwine to form a single meaningful explanation to the intersection of affective factors and learning success. This hypothesis simply suggests that learners are influenced by emotional factors that distract them from absorbing input. Krashen (1985) cited motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety as the three main affective variables related to second language acquisition that act like a filter which filtrates the amount of input in learners' brains (Du, 2009). According to the hypothesis, learners with low affective filter (high motivation, self-confidence, and a low level of anxiety) are better equipped for success in learning, whereas learners with high affective filter (low self-esteem and high level of anxiety) form a mental block that blocks language acquisition and thus, impedes the learning process. Therefore, to secure successful acquisition and learning, the affective filter should be lowered or minimised by creating a learning environment that boosts students' motivation and learning confidence, while decreasing their anxiety, allowing them to maintain a positive attitude. Eventually, students' emotional condition, as pointed out by Krashen (1985), is the key factor to learners' success in language learning.

#### **1.4. Definition of Communicative Competence**

The term communicative competence was coined by Hymes (1972) who defined it as both the knowledge of rules of grammar and the ability to use it effectively in different situations and contexts. Hymes (1972) claimed that there are non-verbal aspects in which we can communicate; therefore, effective language use encompasses a language user's grammatical knowledge as well as social knowledge of how and when to use utterances appropriately. In other words, the ability to use the linguistic system does not entirely depend

on grammatical structures, but requires awareness of the socio-cultural conventions of a particular language.

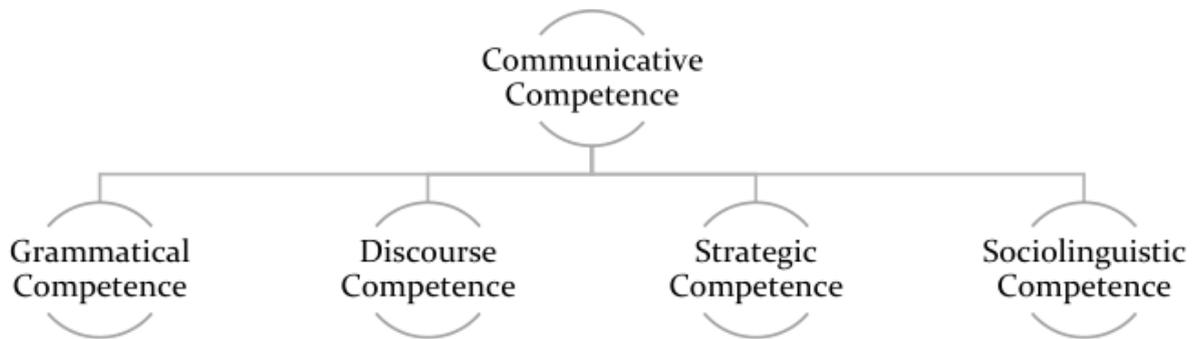
Broughton et al. (1978) asserted that language use can be classified into a variety of categories based on the situation and purpose of communication. For example, certain ways of speaking are appropriate for communicating with intimates, other ways for communicating with non-intimates; certain ways will be understood to convey politeness, while others will be understood to convey impatience, rudeness, or anger. For a foreign language learner, according to them, it is far more important to achieve this level of communicative competence than to achieve a formal “linguistic correctness”.

### **1.5. Components for Effective Speaking**

Hymes’s (1972) conceptualization of communicative competence has been further developed by researchers such as Canale and Swain (1980); Canale (1983); Backman (1990); and Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), who offered a variety of models attempting to define the specific components of the construct of communicative competence.

Developing speaking competence can involve a variety of processes. First and foremost, there is a need for sufficient linguistic knowledge to maintain a conversation in various contexts. Apart from the ability to use language correctly (i.e. linguistic competence), students should also have other competences such as sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences, all of which are components of effective communication (Savignon, 1983).

Canale and Swain's (1980) model offered the following construct of communicative competence:



*Figure 1.* Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence.

### **1.5.1. Grammatical Competence**

Grammatical competence generally entails knowledge of the language code as cited by Oxford (1990): “the knowledge of the linguistic code including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling, and word formation” (p. 7). Similarly, Canale and Swain (1980) (as cited in Brown, 2001, p. 247) described it as the “knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar, semantics and phonology”.

EFL learners have to be grammatically competent and have the ability to use the basic elements of communication; that is, how language is used and how its rules are applied, as well as how words are joined together to form sentences in order to convey a message and effectively communicate (Shumin, 2002).

### **1.5.2. Discourse Competence**

In addition to grammatical competence, EFL learners also need to have discourse competence which requires knowledge of achieving coherence, cohesion and unity in a spoken or written text. According to Oxford (1990), discourse competence is “the ability to

combine ideas to achieve cohesion in form and coherence in thought” (p. 7). Particularly, understanding how ideas are connected through patterns of organisation, cohesive and transitional devices.

Furthermore, in paralleling Canale’s (1983) discourse competence, Backman’s (1990) model offered a different view. He constructed discourse competence under what is known as organisational competence that encompasses not only grammatical competence, but also textual competence, which includes cohesion and unity.

Brown (2001) also described discourse competence as “the ability we have to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to form a meaningful whole out of a series of utterances” (p. 247).

### **1.5.3. Sociolinguistic Competence**

Brown (2001) described sociolinguistic competence as “the knowledge of the sociocultural rules of language and of discourse”. It refers to the speaker’s knowledge of how to express appropriate messages within the social and cultural context of communication in which they are produced. It simply requires having awareness of the social rules of language (e.g. formality, politeness...), non-verbal behaviours, and cultural references such as idioms, expressions, and background knowledge. As explained by Savignon (1983 as cited in Brown, 2001, p. 247), sociolinguistic competence “requires an understanding of the social context in which language is used: the roles of the participants, the information they share, and the function of the interaction”.

Through cultural awareness of foreign speech communities, EFL learners will be able to interpret their discourse and successfully understand them. It can be said that communication, in this case, is not only a linguistic process, but also a social-cultural process. Therefore, for effective communication, EFL learners must be able to understand what lies

beyond the utterance and what the target language user intends to communicate regarding social and cultural norms (Shumin, 2002).

#### **1.5.4. Strategic Competence**

Strategic competence, as Shumin (2002) pointed out, is considered to be “the most important of all the communicative competence elements” (p. 208). It refers to the knowledge of how to use communication strategies, either verbal or non-verbal, to handle breakdowns in communication or to overcome language gaps. Oxford (1990) explained it as “the ability to use strategies like gestures or ‘talking around’ an unknown word in order to overcome limitations in language knowledge” (p. 7).

To achieve communicative proficiency, EFL learners must develop the ability to use communicative strategies and techniques which enable them to compensate for deficiencies and gaps in their target language knowledge (Bialystok, 1990). In other words, students need to be able to use communicative strategies to improve their speaking abilities.

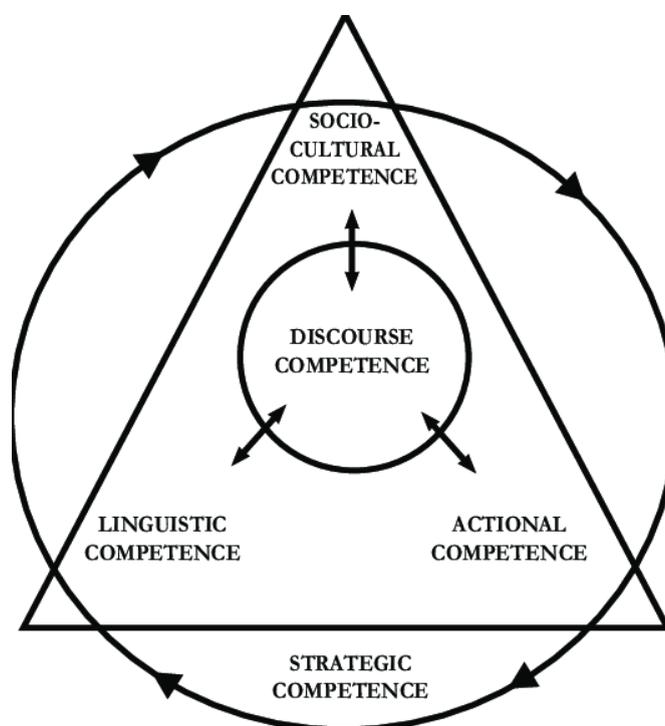
Studies into communicative strategies have been carried out from two perspectives: the interactional view and the psycholinguistic view, as illustrated in the following table:

**Table 1.** *Communicative Strategies*

Interactional View	Psycholinguistic View			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Approximation</li> <li>● Word coinage</li> <li>● Circumlocution</li> <li>● Literal translation</li> <li>● Language Switch</li> <li>● Mime</li> <li>● avoidance</li> </ul>	Avoidance Strategies		Achievement Strategies	
	Formal Reduction Strategies	Functional Reduction Strategies	Compensatory Strategies	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Code Switching</li> <li>● Transfer</li> <li>● Non-linguistic Strategies</li> </ul>	

Because of the differences in theoretical perspectives, taxonomies vary considerably across studies. In support of the interactional view, Tarone (1980) and Canale (1983) consider communicative strategies to be a mutual attempt by participants to maintain communication through using literal translation, language switch, etc. on the other hand, embracing the psycholinguistic view, Faerch and Kasper (1983) define communicative strategies in terms of a participant’s mental response to a communicative breakdown rather than just as a joint response between participants. They proposed two strategies for solving a communication problem, “avoidance strategies” and “achievement strategies”. Avoidance strategies include “formal reduction strategies” and “functional reduction strategies”, whereas achievement strategies comprise “compensatory strategies” and “retrieval strategies”. However, despite the differences between the two perspectives, the compensatory strategies of Faerch and Kasper (1983) share some similarities to some of the devices included in Tarone’s (1980) taxonomy.

In conclusion, the importance of communicative competence has been maintained ever since Hymes (1972). Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) formulated the final model of communicative competence by breaking it down into six competences and adding a new component known as “actional competence”, which involves the understanding of intentions behind a speaker’s communicative act. This competence, in other words, requires the ability to both interpret as well as perform speech act sets. This model depicts the interrelationship among all the components:



**Figure 02.** *Celce-Murcia et al. 's Model of communicative Competence*

This proposed model starts with the core, that is “discourse competence”, which is placed in a position that not only shapes, but is also shaped by linguistic, socio-cultural and actional competencies. In turn, the last component, strategic competence shapes all of the other four. However, Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006) criticised this model, commenting that strategic competence should be placed at the same level as the other competencies

because they all share a mutual goal, which is that of building discourse competence while allowing communicative ability to develop in a parallel way to the other components.

### **Conclusion**

The present chapter focused on the speaking aspect of foreign language learning in relevance to the pedagogical situation within the Algerian schools regarding the teaching and learning of English in general, and the speaking skill in particular. The speaking skill was concluded to be one of the challenging and most sensitive aspects of the learning process as it is affected by different psychological factors that will be documented in the forthcoming chapter.

## **Chapter Two: Conceptualising Foreign Language Anxiety in The EFL Classroom**

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## **Introduction**

The present chapter introduces the concept of language anxiety in the EFL context by which its definitions, different types, as well as its possible sources and effects will be documented. Given the nature of anxiety and its impact on students, we sought to associate this psychological factor in relation to students' feelings and emotional experiences. In this respect, it diverted our attention to the primary root of emotion and the main source of all these psychological issues, which is students' mental health. Because mental health is an unexplored factor in the literature of language anxiety, we attempt to address its importance within the learning process, and depict its level of literacy within the academic community as well as their perceptions.

### **2.1. Definition of Language Anxiety**

From a scientific point of view, anxiety seems to be a general term for a range of disorders, all of which have similar symptoms. Medical News Today website uses the term anxiety to refer to several disorders that form a category of mental health diagnoses that lead to the feeling of nervousness, fear, apprehension, and worry. These disorders affect how we feel and behave in day-to-day living, and they can manifest themselves on a physical level causing physical reactions and exhibiting symptoms.

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) Fifth Edition, anxiety is classified into several types. On account of that, the existence of different types of anxiety led to the emergence of various definitions for the phenomenon, as well as an inconsistency in research findings in the context of foreign language learning; this inconsistency, however, was recognised by scholars such as Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986), Gardner (1985), and Scovel (1978) who suggested that researchers should be specific to what type of anxiety to be defined and studied.

In the foreign language learning situation, anxiety can be highly associated with the learning process, as stated in Oxford Dictionary (2015): “Anxiety is quite possibly the effective factor that most perversely obstructs the learning process”. This association leads to a new term called foreign language anxiety which is described as a psychological or physiological state resulting from physical, emotional, behavioural, and cognitive factors; defined by Hilgard, Atkinson & Atkinson (1983) as “a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, a vague fear, that is only indirectly associated with an object” (p. 18). This illustrates that anxiety reactions are a construct of one's own frame of mind towards a vague fear that may overshadow the actual danger of the threat. Similarly, Anxiety is characterised as “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” according to Spielberger (1983, p. 15). In other words, anxiety is controlled by the human nervous system, the arousal of this system leads one to become anxious, which is manifested in feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry. Besides, when learning a foreign or second language is concerned, Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986 and 1991) viewed it as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to foreign language classroom learning. MacIntyre (1999) as well shares this view towards anxiety, describing it as a feeling of worry, a negative emotional reaction arousing during second language learning.

Anxiety is regarded as a natural response to a stressful situation, which can be a normal and healthy emotion that, at times, motivates as well as encourages a person to handle a stressful situation. However, with regular feelings of worry and apprehension, it might become a medical disorder with a debilitating effect (Medical News Today, 2020).

## **2.2. Types of Language Anxiety**

To understand foreign language anxiety in a broader scope, it is important to address the various characteristics of anxiety in general. Spielberger (1972) recognised two categories of anxiety: trait anxiety and state anxiety while Horwitz & Cope (1986) recognised the third category known as situation-specific anxiety. The anxiety arousal levels in these categories can vary from stability to transience.

### **2.2.1. Trait Anxiety**

Trait anxiety, as Scovel (1978 as cited in Ellis, 1994, p. 479) noted, is a stable personality characteristic that refers to “a more permanent predisposition to be anxious”. Trait anxiety is a factor that contributes to the experience of nervousness due to disposition; that is, one’s own perspective and attitude about life which can either be a positive or a negative way a person views the world. This trait perspective, according to Scovel (1987), occurs when a person has a permanent intent to be anxious. In other words, this aspect of anxiety is a stable personality trait that does not change over time, or across several situations, because it is a feature in the personality of an individual wherein all situations provoke anxiety, as in Sieber, O’Neil & Tobias’s (1977) claim that trait anxiety indicates to “stable personality differences in anxiety proneness” (p. 99).

### **2.2.2. State Anxiety**

Trait anxiety is not the only factor that leads to anxiety reactions, there is also another anxiety type known as state anxiety. The state perspective is defined as an emotional state. Spielberger (1972) explains the state anxiety to be “the emotional reaction or pattern of response that occurs in an individual who perceives a particular situation as personally dangerous or threatening, irrespective of the presence or absence of objective danger”

(p.489). State anxiety describes the situational factors that contribute to the experience of excitement, nervousness, or anxiety; it is simply an emotional reaction towards a situation a person is emotionally invested in. This emotional reaction, unlike trait anxiety, is temporary and can change or decrease depending on the amount of the threat received as well as its duration. For example, the anxiety experienced by students before taking an exam; this feeling can change by the end of the exam period.

Spielberger (1983) developed what he called The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory which is a measurement tool used to test and assess both state and trait anxiety separately. The state measurement assesses how the individual feels at the moment by rating the intensity of their anxiety on a four-point scale, while the trait measurement addresses how the individual generally feels. Individuals who score higher on trait anxiety are more readily to interpret environmental situations as threatening, compared to those who score lower. Thus, resulting in a state anxiety reaction.

### **2.2.3. Situation-Specific Anxiety**

Situation-specific anxiety is another type of anxiety that occurs at a particular point in time as a result of a specific situation (Spielberger, 1983). It is aroused by a specific type of situation or event such as public speaking, examinations, or class participation (Ellis, 1994; & Brown 2001). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) stated that, situation-specific anxiety “can be considered to be the probability of becoming anxious in a particular type of situation, such as during tests (labelled as test anxiety), when solving mathematics problems (math anxiety), or when speaking a second language (language anxiety)” (p. 199). On account of these definitions, situation-specific anxiety refers to the permanent type of anxiety that occurs under specific circumstances relating to a particular anxiety-provoking situation, such as a classroom environment in which a language is learnt, but not to any situation (trait anxiety).

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) recognised language anxiety as a form of situation-specific anxiety, claiming the situation-specific perspective to be the appropriate research approach for foreign language anxiety because of the increase in feelings of worry and stress experienced by language learners inside the classroom situation.

Although no clear distinction between these three types of anxiety can be claimed, the differences can roughly be identified and traced along a continuum from stability to transience. On the one hand, trait anxiety with a general stable predisposition to be anxious in a wide range of situations, and on the other, state anxiety as a temporary reaction to an emotional investment that can be experienced at the present moment. Situation-specific anxiety falls in the middle of the continuum, indicating the likelihood of experiencing anxiety in a specific situation, or under particular circumstances (Ying Zheng, 2008).

### **2.3. Sources of Language Anxiety**

Through their popular theory of foreign language anxiety, Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986) proved that anxiety associated with a foreign language is a situation-specific form arising from the uniqueness of learning a foreign language, rather than general classroom anxiety moved to foreign language learning, observing that “foreign language anxiety is a phenomenon related to but distinguishable from other specific anxiety” (p. 129). Numerous researchers adopted this theory, all of which provided a piece of evidence to support it. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989), Young (1991), and many others are in line with Horwitz et al. ‘s claim that foreign language anxiety is a unique type of anxiety stemming from the distinctive nature of learning a foreign language.

### **2.3.1. The Classification of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope**

Horwitz et al. (1986) were the first to conceptualise a situation-specific construct that they called foreign language anxiety. Accordingly, Horwitz (2001) identified three components of foreign language anxiety responsible for students' negative emotional reactions to language learning: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

#### **2.3.1.1. Communication Apprehension**

Communication apprehension generally refers to a type of anxiety experienced in interpersonal communicative settings, in relevance to second/foreign language learning contexts (Horwitz et al., 1986). The fear of oral communication occurs when a learner gets afraid to comprehend or verbally communicate in the target language with another person (Amogne & Yigzaw, 2013), due to the insufficient exposure to the language, or the lack of adequate vocabulary needed to convey a message which leads to frustration and apprehension. This apprehension, therefore, manifests itself in a form of obstacles that lead students to encounter anxiety inside the classroom such as reluctance, avoidance or withdrawal from communication when possible.

#### **2.3.1.2. Test Anxiety**

Horwitz et al. (1986) described test anxiety as “a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure”. This type of anxiety is one of the major problems faced by learners, especially in academic contexts, relating to the fear of failing a test. Many studies asserted the negative effects of anxiety on students when taking an exam, making them feel worried, afraid, and confused while responding to the questions. For example, when taking a grammar test in which grammar items must be remembered, Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that many students reported that they knew the grammar rule, but forgot it while taking the test.

Besides, students sometimes put more pressure on themselves by setting high expectations that they must perform well to achieve the highest score in the test.

### **2.3.1.3. Fear of Negative Evaluation**

Horwitz et al. (1986) nominated the fear of negative evaluation as the third component in foreign language anxiety. Watson and Friend (1969) defined it as “apprehension of others’ evaluations, distress over their negative evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectations that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (p. 449). Correspondingly, Worde (2003) defined it as learners’ anticipation of being judged negatively in any situation. In the EFL context, a language classroom is always anxiety-provoking because it involves constant competition among students due to the regular assessment and evaluation of students’ competence and performance.

### **2.3.2. The Classification of Dolly J. Young’s**

The classification of Young (1991) offered an extensive list of possible sources that could potentially provoke language anxiety in the classroom. These sources revolve around the three primary parties involved in the learning process, some of which are related to the learner, some to the teacher, and others are related to the classroom atmosphere. Young argues that language anxiety arises from six potential sources:

#### **2.3.2.1. Personal and Interpersonal Anxieties**

Anxiety stemming from personal as well as interpersonal issues in the language learning context has been related to different sources involving self-esteem, self-confidence, competitiveness and communication apprehension. According to Krashen (1991, as cited in Young, 1991, p. 427), an individual’s level of self-esteem is highly related to language anxiety: “people with low self-esteem worry about what their peers think; they are concerned

with pleasing others". Similarly, Bailey (1983) asserts that competitiveness can lead to anxiety when learners compare themselves negatively to others or to an idealised self-image and thus, become a victim of lower self-esteem. To further demonstrate, a study conducted by Price (1991) reported that most of her students believed their language abilities and skills were weaker than others in the class, that they "weren't doing a good job and that everyone else looked down on them; that they should have done much better than they did; that if they had only worked a little harder they could have been successful at this task" (p. 106).

Due to its emphasis on interpersonal interactions inside the classroom, it is possible to draw parallels between this element of Young's classification and Horwitz et al. 's communication apprehension in relevance to the fear of engaging in verbal communication with others in order to avoid unfavourable peer judgement.

#### **2.3.2.2. Learners' Beliefs about Language Learning**

Learners' perceptions and beliefs about language learning play a significant role in second or foreign language learning (Young, 1991). This idea of Young was further extended and supported in research studies conducted by Wen and Clement (2003) and Peng (2007) revealing that this factor contributes to language anxiety. Some beliefs which have been reported were accuracy and fluency in language learning. Further, Gynan's (1989) research on beliefs reported that learners develop these beliefs about language learning instilling the idea that pronunciation is the most important aspect of successful language learning. For example, some learners give great concern to the accuracy of their utterances, and others believe that they have to speak with a fluent accent in the target language. When learners find these beliefs unrealistic, they may feel anxious about language learning (Young, 1991).

In the same vein, Horwitz (1984), Gynan (1989), and Howitz et al. (1986) all share this view; the former through stating that learners are not without beliefs, and the latter through defining language anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs,

feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128).

### **2.3.2.3. Instructor Beliefs about Language Teaching**

Because only a one-sided picture is shown, addressing learners’ beliefs about language learning may not suffice. However, researchers have also recognised a link between students’ language anxiety and teachers’ beliefs towards language teaching.

In contrast, Horwitz (1986) addressed anxiety and beliefs from teachers’ perspectives, suggesting, in her study, that non-native teachers may also experience anxiety leading to negative consequences inside the classroom. For example, in terms of teaching methodology, anxious teachers may unintentionally create a learning atmosphere that may not be comfortable and easy for learners to enhance communication, but rather triggers and increases their anxiety (Gopang, Bughio, Memon & Faiz, 2016).

Teachers play a critical role in reducing anxiety and clarifying misconceptions about language learning (MacIntyre, 2007). In the process, preventing language anxiety and learners’ beliefs from affecting learning in the classroom.

### **2.3.2.4. Instructor-Learner Interactions**

Interactions are a necessary aspect in foreign language classrooms due to the nature of the learning process. These interactions would occur either between students themselves or between students and their instructors. Researchers like Horwitz et al. (1986); Koch and Terrell (1991); Price (1991); and Young (1990) reported that instructor-learner interactions are anxiety-provoking due to teachers’ harsh manners when it comes to providing feedback or correcting students’ errors. In addition, learners’ negative perceptions towards committing mistakes inside the classroom is another source of anxiety. Students constantly experience anxiety when they respond incorrectly, being incorrect in front of their peers, and looking or

sounding “dumb”. On the other hand, studies conducted by Koch and Terrell (1991), Horwitz et al. (1986), and Young (1990) revealed that students feel that error correction is necessary. Therefore, the issue is not with error correction itself, but with the manner in which error correction is provided. This, on another note, mirrors Horwitz et al. ‘s classification of fear of negative evaluation.

#### **2.3.2.5. Classroom Procedures**

Anxieties associated with classroom procedures primarily revolve around situations requiring a speaking performance in front of an audience, or activities in which students are expected to engage in conversations, or participate in group discussions. For example, Koch and Terrell (1991) found that strong anxiety sources came from classroom activities such as oral presentations in front of peers, oral quizzes and being called on to respond orally in the target language. In addition, in her study attempting to examine anxiety and speaking from the students' perspective, Young (1990) found that more than sixty-eight per cent of her students reported feeling more comfortable when they did not have to get in front of the class to speak.

#### **2.3.2.6. Language Testing**

Another factor that contributes to students' language anxiety, according to Young (1990), is language testing which Horwitz et al. called “test anxiety” that increases in an evaluative situation like a test whether oral or written. Daly (1991) offered aspects that can increase learner anxiety in language testing, claiming that when a situation is unfamiliar, ambiguous, or highly evaluative, learners are likely to experience anxiety. According to Young (1990), test formats could also be one of the aspects to trigger anxiety. Students can experience anxiety when the given test emphasises on materials different than the ones seen

in class with the teacher, which can be frustrating for students who spend hours studying the material highlighted in class.

#### **2.4. The Effects of Language Anxiety on Students' Learning**

Anxiety is a factor that could hinder the success of learning a second or foreign language as agreed upon in numerous studies investigating a link between anxiety and its effects whether positive or negative. The focus, however, was on the negative impacts of this factor on learners' language performance and achievement (Horwitz et al, 1986; Aida, 1994; MacIntyre, 1999; Oxford, 1999; Kim, 2000; & Brown, 2007). In spite of that, researchers were able to recognise the positive impact anxiety can have on the learning process. Bailey states that: "despite the unpleasant associations we may have with it, it is not necessarily a bad thing in itself" (p. 172).

##### **2.4.1. Facilitating vs Debilitating Effects**

Research has classified anxiety into two distinct types, one that keeps learners motivated, helps them to truly perform well and achieve better grades known as the "facilitating anxiety", and the other harms learners and impacts their performance negatively known as the "debilitating anxiety. In his book entitled "Principles of Language Learning and Teaching", Brown (2007) indicated that students lacking this facilitating anxiety that keeps one poised, alert, and motivated may lead to another kind of anxiety known as the "debilitating anxiety" which gets in the way of the learning process. On that account, it can be argued that anxiety is a multifaceted factor that can affect learners either positively or negatively. This factor lies in a continuum of two extremes, with debilitating effects on one end, and facilitating effects on the other (Brown, 2001). The former has its harmful impacts in reducing learners' language performances and achievements, and the latter is seen by few

researchers as a trait that can help learners in overcoming their anxiety. ((Bailey, 1983; Ellis, 1994; Kleinmann, 1977).

#### **2.4.1.1. Performance**

Language performance can be manifested through the four basic language skills, however, researchers have emphasised the negative correlation between anxiety and the speaking performance of a foreign language, as stated by Horwitz et al. (1986): “speaking in the target language seems to be the most threatening aspect of foreign language learning” (p. 23). Due to the insufficient exposure to the foreign language especially in real-life situations, participating in an oral performance in front of peers can be an overwhelming experience for students who are conscious about making errors while speaking, or losing the natural feeling of meanings of what has been spoken. As stated previously, Koch and Terrell (1991) as well as Young (1990) reported that such activities are anxiety-provoking, which may lead students to experience debilitating effects which manifest themselves in a form of negative feelings such as apprehension, fear of negative feedback, embarrassment and humiliation due to the constant comparison of one’s performance to those of others, etc. These feelings affect the psychological state of learners leading to poor language performance, which eventually affects their language achievement.

#### **2.4.1.2. Achievement**

Several studies have noted a negative correlation that exists between language anxiety and language achievement. The first to indicate this negative correlation, in terms of academic outcomes, was Horwitz (1986) in her study which revealed a significant moderate negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and the grades students expected to achieve in their language class, as well as their actual final grade, implying that students with higher anxiety levels both expected and received lower grades than those with lower anxiety

levels. Similarly, language anxiety and outcome measures other than grades were also investigated by several scholars like Trylong (1987) who found a negative correlation between anxiety and teacher assessment and ratings of achievement. MacIntyre, Noels, and Clément (1997) observed a negative relationship between students' self-ratings of their language proficiency. Moreover, in the Asian EFL context, Kim (1998) not only found negative correlations between anxiety and grades but also reported an interesting difference in the correlation when comparing between a reading class and a conversation-based class, revealing that students were less anxious during reading sessions. This leads to the inference that classrooms requiring oral or verbal communication are more anxiety-provoking than those requiring less speaking.

On account of Horwitz et al. & Young's classifications of anxiety sources, factors like language testing, test anxiety, fear of failure and communication apprehension, for example, can have a negative association with students' EFL achievement by playing a part in showcasing debilitating effects leading to poor academic achievements. This, in turn, may affect learners' perceptions and beliefs about foreign language learning, influencing their decision to drop out or pursue no further learning.

#### **2.4.1.3. Motivation**

Among the numerous factors influencing the foreign language learning process, two have frequently been identified as particularly significant, namely motivation and anxiety. There have been investigations that established a link between motivation and lower levels of language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). On the other hand, when the relationship between the two variables was investigated, it transpired that foreign language anxiety and intrinsic motivation were negatively associated with each other, while extrinsic motivation was positively associated with foreign language anxiety (Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 2001). Accordingly, it is demonstrable that anxiety can have both

facilitating as well as debilitating effects on students' motivation. For example, better results in language learning would be achieved by students with intrinsic motivation due to their enthusiasm, self-determination, and desire to make efforts and participate in classroom activities, leading to lower levels of anxiety. Extrinsic motivation, however, can lead to higher levels of anxiety because it's controlled by external forces like the teacher, or classroom procedures. This pressure will lead students to accomplish a task only to avoid punishment or obtain a reward. Therefore, the higher extrinsic motivation is the more language anxiety increases, debilitating the success of learning (Noels et al., 2001).

#### **2.4.1.4. Competitiveness**

Competitiveness, as seen by Bailey (1983), is a factor that facilitates learning a second or foreign language. In her study of competitiveness and anxiety, Bailey used the construct of facilitative anxiety to document and explain the positive effects of competitiveness. She revealed that one of the key elements to success was facilitative tension, closely related to competitiveness. Her study was carried out by keeping a diary of her own journey of language learning describing the situations in which anxiety motivates her to do better, and those in which it hinders her learning. In her self-analysis, Bailey found that while competitiveness sometimes hindered her progress, at other times it motivated her to study harder by, for instance, preparing for a classroom task beforehand in order to feel at ease during the task in the classroom (Brown, 2001: 163).

#### **2.4.2. Effects of Anxiety on the Three Processes of Learning**

Previous research has shown language anxiety to be associated with language performance and achievement. However, scholars like Krashen (1982); MacIntyre & Gardner (1989); and Tobias (1986) took matters further by reporting language anxiety to have a serious effect not only on students' language performance but also on their cognitive

processing system. MacIntyre & Gardner (1994) identified three stages of anxiety known as input, processing and output, declaring that students' poor performance is related to these stages. Moreover, their research also indicated a significant relationship at processing and output stages. Besides, the latter also noted that the three stages of anxiety are interdependent. That is, each stage depends on the successful completion of the previous one.

#### **2.4.2.1. Anxiety at The Input Stage**

In his affective filter hypothesis, Krashen (1982) explained how affective factors such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety affect the success or failure of second language acquisition. Krashen states that the effective factors are emotional variables that can indirectly influence learning by preventing input from reaching the language acquisition device in the brain. For example, when the effective filter increases, learners may experience anxiety or tension which prevents students' receptivity in the classroom from acquiring information properly.

One of the essential takeaways of this hypothesis in pedagogy is that in order to facilitate input and make it understandable, teachers need to lower affective filters by creating a classroom environment low in anxiety.

#### **2.4.2.2. Anxiety at The Processing Stage**

At this stage, cognitive operations are performed by students on new information, through converting input into a form that can be organised and stored for later to retrieve and use. Anxiety at this stage interferes by acting like a mental block that debilitates and reduces the efficiency of these processes that are used to solve problems (Tobias, 1977). According to Tobias (1986), the amount of anxiety encountered at this stage depends on the complexity of the information, the level of organisation of the presented material, and the extent to which memory is relied. Besides, high levels of anxiety at this stage can affect learning by reducing

students' ability to understand messages or learn new vocabulary items in the target language (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994).

#### **2.4.2.3. Anxiety at The Output Stage**

Anxiety at the output stage refers to the apprehension and fear students encounter when it comes to the retrieval and use of previously learnt information. Anxiety, at this level, interferes with students' ability to demonstrate their knowledge through different classroom activities. This interference manifests after processing input has been completed, but before it has been effectively reproduced as output (Tobias, 1977). According to MacIntyre & Gardner (1994), high levels of anxiety at this stage can hinder students' ability to speak or write in the target language. The effects of this debilitating anxiety can be demonstrated by using the example of students who know the correct answer, but “freeze up” on a test due to nervousness.

### **2.5. Foreign Language Anxiety as a Cause or a Consequence**

Foreign language anxiety research stems from the very first theory introduced by Horwitz et al. (1986) which continues to play a vital role in language anxiety research, making them key influential researchers in this field. Their theoretical model of foreign language anxiety has been applied in quite a number of studies as it emphasises the unique and specific nature of foreign language anxiety; a topic that triggered various divergences of opinions as well as raised questions as a challenge to Horwitz et al. 's theory. Some of the questions that were raised evolve around the direction of the causal relationship between foreign language anxiety and language performance/language achievement. The issue of “which causes which” evoked speculations around whether anxiety was a cause or a consequence of poor language performance, i.e. Does poor language performance cause anxiety? Or does anxiety cause poor language performance?.

Although it was agreed upon by many researchers that foreign language anxiety is a factor that could hinder and interrupt the learning process, opposing views have been found in terms of this matter of speculation since it was analysed from different perspectives. Some researchers (Sparks & Ganschow, 1995; Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002) consider anxiety a consequence, and others (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 1995; Horwitz, 2000) a cause. According to Sparks & Ganschow (1995), “one cannot discuss anxiety without inferring a cause” (p. 236). That is to say, anxiety is not the direct cause of failure, but instead is a result of other factors which cause anxiety reactions. Therefore, it was their view that anxiety is more likely to be a consequence rather than a cause of poor achievement in foreign language learning. In support of this hypothesis, Argaman & Abu-Rabia (2002), conducted a study examining the influence of language anxiety on Hebrew students’ achievements in English writing and reading comprehension tasks and found significant relationships between both reading and writing skills, which raises the possibility that language anxiety is not a cause of failure in learning a foreign language but a consequence. Because reading, unlike writing, is not classified as a communication skill, its influence by anxiety implies an effect instead of a cause. Responding to Sparks & Ganschow, and in support of Horwitz et al.’s position which demonstrates anxiety as a factor that causes harm to the language learning process, MacIntyre (1995) argued that anxiety is likely to be a cause rather than a consequence of poor language performance since anxiety arousals are perceived and experienced differently among students, they contribute in creating individual differences in second or foreign language learning. He then backed up his argument by using an example of the student who knows the answer but “freezes up” on a test.

Furthermore, one model has been used to explain students’ performance known as the deficit model. Naveh-Benjamin (1991) contrasted the deficit model with the interference model to explain this theory. The former model claims that students fail to perform well due

to insufficiently developed skills (MacIntyre, 1995; Sparks & Ganschow, 1991) based on the argument that anxious students perform poorly because of the deficiency in the acquisition stage. The latter model claims that anxious students' poor performance is due to their difficulties of retrieving information and not a question of unsuccessful learning or insufficient knowledge of the subject matter. For example, Sparks, Ganschow and Javorsky (2000), argued that students' cognitive-linguistic disability, which affects attention, memory, problem-solving, communicative abilities, etc., is what causes poor achievement which in return causes anxiety. Horwitz (2000), however, disagrees with them by standing to his view that anxiety can interfere with learning.

Due to the sensitivity of the issue, many researchers were unable to determine the orientation of cause and effect in this causal relationship. In fact, the two sides with opposing views have not fully rejected each other's perspectives. Sparks and Ganschow (1995) are correct in pointing out that anxiety is likely to result from certain situations, with low proficiency or lack of language skills being one possible reason. However, that may be true in some cases but not in all cases of language anxiety, given the fact that even successful students experience language anxiety (Horwitz, 2000). Following the perspective of both the deficit model as well as the interference model in terms of language performance; anxiety seen as a consequence infers difficulties on the input stage since low proficiencies has to do with the acquisition stage, while as a cause infers difficulties on the output stage since demonstrating knowledge requires information retrieval. Besides, given that anxiety can interfere in both stages, it is safe to assume that anxiety can be both a cause as well as a consequence of poor language performance/achievement depending on the given situation. Horwitz (2001) issued a statement that logically resonates with these speculations, that is: "it is easy to conceptualise FLA as a result of poor language learning ability [...] the challenge is

to determine the extent to which anxiety is a cause rather than a result of poor language learning” (p. 118).

## **2.6. Mental Health and Academic Learning and Success**

Anxiety is the body’s natural reaction to perceived danger or significant events; similar to an internal alarm system, it alerts us to potential danger and helps our bodies in preparing to deal with it. Constant feelings of anxiety, on the other hand, can affect people with their daily lives (Anna Freud National Centre For Children and Families, n.d.). In academic contexts, students may experience anxiety related to specific situations such as attending college, participating in class and social events. Other triggers can also include life changes, loneliness, isolation, or other factors that could lead to mental health problems. It is quite natural for children and young people to worry and be anxious at various stages of their everyday school life. However, anxiety can become a problem when it interferes with students’ ability to take part in activities or to complete tasks that other students can do easily (Mentally Healthy Schools, n.d.). On this account, it cannot be denied that mental health problems such as anxiety can be associated with academic success.

Students’ mental health, according to Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families, is a significant concern for further education settings; in the past year, 90% of colleges in the UK reported an increase in the number of students diagnosed with mental health conditions. Previous research has looked at a variety of factors that influence college retention and completion, such as financial aid (Dynarski, 2003) and academic as well as social involvement (Tinto, 1998). Nonetheless, mental health may also be another important factor. A study (Eisenberg; Golberstein; & Hunt, 2009) conducted to examine the connection between mental health and academic success during college showed that depression, anxiety, and eating disorders are significantly associated with lower academic outcomes. Moreover,

depression was found to be a significant predictor of lower grade point average and higher probability of dropping out. It also appeared to interact with anxiety; the association between depression and academic outcomes was particularly strong among students who also have anxiety disorders. Besides, mental health problems may, in particular, affect the amount of productivity of schooling, which in return may have lifelong consequences in terms of employment, income, and other outcomes.

Understanding this connection could be valuable because it is a crucial step towards prioritising and normalising mental health, especially in academic settings. Promoting these issues will result in everyone involved in the education institution having the proper mental health literacy to identify and detect symptoms in order to treat or prevent these mental health issues from impairing academic performance.

### **6.1. Mental Health Literacy**

Mental health is simply the state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being; good mental health generally entails the ability to think, feel, and react in the ways that one needs and wants to live their life (Mind, 2017). Although mental health problems are a common human experience, they are highly stigmatised. The stigma surrounding mental health derives from the negative perceptions and beliefs, traditional values, stereotypes, and misconceptions that cultures all around the world hold against mental health issues. A study by Soorkia, Snelgar, & Swami (2011) exploring factors influencing attitudes towards seeking professional help among South Asian students suggested that individuals with more traditional values are less tolerant of the stigma associated with mental health issues, and are less likely to recognise the need for psychological help. According to The Royal Foundation of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (2016), mental health is just as important as physical health, yet it is far too often misunderstood, ignored, and neglected due to stigma. Through

their initiatives and campaigns, The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge tackled the stigma by promoting mental health and spreading awareness to ensure clarity about what is meant by mental health issues. This, as well, can be applicable in educational settings in an attempt to reduce stigma by improving mental health literacy among students and teachers alike.

Generally, health literacy has been defined as “the ability to gain access to, understand, and use information in ways which promote and maintain good health” (Nutbeam et al., 1993). In terms of physical health, examples of health literacy would include knowledge and use of healthy diets, workouts, having first aid skills, and knowing how to look up health information. While everyone is aware of how to maintain physical health and look after it since its literacy is widely acknowledged, looking after mental health is just as important, yet very little is known about how to maintain it because literacy in this area has been comparatively neglected. This can be reflected in university students, as indicated by many researchers, who lack sufficient mental health literacy skills to be able to recognise and understand symptoms of mental health problems and seek help when necessary (Furnham et al., 2011; Hunt and Eisenberg, 2010; Reavley et al., 2012; Wei et al., 2013).

The term “mental health literacy” was first coined by Jorm et al. (1997) who defined it as “knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders which aid their recognition, management or prevention” (p. 184). Mental health literacy consists of three main areas: knowledge of mental health problems, promotion of positive mental health, and knowledge of help-seeking behaviours (Wei et al., 2013). These skills can be further divided into six components including: the ability to recognise symptoms of different disorders, knowledge about risk factors and causes, knowledge and beliefs about self-help interventions, knowledge and beliefs about seeking professional help, the ability to promote positive attitudes towards mental health problems and help-seeking behaviour, and knowledge of how to locate mental health information (Jorm et al., 1997). Research findings examining mental health literacy in

relation to help-seeking behaviours among university students revealed a significant positive correlation between mental health literacy and help-seeking behaviour, that those with greater overall mental health literacy are more likely to seek help (Gorczyński, Sims-schouten, Hill, & Wilson, 2017; Smith & Shochet, 2011). A similar study indicated that better levels of mental health literacy are also positively correlated with mental well-being (Lam, 2014).

In light of these findings, consistent with the idea that mental health issues impair academic performance, the lack of awareness on part of all members of the academic institution suggests that there is a need to improve mental health literacy in educational settings because the ability to recognise symptoms, as well as the intention to seek help, are influenced by one's mental health literacy. Therefore, enhancing these skills would help reduce stigma, increase proper understanding of mental health issues, and secure a mentally healthier learning environment.

## **6.2. Students' Perceptions and Attitudes Towards Mental Health**

As previous studies suggest, only a considerable number of students who experience mental health problems are likely to seek help (Wilson et al., 2007). This appears to be mostly due to stigma surrounding mental health among the student population (Soorkia, Snelgar, & Swami, 2011). One of the manifestations of stigma to be found within a student environment, is the reluctance to openly talk about feelings, emotions, and mental health problems. Evidence shows that only a minority of students are willing to disclose their mental health issues (Monk, 2004). Students find it difficult to talk openly about their mental health difficulties because they fear that it would be perceived as a sign of weakness, that people would look at them differently (Quinn, Wilson, MacIntyre, Tinklin, 2009). Furthermore, the same study revealed that even students who disclosed their difficulties perceived their

teachers to have different attitudes towards students with physical disabilities to those with mental health problems (Quinn, Wilson, MacIntyre, Tinklin, 2009).

It is, undoubtedly, far easier to talk about physical health and receive support whenever needed, than it is to talk about mental health. In fact, physical health is widely acknowledged in schools and is integrated into academic curriculums, mental health deserves the same quality of academic support especially since successful learning requires sufficient emotional, mental, and psychological states. Therefore, since mental health cannot be seen, there is a need to prioritise and normalise talking about it through promoting mental health issues and creating a culture of openness where it is encouraged for students to talk more openly about their experiences of mental health, aiming to facilitate early detection and prevention of such issues from impairing learning (Quinn, Wilson, MacIntyre, Tinklin, 2009).

It's time that everyone speaks up and really feels very normal about mental health, it's the same as physical health. Everybody has mental health and we shouldn't be ashamed of it and just having a conversation with a friend or family member can really make such a difference. (The Duke of Cambridge, 2017)

### **6.3. Teachers' Beliefs and Perceptions Towards Mental Health in Academic**

#### **Situations**

Teachers play a vital role in increasing or decreasing students' feelings of tension, stress, and anxiousness in learning environments. Students' levels of reluctance to open up are highly influenced by teachers' awareness and understanding of mental health issues. A survey promoting student mental health carried out by The Mental Health Foundation (2001) found that staff made no link between issues such as financial problems, poor

accommodation, isolation, etc., and their effects on students' mental health, nor did they see it as their role to play in solving such problems; there was a reluctance for staff to take responsibility for students' mental health. In addition, students also described unpleasant experiences when staff had dismissed their problems as 'normal stress', or when nobody had noticed that they 'disappeared' from classes for extended periods of time. The lack of awareness among academic staff was also tackled in a study by Sanderson (2001) in which students stated that teachers needed to develop more awareness and understanding to ensure they respond appropriately when, for instance, a student felt the need to leave class because they were distressed; they also believed that more support should be provided regarding exam issues, which could provoke high levels of anxiety. This suggests that teachers, especially those who are well-known to students, are seen as a potential source to turn to for support.

Therefore, as a means to contrast these findings and remedy the academic experience, teachers should play the role of a model in promoting mental well-being among students by encouraging them to open up conversations about their mental health difficulties, as well as making sure they understand that mental health is something we all have and that we should be aware of it and learn skills to look after it, that it is normal to ask for help and support when needed. Students interviewed in a study looking at students' experiences of mental health support within higher education, stated that it was particularly appreciated when their teachers made themselves open and readily available to offer support and made it clear that students could come and see them or email them whenever they needed to (Quinn, Wilson, MacIntyre, & Tinklin, 2009).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter aimed at familiarising the academic community with the concept of "Foreign Language Anxiety", which was found to be a factor that can affect the learning

process either positively or negatively, and impact students' emotional experiences inside the classroom.

### **Chapter Three: Field Work and Data Analysis**

Introduction

**3.1** Description of Students' Questionnaire

**3.2** Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

**3.3** Description of the Teachers' Interviews

**3.4** Analysis of the Teachers' Interviews

**3.5** Discussion of the Findings

Conclusion

## **Introducion**

This research-led study investigates the possible causes and the most anxiety-provoking situations leading 3rd year EFL students to experience feelings of anxiety when speaking during oral expression sessions, while also exploring the influence or effects of this factor on the speaking performance. This study also looks into both teachers' and students' attitudes and perceptions of language anxiety.

The participants of this study were randomly selected from the population of 3rd year EFL students to form a sample that consists of 20 students enrolled in the English Department at the University of Mohamed Khider Biskra.

Data for this study was collected through conducting interviews with oral expression teachers and distributing online questionnaires to 3rd year students. In addressing this issue from both perspectives of the two fundamental parties of learning: teachers and learners, it helped us gain better insight and better understanding of this human behaviour.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data retrieved, which was then distributed in frequency tables, pie charts, bar charts, and bar graphs.

### **3.1. Description of Students' Questionnaire**

This semi-structured questionnaire was developed as a tool to help us collect data aiming to uncover the possible causes or reasons behind 3rd year EFL students' feelings of anxiety while speaking during oral expression sessions. It also aims to assess students' perceptions of language anxiety, as well as explore its effects on students' speaking performance.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections, each composing a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions in order to help us better understand this human behaviour.

Likert scale items included in this questionnaire was adopted from a pre-existing scale known as The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) with minor changes in wording. The FLCAS was designed by Horwitz (1986) as an instrument to measure students' anxiety levels in the classroom context. It contains 33 items ranging on a 5-point likert scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

The questionnaire was distributed online via Facebook, tackling the population of 3rd year EFL students from the University of Mohamed Khider Biskra. Only 20 students responded to this questionnaire.

Data collected from some of the elements in the questionnaire were analysed using SPSS, and distributed using frequency tables, pie charts, bar charts, and bar graphs.

### 3.2. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

#### Section One: General Information

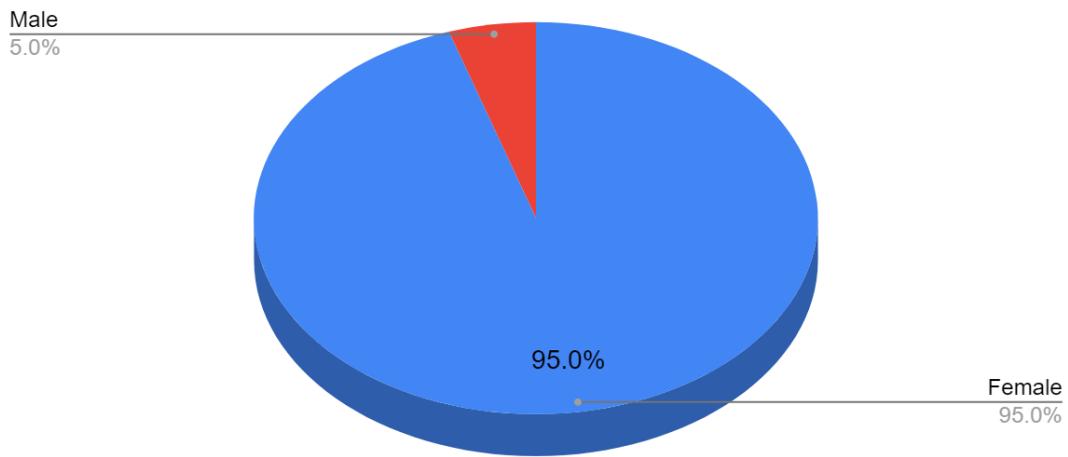
This section is composed of five questions designed to gather general information about the participants.

#### Q1: Students' Gender

**Table 02.** *Students' Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	19	95%
Male	1	5%
Total	20	100%

**Q1: Students' Gender**



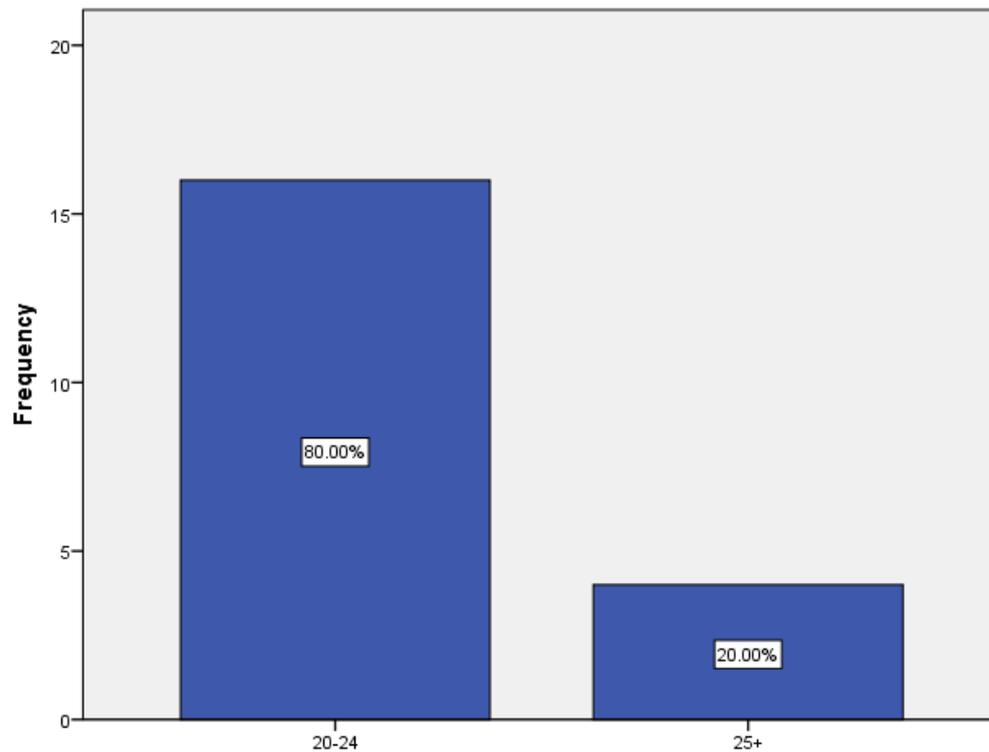
**Graph 01:** Students' Gender

The table above shows that almost all of the participants of this study are females, representing 95% of our sample as shown in the graph above, and only 1 student represents 5% of male participants. This unbalanced representation of students' gender, may give our study an insight into how language anxiety is experienced by females more than it is experienced by males.

**Q2: Students' Age**

**Table 03.** *Students' Age*

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
20-24	16	80%
25+	4	20%
Total	20	100%



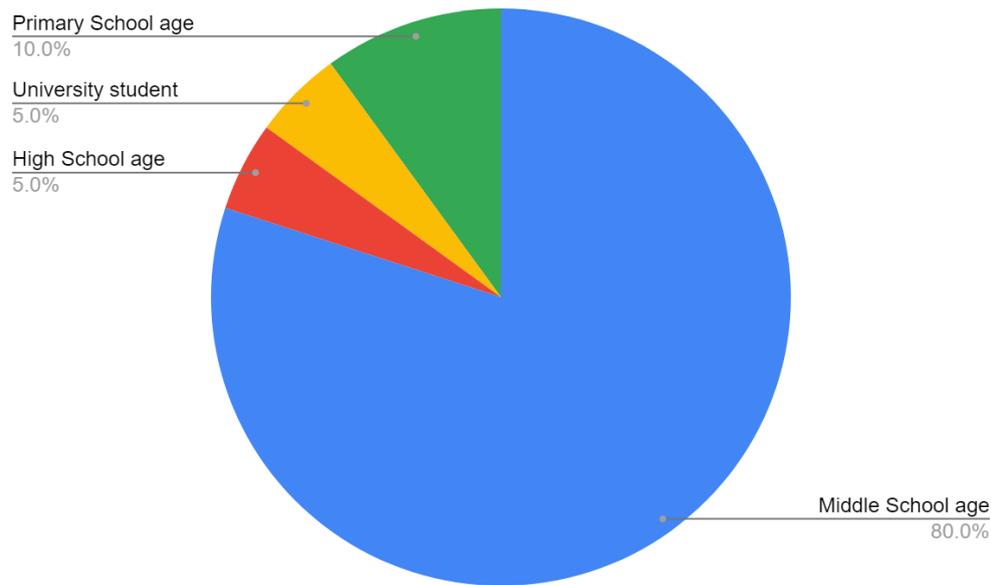
**Graph 02:** Students' Age

The highest percentage of participants, represented by 80% on the graph, are between the ages of 20 and 24, while only 20% of students are aged 25 and above. The majority of students are in the most appropriate age group that 3rd year EFL students normally belong to.

**Q3: At what age did you start learning English?**

**Table 04.** *School Age of Students Starting to Learn English*

School Age	Frequency	Percentage
Primary School	2	10%
Middle School	16	80%
High School	1	5%
Other	1	5%
Total	20	100%



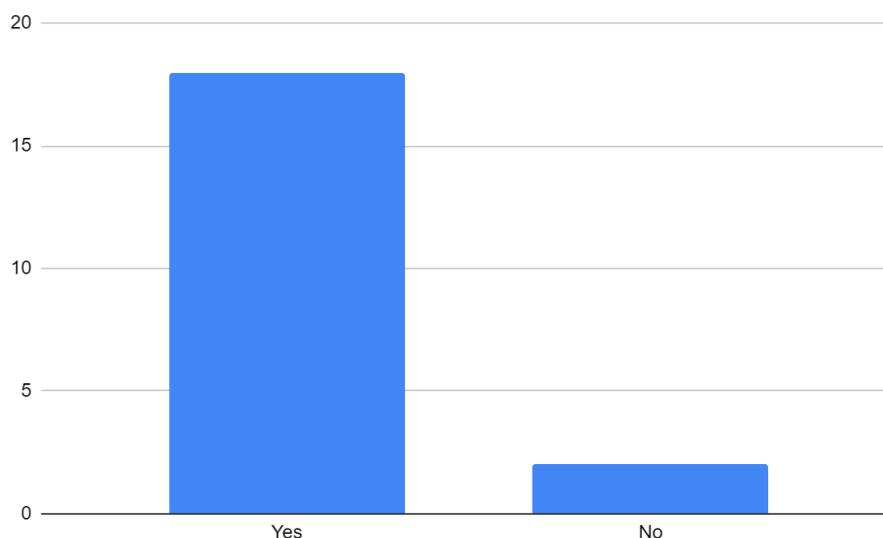
**Graph 03:** School Age of students starting to learn English

The graph above illustrates that 80% of the participants first started learning English at middle school, while only a small proportion of students, represented by 10% on the graph, started learning English early on at a very young age. An even smaller proportion of students, representing 5% of the sample, first started learning English later on in high school. Other options were chosen by only 1 student who stated that they started learning English at University. The highest percentage (80%) may indicate that the majority of EFL students first encounter the English language in the classroom through educational settings. Only few students are likely to encounter this language at a young age outside classroom settings.

**Q4: Was studying English at University your personal choice?**

**Table 05.** *Students' Study Choices*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	90%
No	2	10%
Total	20	100%



**Graph 04:** Students' Study Choices

90% of students stated that studying English at university was a choice of their own. This choice, on the other hand, was imposed on 2 students representing 10% of the participants.

### **Students ' Justifications**

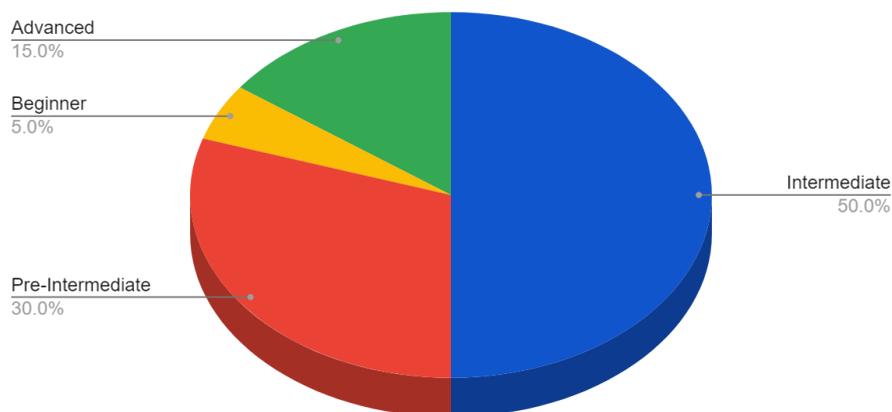
When students were asked to justify their decision for studying English at university, the majority stated that they simply love this language: "English was always my go to language no matter what". It was observed that the majority of students expressed an interest in learning foreign languages in general, but English in particular for being a universal language that is spoken all over the world: "English in particular as it is considered the language of the era". Another considerable number of students stated that it was the only thing in which they believed they had potential. A small number of students chose to study English at university for academic purposes and future careers. The remaining students made this decision because they wanted to get exposed to the language, learn more about it, and improve their English language skills. It can be interpreted that the majority of students

usually resort to academic institutions to learn more about the English language, due to its lack of use in Algerian society.

**Q5: How would you rate your English proficiency level?**

**Table 06.** *Students' English Proficiency Level*

Proficiency levels	Frequency	Percentage
Beginner	1	5%
Pre-intermediate	6	30%
Intermediate	10	50%
Advanced	3	15%
Total	20	100%



**Graph 05:** Students' English Proficiency Level

According to students' self-ratings, half of the participants, with 50% on the graph, rated themselves as having an intermediate level of English proficiency, followed by 30% of students having a pre-intermediate level. A small proportion of students, showing 15% on the graph, are at an advanced level, while only 1 student, representing 5% of the participants, is at a beginner level. The results revealed that the majority of students' proficiency levels were

between the pre-intermediate and the intermediate. Students with advanced levels are those who started learning English at primary school.

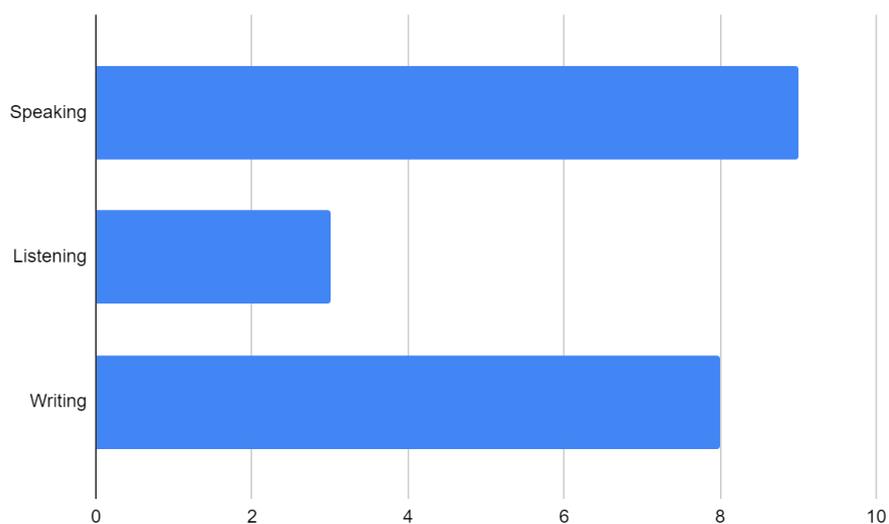
### Section Two: Speaking in the EFL Classroom

The following section consists of six questions attempting to gather data about students' perceptions and opinions regarding oral expression sessions and speaking in general.

#### Q1: In your opinion, what language skill is the most difficult to learn?

**Table 07.** *The Most Difficult Language Skill to Learn*

Language Skill	Frequency	Percentage
Speaking	9	45%
Listening	3	15%
Reading	0	0%
Writing	8	40%
Total	20	100%



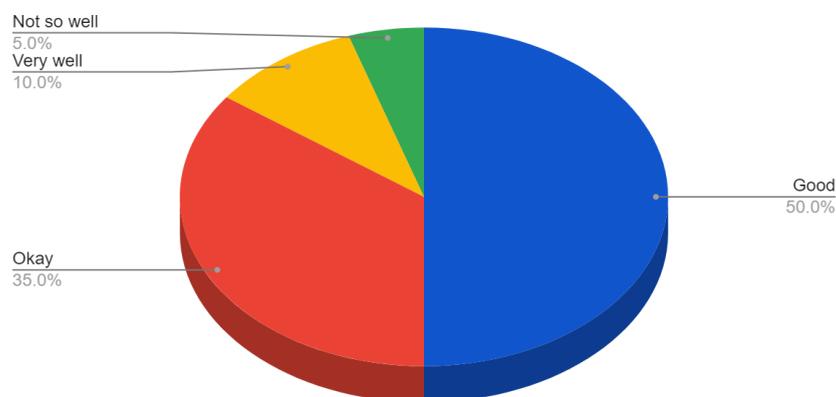
**Graph 06:** The Most Difficult Language to Learn

The speaking skill received the highest percentage of 45% for being the most difficult language skill to learn, closely followed by writing with 40%. The remaining 15% of students think that listening is the most difficult skill to learn. However, 0% of students considered reading to be a difficult skill. According to students' opinions, speaking and writing are the two most difficult language skills to learn, probably because they are the two skills they interact with the most throughout their academic journey, especially since the level of assessment for 3rd year students is usually on speaking and writing.

### Q2: How well do you speak in the English language?

**Table 08.** *Students' English Speaking Proficiency*

Speaking Proficiency	Frequency	Percentage
Very well	2	10%
Good	10	50%
Okay	7	35%
Not so well	1	5%
Total	20	100%



**Graph 07:** Students' English Speaking Proficiency

50% of students, as demonstrated on the graph, responded that they have a good level of speaking proficiency, while 35% of students responded that they have an okay speaking level. The graph shows that 10% of students have an excellent level of speaking proficiency, while the remaining 5% have a poor speaking level. The results shown on the table and on the graph revealed that the majority of students have an average level of speaking proficiency. Besides, responses obtained from this question are consistent with students' responses about their English proficiency level, which can mean that students' English proficiency levels mirror their proficiency of speaking; it can also be interpreted to mean that students usually measure their overall language proficiency according to their speaking abilities.

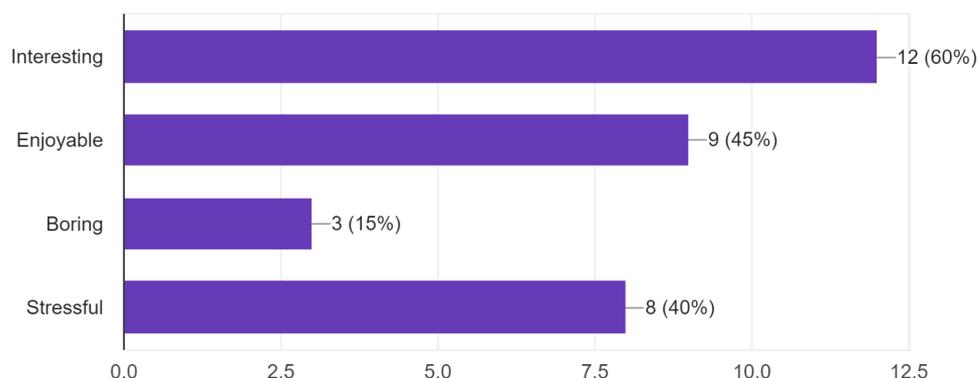
**Q3: How do you find oral expression sessions?**

**Table 09.** *Students' Opinions about Oral Expression Sessions*

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage	Percentage of Cases
Interesting	12	37.5%	60%
Enjoyable	9	28.1%	45%
Boring	3	9.4%	15%
Stressful	8	25%	40%
Total	32	100%	160%

Q3: How do you find oral expression sessions? (You may choose more than one).

20 responses



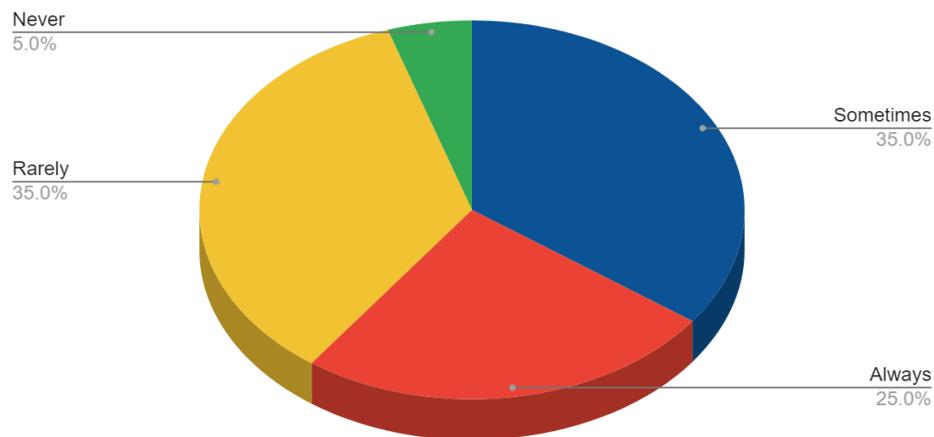
**Graph 08:** Students' Opinions about Oral Expression Sessions

60% of the participants, as shown on the graph, find oral expression sessions to be interesting, while 45% of students find it enjoyable, closely followed by 40% of students who find this session to be stressful. The remaining 15% of students reported that oral expression sessions are boring. There is a considerable close percentage between students who find oral expression sessions to be enjoyable and stressful. Four students reported that they found this session to be interesting, enjoyable, and stressful all at the same time.

**Q4: How often do you speak English outside the classroom?**

**Table 10.** *Students' Frequency of Speaking English Outside the Classroom*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Always	5	25%
Sometimes	7	35%
Rarely	7	35%
Never	1	5%
Total	20	100%



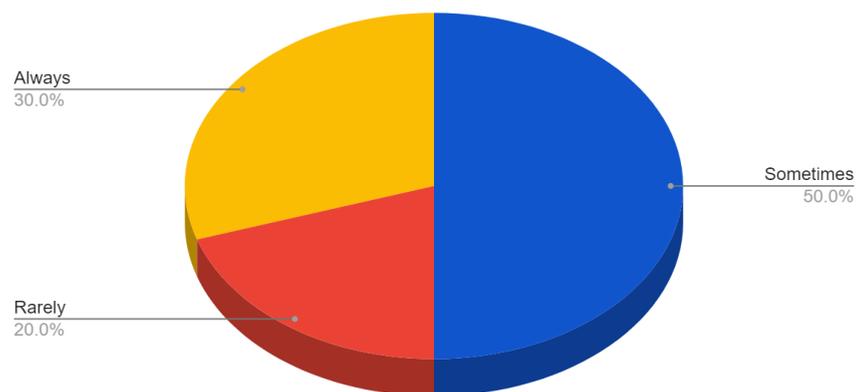
**Graph 09:** Students' Frequency of Speaking English Outside the Classroom

The graph above shows a significant tie in percentage (35%) between students who only sometimes and rarely speak English outside the classroom. Only a small percentage of students, represented by 25% on the graph, always speak English outside classroom settings. 1 student only reported that they never speak English outside the classroom. The results shown on the table, and illustrated on the graph, indicate that there is a lack of exposure to spoken English in Algerian society. The 35% of students who only sometimes speak English outside of the classroom may explain the average level of speaking proficiency among 3rd year EFL students. Although the other 35% of students rarely speak English outside classroom settings, they still managed to have an average and an acceptable level of speaking proficiency.

**Q5: How often do you speak English during oral expression sessions?**

**Table 11.** *Students' Participation During Oral Expression Sessions*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Always	6	30%
Sometimes	10	50%
Rarely	4	20%
Never	0	0%
Total	20	100%

**Graph 10:** Students' Participation During Oral Expression Sessions

Half of students, representing 50% of participants, reported that they sometimes participate in speaking activities during oral expression sessions, and only 30% of students always participate. The remaining 20% of students reported that they rarely participate during oral expression sessions. In comparing these results with the previous one, almost the majority of students only sometimes speak English either outside or inside the classroom, which may indicate a lack of language use outside the classroom and a low frequency of participation inside it, plausibly due to factors other than lack of exposure to the English

language. The 0% of students shown on the table, may also indicate a willingness on part of 3rd year EFL students to participate in speaking activities during oral expression sessions.

**Q6: What are the different classroom activities you prefer/enjoy in oral expression sessions?**

When we asked them about their preferable classroom activities, the majority of students listed presentations, classroom discussions, debates, listening activities, role plays and games as the most enjoyable activities they take part in during oral expression sessions. One student, however, reported that almost nothing is enjoyable in oral expression sessions, and another wrote: “I don't actually because it's always the same boring session, all I do is answer the questions and that's it!”.

**Section Three: Foreign Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom**

The last and final section of the questionnaire consists of 11 questions aiming to understand students' experiences of language anxiety during oral expression sessions.

**Q1: Do you feel more anxious when you:**

- Speak
- Listen
- Read
- write

**Table 12.** *Language Anxiety in Relation to Language Skills*

The Language Skill	Frequency	Percentage	Percentage of Cases
Speak	17	73.9%	85%
Listen	1	4.3%	5%
Read	3	13%	15%
Write	2	8.7%	10%

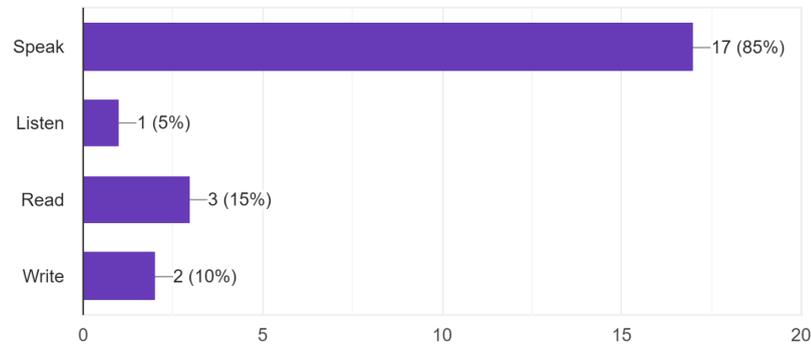
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Total	23	100%	115%
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Q1: Do you feel more anxious when you:

20 responses



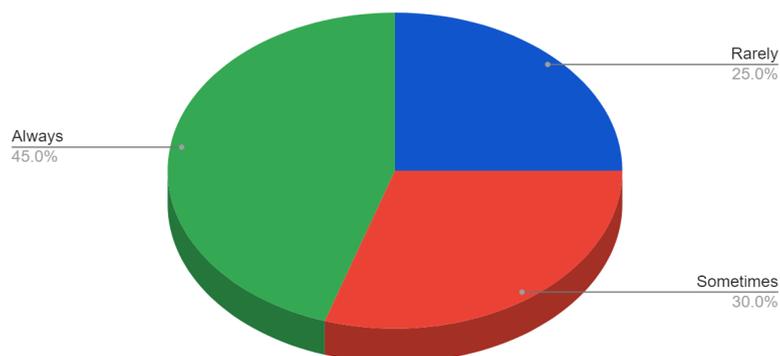
**Graph 11:** Language Anxiety in Relation to Language Skills

85% of students responded that they feel more anxious when they speak more than when they read (15%), write (10%), or listen (5%). This can be the reason why the majority of students hesitate to always participate and speak during oral expression sessions. On another note, although 0% of students, as shown previously on Table 07, consider reading to be a difficult language skill to learn, 15% of students would still feel anxious when reading. This could be due to factors such as: lack of comprehension, lack of self-confidence, shyness, or feeling self-conscious when performing in front of others.

**Q2: How often do you get nervous while speaking English?**

**Table 13.** *Frequency of Getting Nervous When Speaking English*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Always	9	45%
Sometimes	6	30%
Rarely	5	25%
Never	0	0%
Total	20	100%

**Graph 12:** Frequency of Getting Nervous When Speaking English

Almost half of the participants, representing 45% on the graph, indicated that they always feel nervous while speaking English. While 30% of students sometimes get nervous, 25% of students rarely get nervous when speaking English. None of the students responded with never, which can indicate that 3rd year EFL students are likely to experience certain levels of anxiety while speaking English during oral expression sessions.

**Q3: How much do you agree or disagree with these statements which might be the reason to make you reluctant to speak in oral expression sessions?**

**Table 14.** Reasons To Make EFL Students Reluctant to Speak English

Item No	Statements	Frequency				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I never feel quite sure of myself while I am speaking English.	3 15%	9 45%	4 20%	4 20%	0 0%
2	I feel shy speaking English because I did not study English speaking skills in secondary and high school.	6 30%	5 25%	7 35%	2 10%	0 0%
3	I always feel that other students speak English better than I do.	9 45%	4 20%	2 10%	4 20%	1 5%
4	I prefer to be allowed to volunteer to speak instead of being called on to speak in English.	8 40%	9 45%	1 5%	1 10%	0 0%
5	I start to panic when the teacher asks me to speak English without preparation in advance.	11 55%	3 15%	4 20%	2 10%	0 0%
6	Even if I am well prepared, I feel anxious about speaking English.	8 40%	5 25%	5 25%	1 5%	1 5%
7	When I am speaking English, I get so nervous I forget things I know.	7 35%	7 35%	3 15%	3 15%	0 0%
8	I feel very self-conscious while speaking English in front of other students.	7 35%	7 35%	3 15%	3 15%	0 0%
9	I am less reluctant to speak in class when I am not the only person participating.	3 15%	10 50%	5 25%	2 10%	0 0%

10	I would be less reluctant to speak in class if it was commonly understood that everyone makes mistakes, and it was not a big deal to make a mistake.	9	4	5	2	0
		45%	20%	25%	10%	0%
Total		20			100%	

**Item 1:** The table above shows that 45% of students agreed that they never feel quite sure of themselves while speaking English, while only 20% of students disagreed.

**Item 2:** When it comes to feeling shy when speaking, 35% of students are neutral. However, a significant proportion of students (30%) strongly agree that they do feel shy when speaking English due to lack of practice in their previous learning experiences in secondary and high school.

**Item 3:** The majority of students (45%) strongly agree that they always feel that other students speak English better than they do, which makes them reluctant to speak. Only 20% of students disagree.

**Item 4:** 45% of students agree, with another 40% strongly agreeing that they would rather volunteer to speak than be called upon by the teacher.

**Item 5:** more than half of the participants, showing 55% on the table, strongly agree that when the teacher asks them to speak without preparation, they panic.

**Item 6:** Despite being well prepared to speak, 40% of students strongly agree that they feel anxious about speaking English in general, while only 5% of students disagree.

**Item 7:** A significant tie in percentage shows that 35% of students agree and another 35% strongly agree that they forget things they know when they get nervous while speaking English. Only 15% of the remaining participants disagree.

**Item 8:** 35% of students agree and another 35% strongly agree about feeling self-conscious while speaking English in front of other students.

**Item 9:** 50% of students agree that they feel less reluctant to speak when they are not the only person participating, while only 10% disagree.

**Item 10:** The majority of students, showing 45% on the table, strongly agree that they would feel less reluctant to speak if everyone had positive perceptions towards making mistakes, while only 10% disagree.

The following results revealed that the majority of students agreed with all of the above-mentioned statements, which may indicate that these can be some of the possible reasons behind students' speaking reluctance during oral expression sessions.

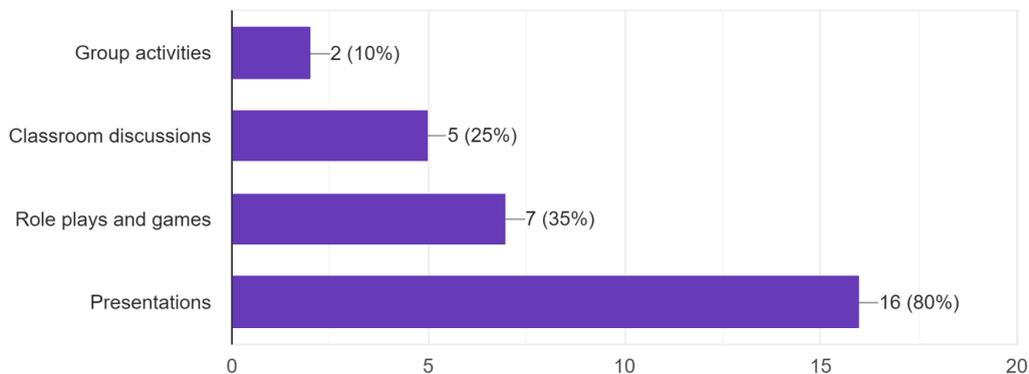
**Q4: In your opinion, what classroom activities are most anxiety-provoking for students?**

**Table 15.** *Anxiety-provoking Classroom Activities*

Types of Activities	Frequency	Percentage	Percentage of Cases
Group Activities	2	6.7%	10%
Classroom Discussions	5	16.7%	25%
Role Plays and Games	7	23.3%	35%
Presentations	16	53.3%	80%
Total	30	100%	150%

Q4: In your opinion, what classroom activities are most anxiety-provoking for students? (You can tick more than one).

20 responses



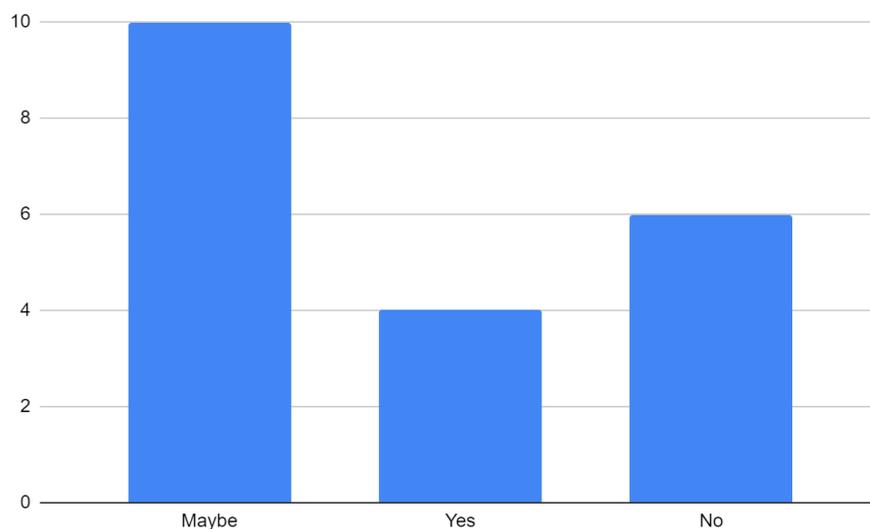
**Graph 13: Anxiety-provoking Classroom Activities**

According to the graph above, 80% of students think that presentations are the most anxiety-provoking activity, while 35% of students think that it is role plays and games. For 25% of students, classroom discussions are believed to be anxiety-provoking, while group activities are believed to be so for the remaining 10%. The results that this question reveals are inconsistent with the results revealed from Q6 in section two of the questionnaire. This inconsistency presents students' preferred and most enjoyable classroom activities as the same activities to provoke students and lead them to experience feelings of anxiety. This can indicate that factors causing students to be anxious may not be due to external factors relating to classroom activities, but rather due to internal and psychological factors having to do with students' emotional experiences during classroom activities. This can also indicate that the type of anxiety experienced in this case is with positive effects, which led students to enjoy these activities despite being anxious.

**Q5: Would you still feel anxious if the teacher made these classroom activities more fun and enjoyable?**

**Table 16.** *Students' Perceptions of Entertaining Activities to Face Language Anxiety*

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	20%
Maybe	10	50%
No	6	30%
Total	20	100%

**Graph 14:** *Students' Perceptions of Entertaining Activities to Face Language Anxiety*

The table above shows that half of students, representing 50% of the participants, responded with maybe, while only 20% of students responded that making classroom activities more fun can make a difference. However, 30% of students believe that even if the teacher makes classroom activities more fun, they would still feel anxious. This can be a second indication that factors causing anxiety may not be related to the classroom atmosphere, but to internal and psychological factors experienced in the middle of this atmosphere. Besides, The 50% of students responding with maybe, can mean that students

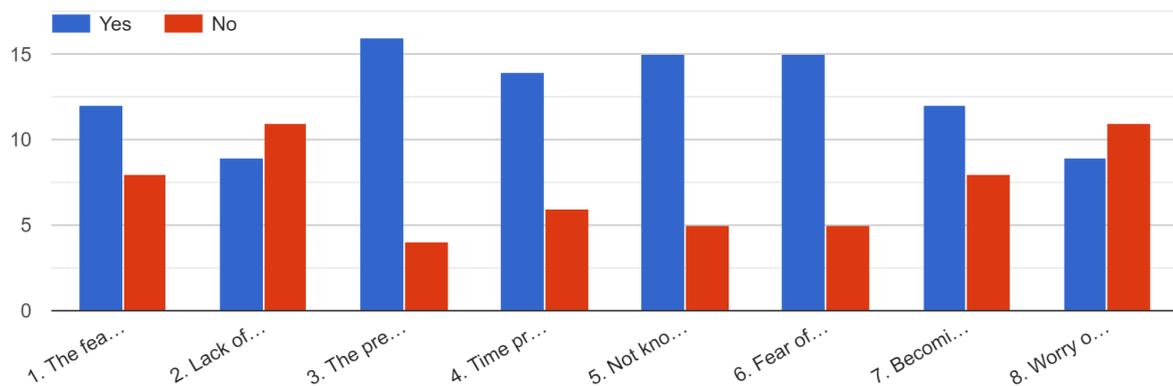
are unsure of what could reduce their feelings of anxiety. In other words, students may be unaware of how to manage such feelings due to lack of awareness.

**Q6: While speaking in English during oral expression sessions, you can be anxious due to:**

**Table 17.** *Reasons Leading to Anxiety*

Items No	Reasons	Frequency		
		Yes	No	Total
1	The fear of not understanding what is said due to insufficient vocabulary.	12 60%	8 40%	20 100%
2	Lack of good listening abilities, which may affect your understanding.	9 45%	11 55%	20 100%
3	The pressure of having to speak fluently and perfectly.	16 80%	4 20%	20 100%
4	Time pressure because you have to speak without preparation.	14 70%	6 30%	20 100%
5	Not knowing what to say because you are not prepared.	15 75%	5 25%	20 100%
6	Fear of making mistakes when speaking.	15 75%	5 25%	20 100%
7	Becoming self-conscious that your performance is being evaluated.	12 60%	8 40%	20 100%
8	Worry of receiving poor grades.	9 45%	11 55%	20 100%

Q6: While speaking in English during oral expression sessions, you can be anxious due to:



**Graph 15: Reasons Leading to Anxiety**

**Item 1:** 60% of students responded with yes, believing that one of the reasons to make them anxious is the fear of not understanding what is said, while only 40% of students responded with no. This could imply that students may experience anxiety as a result of their insufficient language proficiency.

**Item 2:** 55% of students responding with no do not consider lack of good listening abilities to be a reason behind their feelings of anxiety, while the other 45% of students believe that listening abilities affect their understanding, which in turn may lead to anxiety while speaking.

**Item 3:** A significant proportion of students (80%), who responded with yes, believe that they can be anxious due to the pressure of having to speak fluently and perfectly. Only 20% of students responded with no.

**Item 4:** Having to speak without preparation in advance, according to 70% of students, can be another reason to make them anxious about speaking.

**Item 5:** 75% of students, who responded with yes, believe that they can become anxious because they do not know what to say while speaking due to lack of practice. The remaining 25% of students responded with no.

**Item 6:** Another reason to make students anxious while speaking is the fear of making mistakes according to 75% of the participants. The remaining 25% of students do not consider making mistakes as a cause for anxiety.

**Item 7:** 60% of students, responding with yes, associate anxiety with evaluation, believing that when their performance is being evaluated, they can become self-conscious resulting in anxiety reactions.

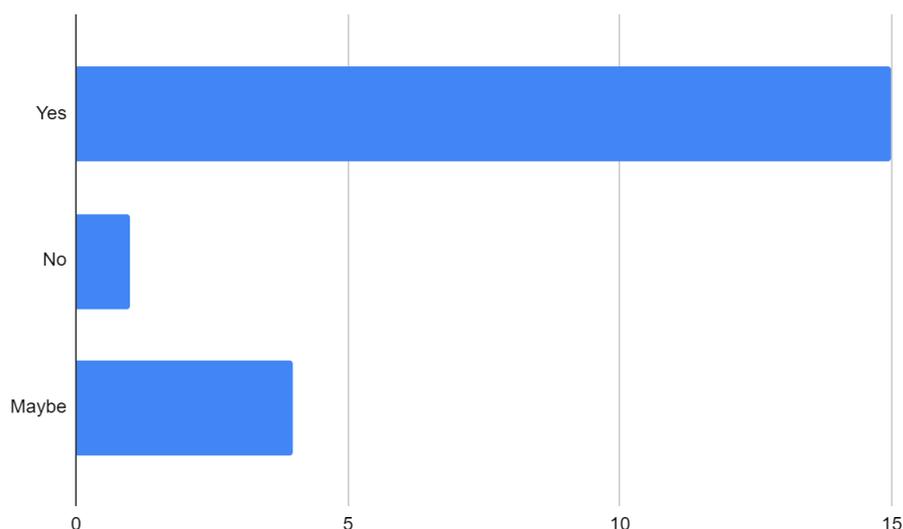
**Item 8:** 55% of students, who responded with no, do not consider poor grades to be an anxiety trigger, while a smaller proportion of students (45%) worry about receiving poor grades. In comparing these results with the results shown on item 7, it can be indicated that poor achievement may not be an anxiety trigger, but rather the process of evaluation itself.

According to students' responses, items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7 can describe the possible reasons leading 3rd year EFL students to experience feelings of anxiety when speaking English during oral expression sessions.

**Q7: Do you believe that anxiety may hinder your speaking performance?**

**Table 18.** *Students' Perceptions Towards Anxiety*

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	75%
Maybe	4	20%
No	1	5%
Total	20	100%



**Graph 16:** Students' Perceptions Towards Anxiety

75% of participants believe that anxiety hinders their speaking performances, and only 5% believe that it does not. 20% of students are in the middle, unsure whether their speaking performances will be hindered by anxiety. These results revealed that the majority of students hold negative perceptions towards anxiety.

### **Students' Justifications**

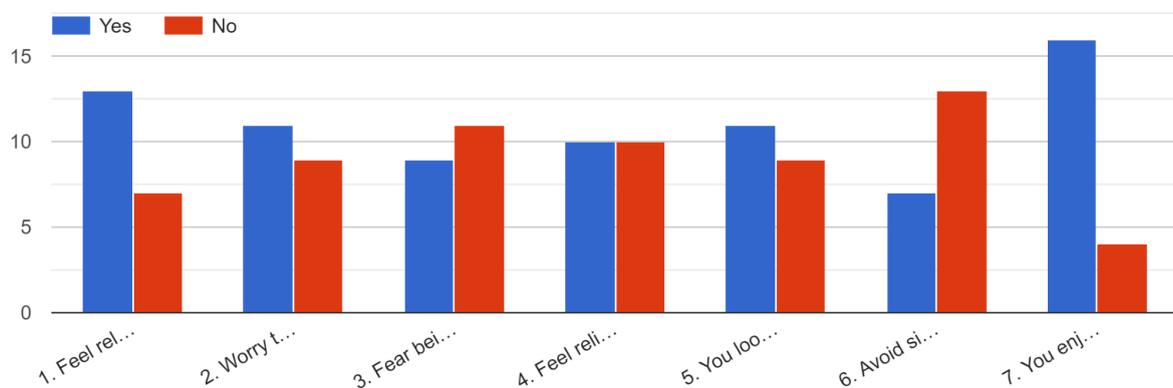
When asked to justify their answers, it was observed that the majority of students recognised anxiety to be a problem that negatively affects their speaking performance. Students explained that anxiety makes it difficult for them to speak properly because their voices shake and they suffer from severe word loss, which in turn breaks their speaking fluency, making their performance less special. One student described their experiences with anxiety: “When feeling anxious, it can cause you to see things differently, and it can make it difficult when communicating with other people”, and another stated that feelings of anxiety can be contained with constant practice: “it can be contained with a proper training ( getting gradually exposed to audience and performing in front them without being judged)”.

**Q8: After your speaking performance inside the classroom, do you:**

**Table 19.** *Students Reactions to Anxiety Experiences*

Item No	Reactions	Frequency		
		Yes	No	Total
1	Feel relaxed and confident about speaking.	13	7	20
		65%	35%	100%
2	Worry the teacher might have negative perceptions towards you due to your poor performance.	11	9	20
		55%	45%	100%
3	Fear being negatively perceived by your classmates because you made mistakes in pronunciation or grammar.	9	11	20
		45%	55%	100%
4	Feel relieved you do not have to speak during the session again.	10	10	20
		50%	50%	100%
5	You look forward to expressing your ideas in English again.	11	9	20
		55%	45%	100%
6	Avoid situations where you have to speak in English	7	13	20
		35%	65%	100%
7	You enjoy the experience of speaking English	16	4	20
		80%	20%	100%

Q8: After your speaking performance inside the classroom, do you:



**Graph 17:** Students Reactions to Anxiety Experiences

**Item 1:** After their speaking performance, 65% of students who responded with yes, feel relaxed and confident about speaking.

**Item 2:** 55% of students reported that after their speaking performance, they worry about the teacher having negative perceptions towards them due to their poor performance, whereas 45% do not worry about the teachers' perceptions.

**Item 3:** 45% of students, who responded with yes, fear being negatively perceived by their classmates if they make mistakes while performing. A larger proportion of students (55%) do not fear being negatively perceived by their classmates after their speaking performance. It can be observed when comparing results from item 3 and item 2, that there is a significant resemblance in percentages but in reverse, indicating that the majority of students care more about what their teacher thinks of them than their peers. As a result, the teacher may become a key factor that plays a role in students' feelings of anxiety.

**Item 4:** There is a significant tie in percentage between students who feel relieved about not having to speak again during oral expression sessions and those who do not. The 50% of students, who responded with yes, may indicate that students experienced certain levels of anxiety during their speaking performance, which may have had negative effects on them that

they do not want to relive the experience once again.

**Item 5:** 55% of students reported that they look forward to expressing their ideas in English again, which may indicate that despite being anxious while speaking, anxiety can be reduced over time with more speaking during the session.

**Item 6:** 35% of students, who responded with yes, would avoid situations where they had to speak in English after their performance. The 65% of students, who responded with no, may indicate that the majority of students are willing to speak again during the session.

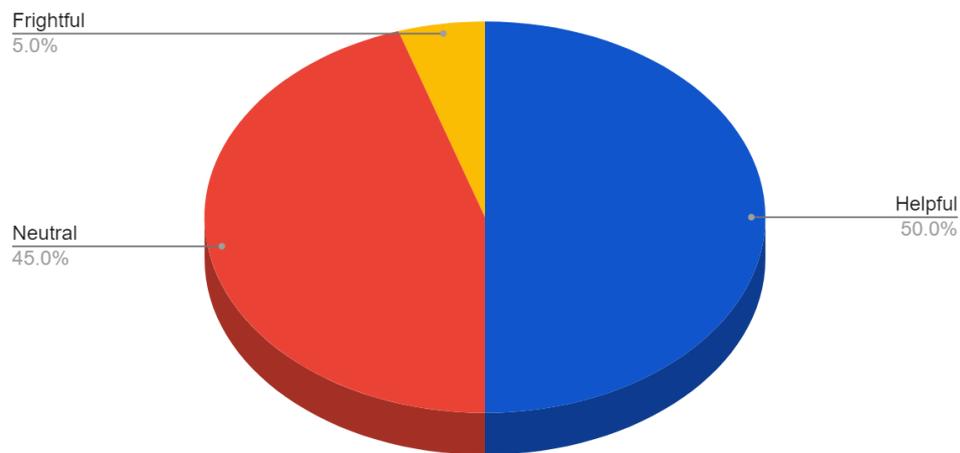
**Item 7:** 80% of students reported that they do enjoy the experience of speaking English, while only 20% of students do not enjoy this experience.

According to students responses, it can be observed that the anxiety experienced by students may have positive effects, because despite feeling anxious while speaking, the majority of students, who responded with yes, still feel relaxed and confident after their speaking performance, and they look forward to expressing their ideas in English again because they enjoy the experience of speaking during oral expression sessions.

#### **Q9: How do you find feedback after speaking?**

**Table 20.** *Students' Perceptions Towards Feedback*

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Helpful	10	50%
Neutral	9	45%
Frightful	1	5%
Total	20	100%



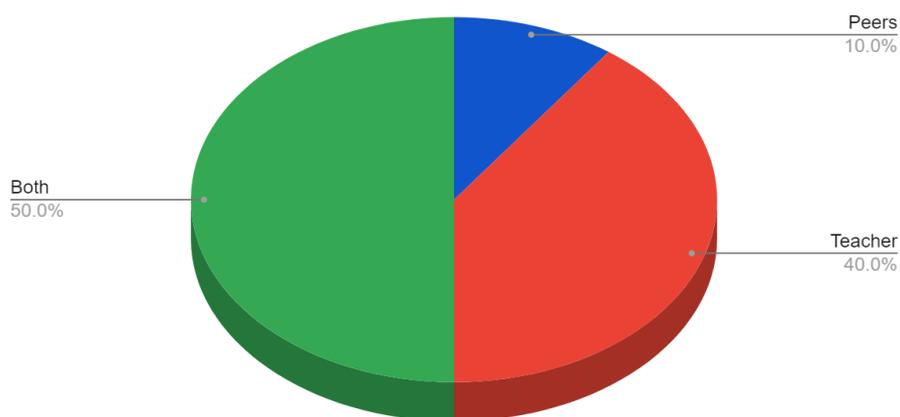
**Graph 18:** Students' Perceptions Towards Feedback

Half of the participants, represented by 50% on the graph, find receiving feedback on their speaking performance to be helpful, closely followed by 45% of students who feel neutral about receiving feedback. Only 5% of students are frightened of receiving feedback after speaking. The graph above shows that the majority of students hold positive perceptions towards feedback.

**Q10: Would you rather receive feedback from:**

**Table 21.** Students Preferences of Sources of Feedback

Source of Feedback	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher	8	40%
Peers	2	10%
Both	10	50%
Total	20	100%



**Graph 19:** Students Preferences of Sources of Feedback

50% of students responded that they would rather receive feedback from both teachers and peers, while 40% of students would rather receive feedback from teachers only. The remaining 10% of students prefer receiving feedback only from peers.

#### **Students' Justifications**

40% of students explained that they prefer receiving feedback from the teacher because they consider teachers to have the most important opinion. They also believe that since teachers are in charge, they are the ones to be paying more attention to students' performances, thus, providing more reliable and constructive feedback, as stated by one of the participants: "Not all peers give a constructive criticism".

However, 10% of students explained that they prefer the opposite simply because receiving feedback from peers is much easier, stating that peers "make it easy for me".

On the other hand, the majority of students argued that both opinions of teachers and peers matter and that it can be more beneficial to receive feedback from the two perspectives. Two students expressed the same idea in that: "The teacher corrects my mistakes and my friends encourage me", "My teacher will tell me about my mistakes and my peers will encourage me even though I don't do a good job but it makes me relaxed and happy".

Another student wrote: “Because the teacher may avoid to mention that you were afraid”.

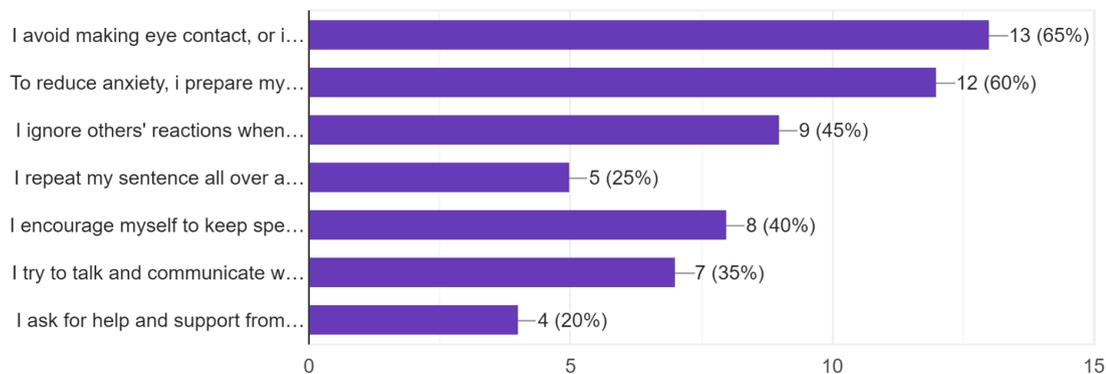
**Q11: If you to experience anxiety while speaking, how would you deal with the situation?**

**Table 22.** *Students' Management of Anxiety*

Item No	Statements	Frequency	Percentage of Cases
1	I avoid making eye contact, or I maintain eye contact with only one person so I do not get confused and focus on my speaking.	13	65%
2	To reduce anxiety, I prepare myself and think before I speak by making sentences in my mind first, so that I do not say something wrong.	12	60%
3	I ignore others' reactions when I say something wrong.	9	45%
4	I repeat my sentences all over again and make sure I correct the mistakes.	5	25%
5	I encourage myself to keep speaking even if I make mistakes.	8	40%
6	I try to talk and communicate with the audience.	7	35%
7	I ask for help and support from the teacher or a peer.	4	20%
Total		58	290%

Q11: If you to experience anxiety while speaking, how would you deal with the situation? (You can tick more than one).

20 responses



**Graph 20:** Students' Management of Anxiety

The table above shows that avoiding eye contact (65%) and making sure to be well prepared before speaking (60%) are the two strategies the majority of students opt for in order to avoid or manage anxiety reactions while speaking. It can be observed that students who would ignore others' reactions when making mistakes (45%) and those who would still encourage themselves to keep speaking despite making mistakes (40%) are significantly close in percentage. According to the table, 35% of students would try to talk and communicate with the audience to reduce anxiety, and another 25% would repeat their sentences all over again and correct their mistakes. The table also shows that only 20% of students would ask for help and seek support from their teacher or peers.

The two highest percentages on the table, representing the strategies that the majority of students use to reduce anxiety, may be a reflection of the possible situations causing students to feel anxious. It may also mean that students would usually manage their anxiety by avoiding the situations that trigger such feelings.

### Students' Comments

At the end of the questionnaire, students were welcomed to add comments or

suggestions regarding language anxiety and only four students responded. Two students issued comments regarding the role teachers play in oral expression classes, one believes that “The teacher is the responsible of providing a relaxing environment for his students to comfort them”, and another expressed: “It really helps when the teacher makes the classroom more comfortable to speak what in their mind -I think for teachers to judge student's fluency in english is a very harmful thing to do. Both the student and the teacher help in making a more effective learning process in oral expression”. One student suggested a solution to overcome anxiety, “The good preparation is the solution when you search very well about the things you are going to talk about it will be easy to face any reactions or question”, and another described their own experiences with anxiety, “Unfortunately there's no magic solution to overcoming that anxiety. This is what I came to realize after so many years of struggling with English speaking... Feel the fear. But understand that's it's fully coming from you, not from others. You may encounter people who will judge you, but it's unlikely to find a supportive environment for learning than a foreign language class. Keep in mind that you're all struggling together.”

### **3.3. Description of the Teachers' Interviews**

The interview was another data collection tool used in this study tackling the issue of language anxiety from the perspective of oral expression teachers. Sitting in conversation with oral class teachers at the University of Mohamed Khider Biskra, we aim to assess their perceptions and awareness towards the existence of factors such as anxiety that interrupt and impair students' oral performance inside the classroom. In addition, we also conduct this interview as a means to explore the possible causes and most anxiety-provoking situations that lead 3rd year EFL students to the reluctance to speak.

Seven interviews were scheduled to be conducted in advance; however, due to scheduling conflicts with the teachers, only four of them were able to take part in this interview in which a series of 20 open-ended questions had been asked.

The construction of the interview comprised three sections; the first section included 10 questions aiming to collect information from teachers about the nature of oral expression classes in particular, and speaking in general. The second section introduced the concept of language anxiety, targeting teachers' perspectives of this issue inside oral classes. The last section included three questions revolving around teachers' perceptions of the importance of students' emotions in the classroom context.

### **3.4. Analysis of the Teachers' Interviews**

#### **3.4.1. Teachers' Teaching Experiences**

The first question of the interview asked teachers about the number of years they have been teaching oral expression sessions. Three teachers answered that they have been teaching oral classes for about 5, 6, or 7 years for different levels (1st year, 2nd year, and 3rd year). Only one teacher has taught oral classes for only 2 or 3 years; this teacher also commented that since our research topic "deals with something in pedagogy", he believes that the teaching experience should not be limited at the tertiary level only,

I think it goes even for middle and secondary school because it's very important as well. I think this is, maybe it's more important at that phase because of, you know, teenagers, ect. You know it's very sensitive as a topic. (Teacher 2)

Our interviewees' teaching experiences are defined by these significant numbers of years. As a result, the majority of teachers (3 teachers) have considerable teaching

experience, with only one teacher having less. This means that teachers' responses were based on their experiences which increases the reliability of our data.

### **3.4.2. EFL Students and the Speaking Skill**

Attempting to get teachers to assess the difficulty of teaching the speaking skill, teachers were asked how they feel about teaching oral expression sessions, and whether they think the experience is different in comparison with teaching other sessions.

Teacher 1 compared the attention given to the speaking skill by EFL students to the attention given to other language skills, stating that:

Speaking is probably given more attention than other skills because it's often the skill that most people are judged... any contact with people, the first question you receive if you study English is that "do you speak English?" instead of "do you write English?". it is the one that shows the learners' level of proficiency in that language

He explained that: "Writing, listening and reading are, let's say, more personal; however, speaking is more interactive". He also believes that all language skills should be equally regarded and just as important, "I always believe that skill should be evenly or fairly regarded. As teachers, we should not overrate one skill over the other".

Teacher 2 recognised that students do face challenges when learning the speaking skill, and described the difficulty of teaching oral classes as "a bit challenging" and "very intense"; however, he explained that teaching oral classes can be less intense when compared with teaching other sessions simply because students are motivated to learn this skill,

Speaking basically is the face of the language which learners usually want... They try to develop it fast, and develop it efficiently, and they are very motivated when it

comes to teaching or learning speaking. I think most of students show some kind of motivation, it means they want to learn how to speak despite the challenges they face

Teacher 3 expressed his opinion about oral expression classes,

I've always liked teaching oral expression, because for me it's a chance or the opportunity for students to express themselves. So, I have always given great importance to this module and to the skill

Whereas teacher 4 differentiated between oral classes and the speaking skill in terms of level of difficulty, explaining that:

Oral expression in general as a module, it's hard to teach in terms of preparation, not easy to find the appropriate material for the class, ect. And when talking about speaking specifically, sometimes it's very difficult to encourage students to speak in the class

When students' speaking proficiencies are concerned, all 4 teachers agreed that the majority of students' levels range from average to intermediate, with some excellent students and some with poor levels, as stated by teacher 3: "Overall, well, there are some students who are native-like and others are unable to even express themselves in English". However, teacher 2 recognised the difficulty of assessing speaking as a skill, and found it difficult to rate students' overall speaking proficiency due to two things, "1) i think the speaking skill is affected by many factors especially psychologically speaking. 2) it depends also on the classroom environment".

These responses revealed that students are motivated to learn the speaking skill despite the challenges they face. All teachers recognised that these challenges can be psychological factors which may affect speaking. Besides, teachers also revealed that despite how difficult it can be, they enjoy teaching this skill in oral classes.

### **3.4.3. EFL Students' Participation Inside Oral Classes**

In order to get inside the oral class environment, we first asked teachers about students' behaviour with the English language outside the classroom, and whether this language is often spoken outside.

All 4 teachers reported that they rarely notice their students speak English outside classroom settings, which they consider as a problem. Teachers 2 and 3 mentioned that this behaviour can be noticed even inside the classroom,

We try to make sure they discuss in English, and that's the problem because the minute you leave the classroom, you will hear some words in arabic. (Teacher 2)

Our students feel ashamed to talk in English outside of the classroom, even in some of the classroom, they find it hard to speak in English, because of, I think it's cultural and psychological. (Teacher 3)

Teacher 2 continued to say that he thinks that only "higher achievers" discuss their matters in English either inside or outside the classroom,

I have seen this and i think it's very interesting, very impressive, but it's minimum, i mean it's not what we hope for, especially outside the classroom, i think a very small number of students who actually discuss their matters using English language

As for classroom participation, it was observed by teachers that not all students show motivation, and that participation is neither low nor high, depending on the activity. Teacher 3 stated that:

Some students are really motivated and they would like to work from beginning to end, they don't stop talking and participating, being creative, they engage in different kinds of activities, but others are just there silent, passive, just watch and do nothing.

while teacher 1 explained:

Participation among students, at the beginning, is very low. And then, by by-time with the familiarity, i mean, with the teacher and the course itself, the way it is done, the different activities in the class, more students join the club; I mean, they tend to participate.

Teacher 2 distinguished between students who are intrinsically motivated and those who are not; he explained that all students have to participate when there is an assignment that requires participation, while only a small proportion of students are willing to participate because they want to. Besides, he also noticed that the type of classroom activity influences students' level of participation,

What I have noticed is that when it's something interesting, especially when I taught oral expression before, I used to rely a lot on games, on more interactive activities. I think most of students actually show some interest, it can go from 40% to at least 85% of students participating, or being active participants in the classroom

Teachers' responses revealed that students' classroom participation is not what oral teachers hope for, and that participation increases only when there is an extrinsic motive such as assignments. This could imply that the majority of students are reluctant to participate in oral classes.

#### **3.4.4. Classroom Activities**

In order to explore the reasons behind students' reluctance, we asked teachers about the different classroom activities used during the session, and whether these activities are chosen by teachers or suggested by students.

All 4 teachers reported that they give their students the chance to suggest activities for the session, which indicates that teachers do not impose classroom activities on students and that this may not be the reason behind their reluctance to participate. However, teacher 2 stated that students' suggested activities are not always helpful because students might choose activities based on their personal interests that might not work for all students, which does not serve the aims of oral classes in which teachers "try to raise interactiveness, we try to help them [students] speak more".

Teacher 3 listed some of the activities that take place during his oral class,

I used to start with word games... I train my students to read, to differentiate between the sounds, spoken and written sounds. I use role plays, intensive reading, videos, we watch movies together, we discuss presentations, songs, I had students with beautiful voices, they used to sing in the classroom

Teacher 1 revealed that he uses students' feedbacks and suggestions to adjust the classroom activities,

Because of the feedback, given by students, or the reflections i usually make on my sessions, i try to adjust, or even ask students to suggest activities or tasks if the ones that i suggest or that i have are not suitable or could be difficult... because sharing or asking students to share their ideas when it comes to activities, is for their benefit.

In terms of teachers' presence during the session, all 4 teachers reported that they participate and try to be involved in the activities taking place in the classroom. However, two teachers believe that teachers' participation, especially for oral teachers, should be kept to a minimum in order to allow students to speak and interact with one another,

I try to be involved in a way. Probably, to share even my ideas, to be a model, to probably encourage them to participate. So, I do not remain silent at all. Yes, I am always there. I try to minimise my talking time as much as I can, but I interfere when needed. (Teacher 1)

It's theoretically valid to say that the teacher should decrease his participation during assignments, especially oral assignments. But, we can never neglect that the teacher has to participate sometimes, has to, you know, interact with students, has to sometimes push students towards talking. (Teacher 2)

It is clear from these responses that teachers are considerate about their students' interests. However, despite choosing classroom activities in accordance with students' interests, they still hesitate to participate. This may indicate that this hesitation may be due to internal rather than external factors relating to classroom activities.

### 3.4.5. Students' Manifestations of Speaking Reluctance

To understand students' behaviour, we asked teachers if they notice when their students are reluctant to speak in class. All four teachers responded that they do notice and that it can be observable when students display such behaviours. However, teacher 1 addressed the difficulty of observing such behaviours, believing that it gets easier with teaching experiences; he explained:

It is not easy to recognise that they [students] are reluctant because reluctance is not an observable behaviour so that I can see it in the class. But, from experience, you can also see that from the body language, from certain facial expressions, certain attitudes.

Similarly, this physical level of observation was also noted by teacher 2 and 3. The former clarified: "you can see it in their faces basically", while the latter explained:

You can feel that. Students, for example, you feel that from their sounds, their voices when they speak, they falter, type of mistakes they occasion, their body language, the way they behave with their classmates, and so on. You can tell.

Some of the common physical signs students manifest when reluctant, according to teachers, are: avoidance such as avoiding eye contact with the teacher or pretending to be busy so that they are not chosen by the teacher to answer a question, hesitation, and forgetfulness. Besides, teacher 1 also noticed that in order to avoid the teachers' attention, some students tend to sit with students who often participate so that they are overshadowed. Teacher 3 added anxiety to be another sign of students' reluctance,

People who are anxious usually avoid speaking, people who feel motivated are always ready to speak even to say one word to make the atmosphere friendly and so on. But some students never talk, no matter how hard you tried, they don't talk at all.

In observing students' behaviours, teacher 2 remarked that teachers sometimes may not only discover that students are reluctant to speak, but also discover why students are reluctant,

Many things prevent them from speaking, fearing of committing mistakes, confusion about the topic, unfamiliarity about the topic itself, so here we have to be careful on how we react towards this reluctant behaviour.

#### **3.4.6. Factors Contributing to Students' Reluctance**

To learn more, we asked teachers about factors they think contribute to students' reluctance, and all four teachers agreed that students' reluctance can be caused by both internal and external factors. To back up his argument, teacher 1 noted that:

The evidence is that, in the same, for example, class, a student participates today, and shows enthusiasm today, is the same student who keep silent the other day.

The internal factors were labelled as "psychological" by all our interviewees; teacher 1 and 3 both named low self-esteem and linguistic competence in addition to fear and frustration under psychological factors. Teacher 2 added shyness and anxiety to the equation while expressing the same idea as teacher 1 in that students sometimes may not be having a good day,

Sometimes we can see that the student is not actually, psychologically speaking, having a good day, it happens like the minute they get into the classroom, they do not feel good, ect. Which is, somehow, to do with their day or something, we have to take this into account. Others have to do with shyness and anxiety, which are important as well.

However, teacher 4 did not name any psychological factors because he believes that only external factors are of his responsibility as a teacher. As for external factors, all four teachers associated them with the classroom environment including: classroom management, teaching methods, topics discussed and activities used. In addition, teacher 3 mentioned culture as an external factor stating that: “We are a culture that does not encourage people to express themselves”

Through these responses, it can be interpreted that since all teachers agree that students’ reluctance is due to both internal and external factors, it can be worth noting that anxiety is also a factor that can be caused by both internal and external factors. Therefore, this can indicate that one of the main reasons for students’ reluctance may be anxiety.

### **3.4.7. Language Anxiety**

#### **3.4.7.1. Teachers’ Awareness**

Because one teacher, in the previous section, ignored the internal factors causing students’ reluctance, we aim to assess teachers’ awareness and familiarity with the concept of language anxiety in this section. We directly asked our interviewees whether they were aware of the existence of such factors in learning. All four teachers reported that they are aware of such issues. However, both teachers 1 and 2 noted that the level of awareness, including how to cope or deal with these issues, differ from one teacher to another, and that this level of

awareness increases with the increase of teaching experiences, and the frequency of contact with students, as stated by teacher 1: “Having more contact with students makes you more familiar with students’ behaviours”.

#### **3.4.7.2. Teachers’ Perceptions of Language Anxiety**

In order to examine teachers’ perception of students’ language anxiety, we asked them if they think anxiety is more occurring in oral classes and whether they would consider it to be the cause for students’ poor speaking performance. All four teachers argued that anxiety can occur in all sessions; however, it can be more apparent or manifested in oral classes because that is where students have to actively speak and physically participate; therefore, any anxiety reaction would be noticeable. Teacher 1 further described that speaking is the “facade of the learner”, reflecting their personalities, identities, and their own thinking. He explained that “anything that is personal creates anxiety, especially in front of an audience”.

In addition, all four teachers considered anxiety as a factor that negatively affects students’ speaking performances. However, teacher 3 noted that language anxiety is not the only factor influencing the speaking performance, adding that:

They [students] have trouble with language, they have trouble with the culture of the language, they have trouble with their interpersonal skills... So, I don't think it's just this one.

According to teachers’ responses, it was revealed that teachers hold negative perceptions of language anxiety that is seen as a problem with harmful effects on students’ speaking performance.

#### **3.4.7.3. Possible Reasons for Language Anxiety**

In order to understand what causes 3rd year EFL students to experience anxiety when speaking in oral classes, we asked teachers three questions, each for one possible reason retrieved from the questionnaire that we believe can be an anxiety trigger.

First, we asked teachers what classroom activities they think may be anxiety-provoking for students. Teachers 1 and 4 believe it is all activities performed on stage where students have to face an audience, “Facing the audience is probably the number one reason that makes people feel anxious”, whereas teacher 3 believes it is the activities in which students are to be tested. However, teacher 2 argued that it is not the activity itself that “develops” anxiety, but the objective behind it or the psychological impact it brings to students; he used the example of students’ unfamiliarity with the topic discussed in class that may affect their understanding, he explained:

if a student does not understand a certain concept, they will develop some kind of a stress or anxiety, but it’s easier, why? Because the minute they understand, they will be motivated to speak, it means it’s not an issue anymore.

The second question explores whether teachers’ behaviours during classroom activities can be anxiety-provoking for students. We asked teachers whether they allow their students to volunteer to participate or spontaneously point out to students. All teachers reported that they prefer volunteered participation; however, teachers 1 and 2 noted that sometimes due to the lack of participation, teachers have to interfere and resort to choosing one student and directly ask them questions,

Volunteering is always the best choice. However, sometimes you realise that students, especially in some classes, are resistant to participation. In here, I opt for assigning students to participate.

The third question asked teachers about their perceptions towards mistakes in order to discover whether teachers think it is still acceptable for 3rd year students to make mistakes. Their responses implied that all four teachers tolerate mistakes to a certain degree, and consider them to be part of the learning process. However, teachers 1 and 2 further explained that depending on the type of mistake or the frequency with which it is made, the teacher may intervene to provide correction. Teacher 2 stated:

Sometimes I try to put some kind of blame, it means I try to blame students a little bit so they can feel their responsibility towards learning, mostly on mistakes that we believe that they shouldn't have been committed at this level.

As for mistake correction, three teachers reported that they avoid providing immediate correction that may interrupt or frustrate students' performance; only two teachers explained that correction sometimes may have negative impacts on students; thus, teacher 4 prefers providing collective feedback, while teacher 1 sometimes would ignore such mistakes,

Sometimes I just forget about them [mistakes], and let the student continuously speak, and expresses him/herself as some students have a negative attitude towards correction because it hinders their fluency and lowers their self-confidence.

Teachers' responses have drawn attention to a few possible reasons behind students' anxiety, which may include: the fear of facing an audience, fear of not understanding, fear of making mistakes, or fear of negative evaluation.

On another note, intending to eliminate such factors from the learning process, all four teachers aspired to improve the learning environment by making it less anxiety-provoking in which students will be encouraged to speak more. Teachers 3 and 4 work on creating a comfortable, friendly, and supportive learning environment, "The friendlier the atmosphere inside the classroom, the better for students to communicate", teacher 3 expressed.

#### **3.4.8. Students' Emotional and Mental Health**

In order to understand teachers' perceptions of students' emotions inside the classroom, we directly asked them how they deal with anxious students. Three teachers reported that they would approach students, sit and talk with them about the matter at the end of the session in an intimate manner, as teacher 1 expressed, in order to establish a sense of "security" or "closeness" with the teacher, he explained,

Once the student feels that he is safe and secure, he reveals everything to the teacher.

So, for me, discussing, talking is one of the workable ways to deal with that.

He added,

I'm very welcoming, I feel very happy when someone approaches me and asks me a question or reveals a concern. I would be glad to do that, I would be glad to communicate with my students.

Teachers 1 and 2 also noted that it is far better to deal with psychological problems with students individually rather than discuss it openly with the entire classroom. However,

teacher 4 reported that he usually approaches students at the beginning of the session where he checks on all his students, talks to them, jokes with them, or asks them about their daily routine in order to make them comfortable before starting the lesson.

The majority of teachers appear to be welcoming to the idea of initiating communication with students about such matters; we then asked teachers if it would be easier for them to spot anxiety symptoms and reactions when students speak more openly about their mental struggles. All four teachers agreed that it can be helpful, teacher 2 explained:

I think it's very helpful for teachers... The more students speak and openly share their perceptions, I think it's easier for the teacher to detect the problem, and easier for the teacher to create some kind of a teacher-learner relationship, and to find a solution as soon as possible, which is very important in learning a foreign language.

Another question was asked about students' openness of talking about their feelings and emotions. All four teachers addressed the secrecy that surrounds the subject, believing that students do not like to open up and talk about their emotions which, according to teacher 2, can make matters worse. Teachers also believe that it can be due to a social and cultural stigma.

The final question of the interview was to get teachers to assess the importance of students' emotions in the learning process, and to explore whether they are positively perceived. We asked teachers if they would encourage students to speak more openly about their emotional experiences inside the classroom. All four teachers appeared to be encouraging of students' emotions, believing that if students open up, teachers would become more aware of their students' emotions, resulting in a better learning environment. However, teacher 1 recognised the sensitivity of dealing with feelings and emotions, suggesting that

students' emotions should be handled in a restricted context, because emotional health requires expertise that teachers lack. Both teachers 1 and 2 stressed the fact that they "remain teachers and not psychologists"; thus, their support for students should be academic as they do not see it as their responsibility to "heal" students from any emotional reaction. Teacher 1 further expressed his fear of intervening in students' personal issues which may lead to opposite consequences than intended if he randomly deals with emotional cases ineffectively and without expertise. Nevertheless, Teacher 1 recommended that:

The student can start "healing" in the class... . Talking about emotions and feelings could be part of the programme, of the syllabus, but it cannot be the entire syllabus which is based on feelings and emotions.

### **3.5. Discussion of the Findings**

The results obtained for this study, which looked into the possible causes and effects of language anxiety on students' oral performance, revealed that Third year EFL students do in fact experience feelings of anxiety when speaking in oral classes. In order to understand reasons behind students' feelings of anxiety and its effects on their oral performance, we designed three research questions to be answered through collecting data from the perspectives of both teachers and students to help us gain better insight and understanding of this human behaviour.

Our first research question attempts to arrive at conclusions about the possible causes of students' experiences of anxiety while speaking in oral classes. The results revealed that there are potential stressful situations that lead students to anxiety, including the classroom activities that take place during the session. Data retrieved from interviews and

questionnaires suggest that it is usually classroom activities that require students to perform in front of an audience such as presentations. However, this contradicts data retrieved from the questionnaire in which students listed presentations to be their preferred classroom activity. This suggests that students' anxiety is not due to external factors relating to the classroom environment but due to internal factors relating to students' psychological or emotional state in the class. This argument can be backed up by data collected from another question in which students reported that even if the teacher makes classroom activities more fun and enjoyable, they would still feel anxious. Likert scale results in section three of the questionnaire uncovered some of the possible internal factors that lead students to anxiety; students' self-confidence and low self-esteem appear to contribute to their anxiety, as they negatively perceive themselves while performing, believing that others speak better than they do, this may also lead students to feel pressured about having to speak fluently and properly. Students' speaking fluency can be affected by the lack of preparation, which explains why speaking without preparation is another source of anxiety. However, data suggests that even when students are prepared, they still feel anxious when speaking, indicating that EFL students experience anxiety when communicating in a language other than their native tongue. Data showed that a high proportion of students fear not understanding what is communicated, which can be linked to students' anxiety when communicating in a foreign language, due to a lack of vocabulary or insufficient language proficiency; however, this argument is inconsistent with students' reports of having an intermediate level, which indicates that EFL students usually rate their overall language proficiency according to their speaking abilities. Shyness was another factor on the likert scale to which students agreed caused anxiety because they felt shy speaking English due to the lack of performing such practices in their previous learning experiences in middle and high school. According to data from the questionnaire, the majority of students started learning English in middle school

where such performances are rarely practised inside the classroom, which makes the act of performing orally in front of an audience an unusual and an overwhelming experience for students that leads them to feel shy and eventually anxious while performing. Data also revealed that when their performance is being evaluated, students can become self-conscious because they fear being negatively perceived by the teacher. This data may also explain why students are anxious about making mistakes when speaking. The following results can be categorised into three main components responsible for students' feelings of anxiety which supports Horwitz et al. 's (1986) findings : 1) Communication apprehension, 2) Fear of negative evaluation, and 3) Test anxiety. However, the last component (test anxiety), which Horwitz et al. (1986) linked to "fear of failure", is inconsistent with the results of our analysis in which it was revealed that students do not worry about receiving poor grades, but do experience anxiety when being evaluated. This suggests that it is not poor achievement that triggers students' anxiety, but rather the process of evaluation itself.

Our second research question addresses the effects of anxiety on students' oral performance. Data retrieved from the interview drew conclusions that the effects of anxiety can be observed first and foremost on the physical level of students' behaviours. The most observed effects, according to data, are manifestations of behaviours such as reluctance and avoidance in terms of classroom participation. Students' avoidance to speak inside the class indicates that this is one of the strategies they use to cope with their feelings of anxiety. As for students' performances, results of our data analysis uncovered other physical reactions that students manifest while performing, including difficulties in speaking such as shaken voices, word loss, forgetfulness, and also committing mistakes which is in line with MacIntyre & Gardner (1994) claim that anxiety arousals tend to increase the number of errors. Thus, making mistakes, according to data, can be an effect as well as a cause of students' anxiety. However, despite the difficulties that frustrates students' performances, no

data indicated any performance breakdown, which suggests that students are still willing and motivated to speak despite the effects of anxiety. This also suggests that anxiety has a dual effect in the sense that it can facilitate and motivate as much as it hinders. The positive effects can be shown on data retrieved from questionnaire items (Q3, & Q8) in which students reported that they find oral classes to be interesting, enjoyable and stressful all at the same time and that despite being anxious, students still look forward to expressing their ideas again during the session because they enjoy the experience of speaking, whereas the negative effects can be indicated in students' lack of speaking tendencies either inside or outside the classroom. This suggests that anxiety can leave negative impressions on students' feelings that can be carried out outside classroom settings, and can affect their future experiences. These results are in line with MacIntyre (1999) and Brown's (2001) research findings that anxiety can have both positive and negative effects, either facilitating or debilitating students' performances. In addition, the negative impressions that anxiety leaves may indicate that there are non-visible reactions students suffer from when anxious, affecting their feelings and emotional experiences towards situations that might become a trigger in future experiences, such as the case of making mistakes.

Our third research question seeks to understand how hindering factors such as anxiety can interrupt the success of foreign language performance/achievement. Data retrieved from the interview analysis identified students' feelings and emotions as key factors in the learning process. This could explain the inconsistency in students' responses in the questionnaire, where it was observed that situations that lead students to experience negative effects of anxiety are the same situations that lead others to experience anxiety but with positive effects. This indicates that experiences of anxiety vary from one student to another, because feelings and emotions also vary. This data supports Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014) claim that the same event might be anxiety-provoking or enjoyment-inducing depending on how it is interpreted

by the learner in the moment, which highlights the importance of students' emotional and mental wellbeing inside the classroom. The success of learning requires a psychological and mental state free of negative emotions that frustrates the learning experience. These negative emotions, if not attended, may cause students to become mentally unhealthy during classroom sessions, which in turn affect their willingness and motivation to learn especially outside classroom settings. The analysis of the interview shows that students' feelings of anxiety affect their intrinsic motivation, whereas they are only willing to participate when there is an extrinsic motive, such as assignments. Overall, it can be concluded that students' emotions and mental wellbeing are possible factors that can determine the success or failure of students' academic performances and eventually achievements, because they highly affect students' motivation.

To better improve the learning experience, the analysis revealed that initiating communication with students is the key factor that facilitates spotting the early signs and triggers of anxiety. In talking with students, teachers may not only break down the barrier or the stigma that students suffer from when it comes to talking about feelings and emotions, but may also increase the level of students' awareness of their own emotional experiences. Increasing levels of awareness will benefit both teachers and students as it enables them to not only become aware of the different situations that lead students to anxiety, but also to master and control emotions when possible, which will result in a mentally healthy learning environment.

## **Conclusion**

The present chapter sought to analyse, describe, interpret, and display data obtained from the previously mentioned data collection tools. At the end, a detailed discussion and

summary of the findings were documented, along with making inferences in order to reach conclusions about our research questions.

### **General Conclusion**

This study aimed to familiarise the academic community with the concept of “Language Anxiety” and to raise awareness about the existence of such factors in the learning context by identifying its possible causes and effects on Third year EFL students. To better understand this human phenomenon, we addressed the issue of language anxiety in relation to students’ emotions, behaviours and learning performance, and tackled it from the perspectives of both students and teachers, which was also helpful in exploring their perceptions of the anxiety factor.

This case study followed a qualitative approach in which two instruments were used as data collection tools, mainly a semi-structured questionnaire, distributed online for the population of Third year EFL students, and open-ended interviews conducted with four oral expression teachers. Data retrieved from our sample was then descriptively and thematically analysed.

The findings revealed that students’ anxiety inside the classroom is highly related to their feelings and emotions experienced at the moment, as no specific source was identified as a cause of anxiety, but rather several potential situations, that can possibly lead students to experience anxiety during oral classes, were found to vary from one student to another depending on how they are interpreted, in that the same situation can be anxiety-provoking for some students, and stressful but enjoyable for others.

The results of the analysis also showed that anxiety is with a dual effect, motivating students to speak despite being nervous at times, and triggering them into avoidance or reluctance at other times. The effects of anxiety were found to manifest not only physically but also internally, by which non-visible anxiety reactions impacted students’ emotions either positively or negatively, affecting the learning experience. Further findings revealed that

making mistakes can be both a cause as well as an effect of students' anxiety, which indicated that anxiety had a deeper impact on students that leaves negative emotions and impressions towards a situation that may become a trigger itself in future experiences, in the sense that affects trigger causes and vice versa. Besides, students avoidance to speak and reluctance to participate inside the class indicated that they negatively perceive and avoid their feelings of anxiety.

These findings intrigued our interest to learn more about the part students' emotional experiences play within the learning process. Our attention was diverted to the primary root of emotions and the main source of such psychological issues (i.e language anxiety) that is mental health. Students' mental health appears to be the underlying thread that connects and binds elements together, whether it is reluctance, pressure, motivation, stress, or anxiety, etc. Results showed that teachers, to a certain extent, hold positive perceptions towards students' emotional experiences inside the classroom. One way to tackle the issue of language anxiety is to talk and initiate communication between teachers and students, which was found to be a key factor that facilitates identifying anxiety triggers and becoming aware of them in order to take precautions and prevent them from impairing the learning experience. This, in turn, will help to improve the level of awareness needed to create a mentally healthy learning environment.

This study contributes to the existing literature of language anxiety by which we attempted to understand this human behaviour, uncovering its reasons and effects. However, this study took a new approach in addressing the issue of language anxiety in relation to students' feelings and emotional experiences inside the classroom. As a result, this investigation led to discovering a new, unexplored factor in the literature, mental health, that was found to be the common thread from which these psychological and emotional experiences stem. As no previous studies tackled the issue of language anxiety from the

perspective of mental health, the present study, therefore, can serve as an encouragement to the Algerian academic community to acknowledge and prioritise mental health in learning, which is often a neglected aspect in education.

### **Limitations**

When it comes to the limitations of this study, the following points must be mentioned:

- The first limitation has to do with sampling issues. Almost all of the participants of this study are females, with only one male participant. This can limit the extent of understanding this human behaviour that can be experienced by both genders. This can also affect the validity of our data as it is commonly known that females can be more emotional than males.
- Another limitation concerns time constraints and difficulties in collaborating with 3rd year students. Despite the convenience of online questionnaires, a considerable time was consumed in receiving responses from students. Besides, when it comes to data retrieved from the questionnaire, some students appeared to have avoided responding to open-ended questionnaire items and instead resorted to using emojis to explain their ideas. Time constraints also led us to eliminate classroom observations as a data collection tool, which prevented us from observing this behaviour firsthand.

### **Recommendations**

This study revealed that Third year EFL students do in fact experience feelings of anxiety inside oral classes, which affects the learning environment and potentially their mental health inside it. To help both teachers and students cope with language anxiety, it can be recommended:

- For teachers to reduce the sensitive atmosphere inside oral classes by creating a friendlier and less formal classroom atmosphere that provides psychological support that allows students to feel at ease and comfortable enough to talk and share ideas inside the classroom without reluctance.
- For teachers to be understanding of students' emotional experiences inside the classroom, and to be approachable to talk and communicate with students which will not only facilitate identifying anxiety triggers, but will also encourage students to open up about their struggles and seek help when needed.
- To raise awareness about the effects of such psychological factors on learning, and to improve the level of mental health literacy within the Algerian academic community.
- For the Algerian university institutions to prioritise mental health and normalise talking about it in the learning/teaching environments by providing support services within university campuses to enable students to access mental health care when needed.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 01: Teachers' Interview

#### Interview Questions:

**Q1:** For how long have you been teaching oral expression sessions?

**Q2:** Given that speaking is the most sensitive aspect of language, how do you feel about teaching such a session? Do you think the experience is different in comparison to the other sessions?

**Q3:** On a scale from excellent to poor, how would you rate your students overall language speaking proficiency?

**Q4:** Do you think English is often spoken among EFL students outside the classroom? Have you ever noticed your students speak in English outside your oral expression sessions?

**Q5:** During your oral expression sessions, do you get a considerable number of student participation? Do all students speak? Or is it just a few select students who always engage in speaking activities?

**Q6:** What are the different classroom activities used in the session? Are these activities usually suggested by students, or chosen by teachers?

**Q7:** In terms of teaching strategies, do you, as a teacher, usually participate in speaking activities during the session? Why?

**Q8:** In what form do you participate? Do you, for example, spontaneously choose a student and directly ask them, or do you let students volunteer to answer after they have taken their time and prepared before speaking?

**Q9:** What are your perceptions towards making mistakes? Do you think it is acceptable for 3rd year students to make mistakes when speaking?

## Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom

**Q10:** As a teacher, do you notice when your students are reluctant to speak? What are some of the reactions students manifest when anxious to speak?

**Q11:** In your opinion, what are some of the factors that contribute to students' reluctance? Do you think they might be internal or external factors?

**Q12:** Research has classified foreign language anxiety to be one of the effective factors interrupting and impairing students' speaking performance. Do you think teachers are familiar with the concept and aware of the existence of such factors in learning?

**Q13:** As a teacher, do you usually analyse and observe your students' behaviours? Can you tell whether a student is distressed? How would you deal with anxious students?

**Q14:** Do you think that anxiety is more occurring in oral expression sessions than any other session? Would you consider it to be one of the causes for students' poor speaking performance?

**Q15:** In your experiences as a teacher, what classroom activities do you think are most anxiety-provoking for students?

**Q16:** Do you give your students the chance to communicate with you to provide feedback and reflect on your performance or choice of activities?

**Q17:** Would you agree that using strategies to create a less anxiety-provoking classroom environment, would encourage students to speak more inside the classroom?

**Q18:** Do you think it would be easier for teachers, as well as students, to spot anxiety symptoms and reactions if students spoke more openly about their struggles and difficulties in learning?

**Q19:** Would you agree that there is some kind of secrecy around talking about feelings and emotions as it is negatively perceived as a sign of weakness?

**Q20:** Would you encourage your students to speak more openly about their emotional experiences inside the classroom? How important do you think it is?

## Appendix 02: Students' Questionnaire

### Students' Questionnaire

Dear third-year students,

You are kindly requested to fill the following questionnaire containing a set of questions designed to collect data exploring "Causes and Effects of Language Anxiety on EFL Learners' Speaking Performance" with focus on spreading awareness for a healthier learning environment.

Data gathered from this semi-structured questionnaire will be privately analysed and we will committ to keep the information you provide anonymous and confidential. Your truthful and honest answers will contribute to the reliability of our research findings. We are very appreciative of the time you have taken, your valuable contribution, and your honest information.

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\* Required

#### Section One: General Information

1. Q1: Students' Gender \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Male  
 Female

2. Q2: Students' Age \*

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Q3: At what age did you start learning English? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Primary School age  
 Middle School age  
 High School age  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom

4. Q4: Was studying English at University your personal choice? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

5. If yes, please state why. \*

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6. Q5: How would you rate your English proficiency level? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Beginner

Pre-Intermediate

Intermediate

Advanced

### Section Two: Speaking in the EFL Classroom

7. Q1: In your opinion, what language skill is the most difficult to learn? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Speaking

Listening

Reading

Writing

## Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom

8. Q2: How well do you speak in the English language? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Very well  
 Good  
 Okay  
 Not so well

9. Q3: How do you find oral expression sessions? (You may choose more than one). \*

*Check all that apply.*

- Interesting  
 Enjoyable  
 Boring  
 Stressful

10. Q4: How often do you speak English outside the classroom? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Always  
 Sometimes  
 Rarely  
 Never

11. Q5: How often do you speak English during oral expression sessions? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Always  
 Sometimes  
 Rarely  
 Never

## Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom

12. Q6: What are the different classroom activities you prefer/enjoy in oral expression sessions? \*

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Section  
Three:  
Foreign  
Language  
Anxiety in  
the EFL  
Classroom

Foreign language anxiety is a situation-specific anxiety that lead to the feeling of nervousness, fear, apprehension, and worry arising from a particular situation relating to learning or speaking a foreign language, ect., (Horwitz, Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Spielberger, 1983). Anxiety is regarded as a natural response to a stressful situation, which can be a normal and healthy emotion that, at times, motivates a person to handle a stressful situation. However, with regular feelings of worry and apprehension, it might become a debilitating factor impairing the learning process (Horwitz, Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner 1991; Oxford, 1999).

13. Q1: Do you feel more anxious when you: \*

*Check all that apply.*

- Speak  
 Listen  
 Read  
 Write

14. Q2: How often do you get nervous while speaking English? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Always  
 Sometimes  
 Rarely  
 Never

## Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom

15. Q3: How much do you agree or disagree with these statements which might \* be the reason to make you reluctant to speak in oral expression sessions?

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>1. I never feel quite sure of myself while i am speaking English.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>2. I feel shy speaking English because i did not study English speaking skills in secondary and high school.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>3. I always feel that other students speak English better than i do.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>4. I prefer to be allowed to volunteer to speak instead of being called on to speak in English.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>5. I start to panic when the teacher asks me to speak English without preperation in advance.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>6. Even if i am well prepared, i feel anxious about speaking English.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>7. When i am speaking English, i get so nervous i forget things i know.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>8. I feel very self-conscious while sneaking English in</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom

speaking English in  
front of other  
students.

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9. I am less  
reluctant to speak in  
class when i am not  
the only person  
participating.

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10. I would be less  
reluctant to speak in  
class if it was  
commonly  
understood that  
everyone makes  
mistakes, and it was  
not a big deal to  
make a mistake.

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16. Q4: In your opinion, what classroom activities are most anxiety-provoking for \* students? (You can tick more than one).

*Check all that apply.*

- Group activities  
 Classroom discussions  
 Role plays and games  
 Presentations

17. Q5: Would you still feel anxious if the teacher made these classroom activities more fun and enjoyable? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes  
 Maybe  
 No

## Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom

18. Q6: While speaking in English during oral expression sessions, you can be anxious due to: \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Yes	No
<b>1. The fear of not understanding what is said due to insufficient vocabulary.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>2. Lack of good listening abilities, which may affect your understanding.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>3. The pressure of having to speak fluently and perfectly.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>4. Time pressure because you have to speak without preparation.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>5. Not knowing what to say because you are not prepared.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>6. Fear of making mistakes when speaking.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>7. Becoming self-conscious that your performance is being evaluated.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>8. Worry of receiving poor grades.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom

19. Q7: Do you believe that anxiety may hinder your speaking performance? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

Maybe

No

20. If no, please state why. \*

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## Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom

21. Q8: After your speaking performance inside the classroom, do you: \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Yes	No
<b>1. Feel relaxed and confident about speaking.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>2. Worry the teacher might have negative perceptions towards you due to your poor performance.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>3. Fear being negatively perceived by your classmates because you made mistakes in pronunciation or grammar.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>4. Feel relieved you do not have to speak during the session again.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>5. You look forward to expressing your ideas in English again.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>6. Avoid situations where you have to speak in English</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>7. You enjoy the experience of speaking English.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom

22. Q9: How do you find feedback after speaking? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Helpful  
 Neutral  
 Frightful

23. Q10: Would you rather receive feedback from: \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Teacher  
 Peers  
 Both

24. Please, explain why. \*

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25. Q11: If you to experience anxiety while speaking, how would you deal with the situation? (You can tick more than one). \*

*Check all that apply.*

- I avoid making eye contact, or i maintain eye contact with only one person so i do not get confused and focus on my speaking.
- To reduce anxiety, i prepare myself and think before i speak by making sentences in my mind first, so that i do not say something wrong.
- I ignore others' reactions when i say something wrong.
- I repeat my sentence all over again and make sure i correct the mistake.
- I encourage myself to keep speaking even if i make mistakes.
- I try to talk and communicate with the audience.
- I ask for help and support from the teacher or a peer.

## Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom

26. Any comments or suggestions you might have regarding foreign language anxiety would be welcomed.

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

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### ملخص الدراسة

القلق اللغوي هو ظاهرة تحدث بين طلاب اللغة، والتي يمكن أن تؤدي إلى مجموعة من المشاكل في فصل اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. الأكثر شيوعاً من هذه تشمل تردد الطلاب فيما يتعلق بأدائهم الشفهي. لذلك، تحاول الدراسة الحالية استكشاف مسألة القلق اللغوي عند التحدث داخل الحصص الشفوية، بهدف تكوين فهم لهذا السلوك البشري وكشف أسبابه وأثاره المحتملة على أداء التحدث. لتحقيق هذه الأهداف، اختارت هذه الدراسة التي يقودها البحث نهجاً نوعياً جنباً إلى جنب مع تصميم بحث دراسة الحالة. وقد تم اختيار المشاركين في هذه الدراسة عشوائياً من طلبة لغة إنجليزية سنة ثالثة ليسانس في جامعة بسكرة لتشكيل عينة تتكون من 20 طالباً، و 4 أساتذة الحصص الشفوية. يتم جمع البيانات من كلا المنظورين من خلال توزيع الاستبيانات عبر الإنترنت وإجراء المقابلات. كشفت النتائج أن أسباب القلق تختلف من طالب لآخر اعتماداً على مشاعرهم وتجاربهم العاطفية داخل الفصل الدراسي. وجد أن القلق له تأثير مزدوج على الطلاب، يحفزهم في بعض الأحيان، وفي البعض الآخر يقودهم إلى تجربة مشاعر سلبية. أظهرت نتائج أخرى أن ارتكاب الأخطاء يمكن أن يلعب دوراً مزدوجاً في كونه نتيجة و سبباً محتملاً للقلق اللغوي. ونتيجة لذلك، وجد أن الصحة العقلية هي الخيط الأساسي المسؤول عن هذه التجارب العاطفية، سواء كانت إيجابية أو سلبية. يمكن التوصية بنشر الوعي حول أهمية هذا العامل في التعلم من خلال تسهيل الحديث عنه وبدء التواصل خاصة بين الأساتذة لخلق بيئة تعليمية أكثر صحة.