VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, HANOI

UNIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

FACULTY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

NGUYỄN THÙY LINH

FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING ANXIETY AMONG 1ST-YEAR STUDENTS AT FELTE, ULIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (TEFL)

Hanoi, May 2011

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SUPERVISOR: LƯƠNG QUỲNH TRANG, M.A.

Hanoi, May 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

as their love and care for their students nurtured in me the strong belief that "as teachers we can exert an influence both on the performance and well-being of our students" (Whitaker, 1995, cited in Andres, 2002). Therefore, I have been always interested in the affective side of the learners and in what the instructors can do to minimize its negative influence and maximize its positive impact on their students. This current study on language learning anxiety was prompted by such beliefs and interests.

Last but not least, I am grateful to my beloved family and my friends in Vietnam, as well as my dearly loved host family and my friends in the U.S., for supporting me wholeheartedly during the time I carried out this study. Their support and love gave me strength and confidence to go through the difficult times, so I was able to finish this research paper.

ABSTRACT

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In her review of the role of affective factors in EFL/ESL learning and teaching, Andres (2002) asserted that "If we want our students to develop their inherent potential to learn, the affective variables such as anxiety, motivation, self-esteem and inhibition can no longer be denied, the inner needs of the learners can no longer be neglected." This current research, therefore, was conducted with the aim to investigate the anxiety phenomenon in 1st-year English-major classes at the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS), Hanoi. The study involved 135 students from 6 first-year classes and 21 teachers at the Faculty of English Language Teacher Education (FELTE). It employed both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) methods to examine the pervasiveness and the degree of English language learning anxiety, as well as to explore the teachers' and students' viewpoints on this affective factor. The findings suggested that language anxiety was pervasive among 1st-year classes at FELTE, ULIS; the surveyed students experienced moderate or higher levels of anxiety, and their tension and apprehension in the language classroom appeared to mostly stem from learner characteristics such as negative social comparisons with peers and low self-esteem. Some factors believed to contribute to the alleviation of anxiety were also identified, among which the teacher-related factors, especially a positive teacher-student relationship, seemed to be most highly regarded by the students. Several pedagogical strategies of these findings were offered to assist instructors in helping learners acknowledge, cope with, and reduce anxiety, as well as to encourage them to make the learning context less stressful to their students.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FELTE: Faculty of English Language Teacher Education

ULIS: University of Languages and International Studies

EFL: English as a foreign language

ESL: English as a second language

L2: Second/foreign language

FLCAS: Foreign language classroom anxiety scale

FLA: Foreign language anxiety

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the research problem and rationale for the study

Learning a second language seems to be a challenging task for many people; while some students excel in language learning, others struggle and even fail to achieve their desired level of language proficiency. As a result, a large amount of research in second language acquisition (SLA) has been conducted to address the question of why some people are more successful at learning a new language than others.

According to Horwitz, Tallon, & Luo (2010, p. 95), early SLA research put a heavy emphasis on cognitive variables such as intelligence, language aptitude, and learning styles, etc. However, since the ground-breaking research of the Canadian psychologists R.C. Gardner and Wallace Lambert about attitudes and motivation in second language learning in the 1970s, SLA researchers have also considered affective or emotional variables and how these factors may facilitate or hinder language acquisition (Horwitz, Tallon, & Luo, 2010, p. 95). These studies have led SLA researchers to conclude that how learners feel about language learning can have a significant impact on their success. For example, Kubanyiova (2006, cited in Celebi, 2009, p. 1) stated that: "The quality of learning engagement in the classroom does not depend on students' cognitive abilities alone, but is also influenced by complex motivational and affective factors."

Among various affective variables like attitude, anxiety, interest, motivation, inhibition, and self-esteem, "anxiety is quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process" (Arnold and Brown, 1999, cited in Dornyei, 2005, p. 198). It is generally believed that a foreign language class can be highly anxiety-provoking for many

students (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; MacIntyre, 1995; Ohata, 2005; Liu, 2007; cited in Subasi, 2010, p.29). Particularly, the pervasiveness of foreign language learning anxiety is demonstrated in the result of Worde's research: one third to a half of the examined students reported experiencing high levels of anxiety (Worde, 1998, cited in Zheng, 2008, p.1). The phenomenon is believed to exist among language learners of different proficiency levels; not only beginning students experience anxiety but even highly advanced learners also feel anxious while learning and particularly speaking English in various situations (Tanveer, 2007, p. 5). For that reason, anxiety has been gradually becoming the research focus and interest of many language professionals.

Foreign language anxiety has been defined as a situation-specific type of anxiety, the "worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language" (MacIntyre, 1998, cited in Zheng, 2008, p. 2), or a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process (Horwitz et al., 1991, cited in Zheng, 2008, p. 2). According to Horwitz (2001, p. 115), foreign language anxiety is a relatively independent factor, demonstrating only a low correlation with general trait-anxiety or "an individual's tendency to be anxious in any situation" (Spielberger, 1983, cited in Zhang, 2010, p. 7). This signifies that foreign language learning anxiety is not merely a transfer of anxiety from another domain such as test anxiety or communication apprehension but is a "uniquely L2-related variable" (Dornyei, 2005, p. 199). The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), a self-report instrument, was developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Scopes (1986)

specifically for the purpose of capturing this distinctive type of anxiety by measuring learners' anxious feelings in foreign language classroom settings.

The psychological construct of foreign language anxiety is multidimensional (Horwitz, 1986; Young, 1991). Ohata (2005, p. 139) argued that "language anxiety cannot be defined in a linear manner; instead, it can be better constructed as a complex psychological phenomenon influenced by many different factors." Williams and Andrade (2008, p.184) summarized several variables possibly related to this specific type of anxiety and grouped them in two main categories:

- Learner variables: ability (both perceived and actual), age, attitudes, beliefs, culture, gender, learning styles, and personality variables
- Situational variables: course level, course organization, course activities, instructor behavior and attitudes, and social interaction among learners

The fact that "anxiety is a complex construct with several different facets" (Dornyei, 2005, p. 198) explains why some basic questions about anxiety in the L2 domain still appear to be unanswered despite the substantial volume of foreign language anxiety study. A much debated issue among researchers is whether language anxiety may account for the discrepancy of success among language learners or whether it is merely a consequence of poor performance or a side effect caused by some language learning difficulty like linguistic deficiency in processing language input (Zheng, 2008; Toth, 2010). Kao and Craigie (2010, p. 50) summarized: some researchers asserted that foreign language anxiety might have an adverse effect on language learning (Arnold & Brown, 1999; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Oxford, 1999), while other scholars believed a

proper amount of anxiety may actually enhance foreign language performance (Chastain 1975; Scott, 1986; Steinberg, 1982), and some studies even found no relationship between anxiety and language achievement (Young, 1990). Scovel (2001, cited in Dornyei, 2005, p. 198) claimed that "anxiety is the most misunderstood affective variable of all." He denounced non-specialists' tendency to associate anxiety simply with fear or "phobia" and criticized language teaching methodological texts' advocacy of eliminating anxiety at all cost, arguing that the perception of anxiety as an enemy to language learning is simply mistaken. According to Dornyei (2005, p. 199), it appears that anxiety does not necessarily inhibit general language performance but hinders only certain tasks, for example, those that require intensive working memory involvement (Dewaele, 2002, cited in Dornyei, 2005, p. 199). The actual amount of detrimental impact that anxiety exerts on language learning also varies on account of the interaction between anxiety and other personality factors; for instance, Clément (1980, cited in Dornyei, 2005, p. 200) correlated anxiety with self-confidence, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002, cited in Dornyei, 2005, p. 200) established a link between language anxiety and perfectionism, and Dewaele (2002, cited in Dornyei, 2005, p. 200) discussed the combined effects of anxiety and introversion. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993, cited in Dornyei, 2005, p. 200) also argued that the effect of anxiety may depend on the "social milieu," with some particular settings possibly enhancing the correlates of language anxiety and thus creating a complex psychological construct that involves language anxiety, self-perceptions of L2 proficiency, and attitudinal/ motivational components. Finally, Oxford (1999, cited in Dornyei, 2005, p. 201) asserted that there is lack of clear theoretical understanding of the circumstances in which certain levels of language

anxiety can be beneficial. In summary, it is apparent from the conflicting evidence of anxiety research that the relationship between anxiety and foreign language learning is rather multifaceted and calls for further studies from a variety of perspectives and approaches in particular second/foreign language contexts.

As a language learner who has experienced anxious feelings aroused by language learning situations and as a future teacher of English, I have always been interested in exploring the role of affective factors in general and of anxiety in particular in English language learning and performance. However, although the affective side of learners is probably a key factor determining the success or failure of language learning (Oxford, 1990, cited in Shumin, 1997), to my knowledge, little research has been conducted to study affective issues among EFL students in Vietnam in general and at FELTE, ULIS, in particular. Especially, despite the fact that foreign language learning anxiety has been widely studied and discussed by researchers in both Western and Asian contexts, it has not yet been given adequate attention in Vietnamese teaching and learning context. As a result, this current research aimed to fill that gap through an exploratory research of the pervasiveness and the level of English language learning anxiety among students at FELTE, ULIS as well as the teachers and students' perceptions of such phenomenon.

2. Research aims and research questions of the study

2.1. Research aims

> How pervasive is FLA among EFL majors, and what is the degree of this anxiety? Why is it that some learners are anxious while others are not in the same language classroom? Is it a serious problem if learners are anxious in their language classes or is it merely 'a minor inconvenience' as some people suppose? Is

anxiety a more important issue in language learning than in learning other subjects? What is my part, as a language teacher, in creating and alleviating language learning anxiety? (Toth, 2010, p. 1)

It was those questions that prompted Toth (2010) to conduct research into Hungarian English-major students' foreign language anxiety. My interest in studying the language anxiety phenomenon among English-major students at FELTE, ULIS, was triggered by very similar inquiries.

The first aim of this current research was to provide a review of major literature about foreign language learning anxiety as an affective variable uniquely related to foreign language classroom situations. Based on the literature review, this research aimed to take the initiative to investigate the foreign language learning anxiety phenomenon (in this case English language learning anxiety) among 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS. Specifically, the research tried to examine the pervasiveness and the level of anxiety among the students, explore the students' and teachers' perspectives on English language learning anxiety (anxiety's manifestations, causes, and effects; as well as factors alleviating anxiety), and identify gaps between the students and teachers' perceptions.

2.2. Research questions

The first phase of the study aimed at investigating the current situation of English language anxiety among 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS. The results of this phase were expected to be the rationale for the second phase of the study. The researcher then carried out the second phase to explore teachers' perceptions of the anxiety issue. The goals were to find out if teachers were aware of the anxiety phenomenon existing in their classes and to gain insight into what teachers, if aware of the problem, had done to ease their students' language anxiety.

To achieve this goal, the study aimed to answer the following questions:

1) *How pervasive is foreign language anxiety among 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS, and what is the degree of this anxiety?*

2) *Do the students and teachers think students' anxiety level changes over time?*

3) *Which language skills are most anxiety-provoking to the students as perceived by the students and teachers?*

4) *What are some personal and instructional factors contributing to anxiety as perceived by the students and teachers?*

5) *How is anxiety manifested in the students (psychologically, physiologically, as well as behaviorally) as perceived by the students and teachers?*

6) *What are some effects of anxiety on language learning and performance as perceived by the students and teachers?*

7) *What are some personal and instructional factors contributing to the alleviation of anxiety as perceived by the students and teachers?*

To address the research questions, the researcher used both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews). Questionnaires were used to answer the first three research questions, and semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to gain deep insight into the students' and teachers' viewpoints on the anxiety phenomenon.

3. Scope of the study

This research focused on 1st-year students at the Faculty of English Language Teacher Education (FELTE), ULIS, for various reasons. First, the researcher has an assumption that 1st-year students might experience a higher

level of anxiety than 2ⁿᵈ- and 3ʳᵈ-year students due to unfamiliarity with the new learning environment and lack of learning methods. Therefore, if the study could identify the causes and effects of learner anxiety as well as the factors contributing to the alleviation of this phenomenon, it would be much helpful to both students and teachers. Especially, the new knowledge about the anxiety issue could be used to develop the curriculum of the subject Study Skills to systematically assist 1ˢᵗ-year students in dealing with any possible negative effects of anxiety. Second, the researcher was doing the Teaching Practicum in some 1ˢᵗ-year classes at FELTE during the time this research was being conducted. As a result, it was most convenient to collect data from students and teachers as well as to observe the anxiety phenomenon among 1ˢᵗ-year students.

This study investigated the phenomenon of general English language learning anxiety among 1ˢᵗ-year students at FELTE, ULIS, instead of focusing on skill-specific anxiety in the learning of any particular language skill. It is because the current research aimed to take the initiative to conduct the first survey of the issue of English language learning anxiety in 1ˢᵗ-year classes at FELTE. The study is expected to be the rationale for other subsequent studies that will further explore the associations of language learning anxiety with specific language skills or with various personal and instructional factors. Moreover, the research aims to replicate some major studies by leading scholars in the field of language anxiety research like Horwitz (1986), Aida (1994), etc. This would allow a comparison between the anxiety phenomenon in Vietnam with that in other second/foreign language learning contexts.

This current study examined the English language learning anxiety from the perspectives of both teachers and students at the Faculty of English

Language Teacher Education, ULIS. Up till now, foreign language anxiety has been investigated mainly from the students' perspectives (e.g. Worde, 2003; Burden, 2004; Cubukcu, 2007). Conversely, anxiety research from other viewpoints, such as those of teachers, appears to receive inadequate attention, especially the possible discrepancy between the teacher's assumptions on student anxiety and the students' actual psychological needs (Young, 1992, cited in Ohata, 2005, p. 134). Ohata (2005, p. 134) claimed that learner anxiety has a "covert nature," making it difficult for teacher's assessment on the students' anxiety to match with their actual psychological state and needs, which might result in even more anxiety in students. Also, among the six potential sources of language anxiety classified by Young (1991), some of the sources of language anxiety are closely related to the teacher and the instructional practice. As a consequence, Ohata (2005, p. 140) argued that there should be more research into the teachers' beliefs about language teaching and their actual instructional procedures in the classroom. Specifically, the teachers' beliefs about their students' anxiety and the role of anxiety in the learning process are worth investigating, because the particular "social context" that the teacher creates in the classroom may significantly contribute to the development of students' anxiety (Bailey, 1983; Tsui, 1996; cited in Ohata, 2005, p. 140). Similar to the studies conducted by Ohata (2005), Tanveer (2007), and Celebi (2009), this current research investigated the teachers' viewpoints on language anxiety, especially how they had perceived and dealt with student anxiety in their actual teaching practices, and explored the gaps between the teachers' and students' perceptions.

4. Significance of the study

Overall, the research could be considerably helpful for teachers as well as researchers working on related studies.

As for teachers and students at FELTE, ULIS, the study, once completed, is expected to raise their awareness of current situation of English language learning anxiety level in FELTE classrooms. Based on the findings of the research, several pedagogical implications would be drawn. Consequently, teachers can adjust their teaching in order to help students reduce the negative effects of anxiety, facilitate the learning process, and advance students' engagement and performance in class. Also, FELTE students, once being aware of their anxiety level and different factors related to language anxiety, will be able to develop strategies to make anxiety less debilitating.

Besides, with regard to second/foreign language researchers in Vietnam, those who happen to develop an interest in the study of anxiety in Vietnam's foreign language learning context could certainly rely on this research to find reliable and useful information for their related studies in the future.

5. Organization of the study

The rest of the paper includes the following chapters:

- Chapter 2 – Literature review – provides the background of the study

- Chapter 3 – Methodology – describes the participants and instruments of the study, as well as the procedure employed to carry out the research.

- Chapter 4 – Data analysis and discussion – presents, analyzes and discusses the findings that the researcher found out from the data collected according to the four research questions.

- Chapter 5 – Conclusion – summarizes the main issues discussed in the paper, the limitations of the research, several pedagogical recommendations concerning the research topic as well as some suggestions for further studies. Following this chapter are the References and Appendices.

6. Operational definitions

- Anxiety: the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system (Spielberger, 1983, cited in Wilson, 2006, p. 41)

- Foreign Language Learning Anxiety: *foreign language anxiety* and *language anxiety* are used interchangeably in this research to refer to a form of situation-specific anxiety: the worry and negative emotional reactions aroused when learning or using a second language (MacIntyre, 1998, cited in Zheng, 2008, p. 2); or a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1991, cited in Zheng, 2008, p. 2)

- Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS): The FLCAS is "a self-report measure that assesses the degree of anxiety" (Horwitz, 1986b, p. 559).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction

In this chapter I shall survey the theoretical background and various empirical studies related to second/foreign language learning anxiety. To begin with, anxiety will be considered in general terms; definition and types of anxiety (trait, state, and situation-specific, as well as facilitating and debilitating) will be introduced. After that, I will review the development of the concept of foreign language anxiety as a distinct phenomenon from general anxiety. I will report on early research into the language anxiety phenomenon to point out the need for a reliable and valid measurement of anxiety, which is the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). I will also present what numerous researchers have written about various personal and instructional factors contributing to language anxiety, some effects of anxiety on the three stages of the learning process and on language achievement, its physiological, psychological, and behavioral manifestations, as well as students' coping strategies and teachers' classroom interventions aiming to alleviate language anxiety.

2. Definition and types of Anxiety

In order to understand the specific type of anxiety that learners experience in a foreign language classroom, it is important to first consider anxiety in general terms.

As a psychological construct, anxiety is described as "a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object" (Scovel, 1991, cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 3). Speiberger (1976, cited in Wang, 2005, p. 13) distinguished anxiety from fear by pointing out that although anxiety and fear are both "unpleasant emotional reactions to the

stimulus conditions perceived as threatening," fear is usually derived from a "real, objective danger in the external environment" while the threatening stimulus of anxiety may not be known.

Spielberger (1983, cited in Wilson, 2006, p. 41) defined anxiety as the "subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system." More specifically, Morris, David and Hutchings (1981, cited in Wilson, 2006, p. 41) claimed that general anxiety consists of two components: "worry and emotionality." Worry or "cognitive anxiety" refers to "negative expectations and cognitive concerns about oneself, the situation at hand, and possible consequence". On the other hand, emotionality or "somatic anxiety" concerns "one's perceptions of the physiological-affective elements of the anxiety experience, which are indications of autonomic arousal and unpleasant feeling states, such as nervousness, upset stomach, pounding heart, sweating, and tension" (Morris, David, & Hutchings, 1981, cited in Wilson, 2006, p. 41, and cited in Cubucku, 2007, p. 134).

2.1. Trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991, p. 87-92) identified three approaches to the study of anxiety, which are: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety.

- **Trait anxiety** is "an individual's likelihood of becoming anxious in any situation" (Spielberger, 1983, cited in MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 87). As trait anxiety is a relatively stable personality characteristic, a person who is trait anxious would probably become anxious in many different kinds of situations, "more frequently or more intensely than most people do" (Woodrow, 2006, p. 309). This approach to anxiety research has been criticized in that the interpretation of trait anxiety

would be meaningless without being considered "in interaction with situations" because a particular situation may be perceived as anxiety-provoking by some but not by others although those people may have similar trait anxiety scores (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 88).

• **State anxiety**, in contrast to the stable nature of trait anxiety, is momentary and thus not an enduring characteristic of an individual's personality. It is the apprehension that is experienced at a particular moment in time (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 90). In other words, it is a transient anxiety, an unpleasant emotional temporary state, a response to a particular anxiety-provoking stimulus such as an important test (Spielberger, 1983, cited in Wang, 2005, p.13, and cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 4). The higher the level of trait anxiety an individual possess, the higher the level of state anxiety he or she may experience in stressful situations (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 90). The state-anxiety approach to anxiety research has been criticized for asking the question "Are you nervous now?" instead of "Did this situation make you nervous?;" in other words, it does not require the subjects to ascribe their anxiety experience to any particular source (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 90).

• **Situation-specific anxiety** reflects a trait anxiety that recurs consistently over time within a given situation (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 87; Spielberger, Anton and Bedell, 1976, cited in Woodrow, 2006, p. 309). Zheng (2008, p. 2) proposed that the three categories of anxiety can be identified on a continuum from stability to transience, with trait anxiety related to a generally stable predisposition to be anxious across situations on one end, state anxiety related to a temporary

unpleasant emotional state on the other, and situational-specific anxiety related to the probability of becoming anxious in particular situations in the middle of the continuum. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991, p. 90), situation-specific anxiety can be considered as trait anxiety, which is limited to a specific context. This perspective examines anxiety reactions in a "well-defined situation" such as public speaking, during tests, when solving mathematics problems, or in a foreign language class (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 90).

2.2. Facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety

Facilitating anxiety improves learning and performance, while debilitating anxiety is associated with poor learning and performance. According to Scovel (1978, cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 10), anxiety, in its debilitating and facilitating forms, serves "simultaneously to motivate and to warn" the learner. Facilitating anxiety occurs when the difficulty level of the task triggers the proper amount of anxiety (Scovel, 1978, cited in Zheng, 2008, p. 2). In such case, facilitating anxiety "motivates the learner to 'fight' the new learning task; it gears the learner emotionally for approach behavior" (Scovel, 1991, cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 11). However, although a certain level of anxiety may be beneficial, too much anxiety can become debilitating: it motivates the learner to "flee" the new learning task, and stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behavior which may lead to avoidance of work and inefficient work performance (Scovel, 1978, cited in Zheng, 2008, p. 2; Scovel, 1991, cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 11).

Such phenomenon can be best described by the Yerkes-Dodson Law, which suggests a curvilinear association between arousal and performance (Wilson, 2006, p. 45). When represented graphically on an inverted U-

shaped curve, the Yerkes-Dodson Law shows that too little arousal produces minimum performance; moderate arousal enhances performance and reaches a peak at the top of the curve; after that, too much arousal will again hinder performance (MacIntyre, 1995, p. 92).

FIGURE 1 – Inverted U relation between anxiety and performance (MacIntyre, 1995, p. 92)

Inverted "U" relation between anxiety and performance.
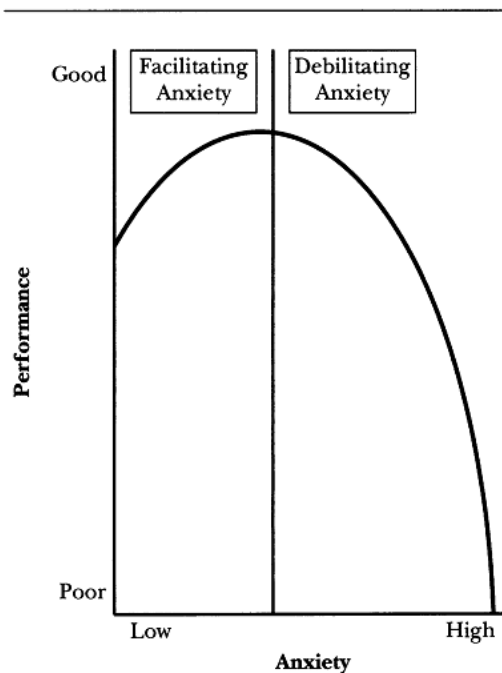
2.3. Anxiety in foreign language learning

Language learning anxiety has been classified as a situation-specific anxiety or a trait which recurs consistently over time within the given context of language learning situations, i.e. the language classrooms (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Horwitz, 2001).

Horwitz et al. (1986) were the first to treat foreign language anxiety as a separate and distinct phenomenon particular to language learning (Young, 1991, cited in Wang, 2005, p. 16). According to Horwitz et al. (1986, p.

128), foreign language anxiety is "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process."

Other researchers also proposed similar definitions. Oh (1992, cited in Wang, 2005, p. 16) perceived foreign language anxiety as a situation-specific anxiety students experience in the classroom, which is characterized by "negative self-centered thoughts, feelings of inadequacy, fear of failure, and emotional reactions." In a similar vein, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994, cited in Wang, 2005, p. 16) described foreign language anxiety as the feelings of tension and apprehension, which are particularly associated with activities in a second language learning context.

According to Horwitz (1986, p. 126), anxiety centers on the two basic task requirements of foreign language learning: listening and speaking, and difficulty in speaking in class is probably the most frequently cited concern of the anxious foreign language students. On the other hand, Hilleson (1996, cited in Matsuda & Gobel, 2004, p. 22), in his diary study, identified various types of anxiety related to different skill areas: the participants in his research demonstrated anxiety related to not only speaking and listening but also reading and writing. Although research on foreign language anxiety has been almost entirely associated with the oral aspects of language use, there has been a recent trend to identify the relationship between anxiety and other language proficiencies (Horwitz, 2001, p. 120; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004, p. 22). According to Tallon (2008, p. 7), while previous studies suggested that foreign language classroom anxiety is a more general type of anxiety about learning a second language with a strong speaking anxiety element, recent research on foreign language

anxiety shows the existence of anxiety relate to the skills of listening, reading and writing.

3. The measurement of anxiety in foreign language learning

Generally, there are three major ways of measuring anxiety in research, including behavioral observation, physiological assessment such as heart rates or blood pressure tests, and participants' self-reports of their internal feelings and reactions (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2001; Daly, 1991; cited in Zheng, 2008, p. 3). According to Zheng (2008, p. 3), participants' self-reports are by far the most common way of examining the anxiety phenomenon in educational research.

3.1. Early research on foreign language anxiety

As "anxiety is a complex, multi-faceted construct" (Phillips, 1992, p. 14), it is not surprising that early studies of the relationship between anxiety and language learning provided mixed and confusing results. Young's (1991) review of sixteen studies examining how anxiety interfered with language learning and performance showed inconsistent results both within and across studies, and she concluded that "research in the area of anxiety as it relates to second or foreign language learning and performance was scattered and inconclusive" (p.438 - 439).

According to Horwitz (2010, p. 157), Scovel's (1978) review of the then available literature on anxiety and language learning can be considered a "turning point" in the study of foreign language learning anxiety. Scovel (1978, cited in Horwitz, 2001, p. 113) attributed the truly conflicting set of findings to ambiguity in the conceptualization and measurement of anxiety. He argued that since the early studies employed different anxiety measures

such as test anxiety or facilitating-debilitating anxiety, etc., it was understandable that they found different relationships between anxiety and language learning. Some studies found the anticipated negative relationship between anxiety and language achievement, but there were also several studies which found no relationship or positive relationships between anxiety and second language achievement. For example, in a research conducted by Chastain in 1975 (cited in Horwitz, 2010, p. 156), the directions of the correlations between anxiety (test anxiety) and language learning (course grades) in three languages (French, German, and Spanish) were not consistent, indicating three levels of correlation: positive, negative, and near zero. Backman (1976, cited in Aida, 1994, p. 156) examined Venezuelan students learning English in the US, whose language progress measured by a placement test, a listening comprehension test, and teachers' ratings did not show a significant correlation with any of the anxiety measures. Kleinmann (1977, cited in Horwitz, 2010, p. 156) utilized the facilitating-debilitating anxiety framework to study Spanish-speaking and Arabic-speaking ESL students and found that learners with more facilitating anxiety had a lower tendency toward avoidance behavior in the oral production of linguistically difficult English structures while there was no evidence that debilitating anxiety negatively influenced their oral performance.

3.2. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's construct of foreign language anxiety

It is essential to trace the development and subsequent use of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986) as this instrument has been employed so widely (in its original form, or translated, or adapted) and with such consistent results since it first appeared. As it has

been observed to be highly reliable (Horwitz, 1986; Aida, 1994; Rodriguez & Abreu, 2003), the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was used in this research.

(Please see Appendix C for the FLCAS)

3.2.1. Development of the FLCAS

According to Horwitz (1986b, p. 559), research on the relationship between anxiety and language achievement had been held back by the lack of a reliable and valid measure of anxiety specific to language learning. She further stated that although teachers and students generally felt that anxiety was an obstacle to overcome in learning a second language, the empirical literature at that time failed to adequately define second language anxiety and to demonstrate a clear-cut relationship between anxiety and language achievement or performance. She suggested that one likely explanation for the inconclusive results of previous studies was that existing measures of anxiety did not test an individual's response to the specific stimulus of language learning. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale was developed so as to provide researchers with a standard instrument for such purpose (Horwitz, 1986b, p. 559). This self-report measure was claimed to evaluate the degree of anxiety, as evidenced by "negative performance expectancies and social comparisons, psycho-physiological symptoms, and avoidance behaviors" (Horwitz, 1986b, p. 559). The author stated that the scale's items were developed from student reports, clinical experience and a review of related instruments.

3.2.2. Conceptual foundations of foreign language anxiety

From a theoretical viewpoint, Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 127) argued that foreign language anxiety implies "performance evaluation within an academic and social context." They, therefore, identified the three related performance anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, which are believed to "provide useful conceptual building blocks for a description of foreign language anxiety" (Horwitz, 1986, p. 128). However, Horwitz (1986, p. 128; 2010, p. 158) also emphasized that foreign language anxiety is not a simple combination of these performance anxieties transferred to foreign language learning. Instead, it is perceived as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors […] arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz, 1986, p. 128).

Communication apprehension was originally defined by McCroskey (1977, cited in Aida, 1994, p. 156) as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons." According to McCroskey (1984, cited in Wang, 2005, p. 17), the typical behavior patterns of communicatively apprehensive people are communication avoidance, communication withdrawal, and communication disruption. According to Horwitz (1986, p. 127), due to its emphasis on interpersonal interactions, the construct of communication apprehension plays an important role in language learning. Difficulty in speaking in groups (oral communication anxiety) or in front of the class ("stage fright"), or in listening to or learning a spoken message (receiver anxiety) are suggested to be all manifestations of communication apprehension (Horwitz, 1986, p. 127). People whose typical communication apprehension is high tend to encounter even greater difficulty communicating in a foreign language class where they have little control of the communicative

situation; there exists a disparity between learners' mature thoughts and their immature foreign language proficiency, and their performance is constantly monitored (Horwitz, 1986; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002, p. 562). The inability to express oneself fully or to understand others not only lead to frustration and apprehension in typical apprehensive communicators but also make many otherwise talkative people become silent in a foreign language class (Horwitz, 1986, p. 127).

Test-anxiety, or "the tendency to view with alarm the consequences of inadequate performance in an evaluative situation" (Sarason, 1984, cited in Aida, 1994, p. 157), is also relevant to a discussion of foreign language anxiety because performance evaluation is an ongoing feature of most foreign language classes (Horwitz, 1986, p. 127). Some learners may inappropriately view foreign or second language production as a test situation rather than as an opportunity for communication (Horwitz, 1986, cited in Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002, p. 562). According to Horwitz (1986, p. 126), test-anxious students often put unrealistic demands on themselves and feel that anything less than a perfect test performance is a failure. Unfortunately, students who are test-anxious may suffer considerable stress and difficulty in foreign language classrooms since daily evaluation of skills are quite common and frequent in most foreign language classes. Moreover, making mistakes is inevitable in the language learning process, and "even the brightest and most prepared students often make errors" (Horwitz, 1986, p. 128).

Fear of negative evaluation, the third performance anxiety related to foreign language learning, is defined as "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectations that others would evaluate oneself negatively" (Watson & Friend, 1969, cited in

Horwitz, 1986, p. 128). Although similar to test anxiety to some extent, fear of negative evaluation is broader in scope in that it applies to any social and/or evaluative situation in which an individual worries about the possibility of being unfavorably evaluated by others (Wilson, 2006, p. 68). Horwitz (1986, p. 128) pointed out what distinguishes foreign language learning from other academic subjects is that language learners are continually evaluated by the teacher and may also feel they are subject to the evaluation of their peers. Unfortunately, learners who are highly concerned about the impressions others are forming of them tend to behave in ways that minimize the possibility of negative evaluations (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002, p. 562). In foreign language classrooms, students with a fear of negative evaluation tend to "sit passively in the classroom, withdrawing from classroom activities that could otherwise enhance their improvement of the language skills" or even "cutting class to avoid anxiety situations" (Aida, 1994, p. 157).

3.2.3. Reliability and validity of the FLCAS

Horwitz et al. (1986) developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) as a 33-item self-report instrument scored on the basis of a 5-point Likert-type scale, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Students respond to statements regarding their reactions to foreign/second language classes. Possible scores on the FLCAS range from 33 to 165: the higher the score, the higher the anxiety level.

Items were developed from student reports, interviews with specialists about their clinical experiences with anxious language learners, the author's teaching experiences, and a review of related measures of anxiety.

According to Horwitz (1986, p. 129), pilot testing of the scale with seventy five introductory Spanish students at the University of Texas at Austin demonstrated its reliability and validity. In terms of internal reliability, the FLCAS achieved internal reliability, achieving an alpha coefficient of .93 with all items producing significant corrected item-total scale correlations. Test- retest reliability over eight weeks yielded an r = .83 (p <.001).

In one sample of 108 introductory students of Spanish, scores ranged from 45 to 147 (M = 94.5, Mdn = 95.0, SD = 21.4). Internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was .93, and test-retest reliability over 8 weeks was r = .83, p = .001, n = .78.

Aida (1994) tested Horwitz et al.'s construct of foreign language anxiety by validating an adapted FLCAS for students of Japanese. She aimed to discover the underlying structure of the FLCAS and to examine whether or not the structure reflects the three kinds of anxiety presented earlier. Her study, using ninety-six students of Japanese, yielded internal consistency of .94 (X = 96.7 and SD = 22.1), using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The reliability, mean, standard deviation, and range obtained in this study were very similar to those of Horwitz (1986), whose sample was a group of students in introductory Spanish classes.

FIGURE 2 – Reliabilities of the FLCAS (Aida, 1994, p. 159)

Reliabilities of The FLCAS in Two Studies

	Present study	Horwitz et al., 1991
Sample size	96	108
Students status	first year	first year
Language	Japanese	Spanish
Cronbach's alpha	.94	.93
Range	47–146	45–147
Mean	96.7	94.5
Standard deviation	22.1	21.4
Test-retest reliability	$r = .80, p < .01$ (n = 54; over one semester)	$r = .83, p < .01$ (n = 108; over eight weeks)

4. Manifestations of foreign language learning anxiety

Anxiety, in general, can have physical/physiological, emotional, and behavioral manifestations, and these manifestations can differ with each individual.

According to Oxford (1999, cited in Williams & Andrade, 2009, p. 4, and cited in Yanling & Guizheng, 2006, p. 98):

- **Physical symptoms** can include rapid heartbeat, muscle tension, dry mouth, and excessive perspiration.

- **Psychological symptoms** can include embarrassment, feelings of helplessness, fear, going blank, inability to concentrate, as well as poor memory recall and retention.

- **Behavioral symptoms** can include physical actions such as squirming, fidgeting, playing with hair or clothing, nervously touching objects, stuttering or stammering, displaying jittery behavior, being unable to reproduce the sounds or intonation of the target language even after

repeated practice. More importantly, behavioral symptoms of anxiety can be manifested in negative avoidance behaviors like inappropriate silence, monosyllabic or non-committal responses, lack of eye contact, unwillingness to participate, coming late, arriving unprepared, showing indifference, cutting class, and withdrawal from the course.

- **Other signs** which might reflect language anxiety are overstudying, perfectionism, hostility, excessive competitiveness, as well as excessive self-effacement and self-criticism (e.g. "I am so stupid").

5. Causes of foreign language learning anxiety

Research has indicated a number of ways that learning a foreign language can cause anxiety for language learners. Young (1991, p. 427), in a comprehensive review, summarized the personal factors and instructional factors contributing to language anxiety into six categories: 1) personal and interpersonal anxieties, 2) learner beliefs about language learning, 3) instructor beliefs about language teaching, 4) instructor learner interactions, 5) classroom procedures, and 6) language testing. Generally, the six factors proposed by Young (1991) combine with other factors indicated by other researchers to form three main sources of foreign language anxiety: learner's characteristics, teacher's characteristics, and classroom's characteristics (Tallon, 2008, p. 2).

5.1. Personal factors (Learner characteristics)

- **Personal and interpersonal issues**, according to Young (1991, p. 427), are possibly the most commonly cited and discussed sources of language anxiety. Several studies have discovered the link between anxiety and proficiency (Aida, 1994; Gardner, 1985; Gardner et al., 1997, cited in Zhang, 2010, p. 9). There are significant differences between high

proficiency and low proficiency students in language anxiety level with the low proficiency students being much more anxious (Young, 1991). In a similar vein, Horwitz (1986) attributed anxiety to learners' immature communicative ability in the foreign language. On the other hand, several other researchers argued that low self-esteem and competitiveness are the two significant sources of learner anxiety. Bailey (1983, cited in Young, 1991, p. 427) studied the diary entries of 11 students and reported that competitiveness can lead to anxiety when language learners compare themselves to others or to an idealized self-image. Likewise, Price (1991, cited in Young, 1991, p. 427) stated that the majority of her subjects believed their language skills to be weaker than those of the others in class, that they "weren't doing a good job and that everyone else looked down on them." As regards to self-esteem, Hembree (1988, cited in Young, 1991, p. 427) implied that students who start out with a self-perceived low ability level in a foreign or second language are most likely to experience language anxiety. Krashen (1981, cited in Ohata, 2005, p. 5) also suggests that anxiety can arise according to one's degree of self-esteem as those students tend to worry about what their peers or friends think, in fear of their negative responses or evaluation. In addition, Gregersen & Horwitz (2002) examined the relationship between foreign language anxiety and perfectionism and found some common characteristics between anxious language learners and perfectionists (e.g., higher standards for their English performance, a greater tendency toward procrastination, more worry over the opinions of others, and a higher level of concern over their errors). The authors supposed that such characteristics may make language learning unpleasant and less successful for the perfectionist students than for others. Another

personality trait that has a positive correlation with foreign language anxiety is shyness: Chu (2008, cited in Zhang, 2010, p. 11) affirmed that anxiety, willingness to communicate, and shyness function together to create a negative impact on Taiwanese students' study of English.

- **Learner beliefs about language learning,** if erroneous and unrealistic, are also a major factor contributing to language anxiety (Young, 1991, p. 428). According to Tallon (2008, p. 4) when students' unrealistic expectations about language learning are not met, it can lead to negative feelings about one's intelligence and abilities. For example, the language learners in Horwitz's study (1988, cited in Young, 1991, p. 428): 1) expressed great concern over the correctness of their utterances; 2) placed a great deal of stress on speaking with "an excellent accent"; 3) supported the notion that language learning is primarily translating from English and memorizing vocabulary words and grammatical rules; as well as 4) believed that two years is enough time to become fluent in another language; and believed some people were more able to learn a foreign language than others. Such erroneous beliefs may make the students later become disappointed and frustrated. In addition, Horwitz (1989, cited in Tallon, 2008, p. 5) found a link between several language learning beliefs and levels of foreign language anxiety in Spanish university students: the more anxious learners judged language learning to be relatively difficult and themselves to possess relatively low levels of foreign language aptitude. Palacios (1998, cited in Tallon, 2008, p. 5) also found that the following beliefs are associated with learner anxiety: the feeling that mastering a language is an overwhelming task; the feeling that one needs to go through a translation process in order to communicate in the target language; the difficulty of keeping everything

in one's head; and the belief that learning a language is easier at an earlier age. Tallon (2008, p. 5) concluded that all of those faulty beliefs may make the students to have unrealistic expectations about the language learning process, thus leading to anxiety.

5.2. Instructional factors

5.2.1. Teacher characteristics

- **Instructor beliefs about language teaching**, which determine **instructor-learner interactions**, are a further source of language anxiety because the teacher's assumption about the role of language teachers may not always correspond to the student's needs or expectations toward the him or her (Ohata, 2005, p. 7). Young (1991, p. 428) listed the following teacher beliefs which have been shown to evoke feelings of anxiety in students: it is necessary for the teacher to be intimidating at times; the instructor is supposed to correct every single mistake made by the students; group or partner work is not appropriate because it can get out of control; the teacher should do most of the talking; and the instructor's role is that of a drill sergeant. According to Tallon (2008, p. 5), a judgmental teaching attitude (Samimy, 1994) and a harsh manner of teaching (Aida, 1994) are closely linked to student fear in the classroom.

- Besides, Palacios (1998, cited in Tallon, 2008, p. 5) found the following characteristics of the teacher to be associated with anxiety: "absence of teacher support, unsympathetic personalities, lack of time for personal attention, favoritism, absence that the class does not provide students with the tools necessary to match up with the teacher's expectations, and the sense of being judged by the teacher or wanting to impress the

teacher." Moreover, Young (1999, cited in Tallon, 2008, p. 6) stated that using speaking activities that put the learner "on the spot" in front of their classmates without allowing adequate preparation are also sources of anxiety for many students. Additionally, Ando (1999, cited in Tallon, 2008, p. 6) argued that having a native speaker for a teacher can cause anxiety because the teacher may lack the sensitivity of the learning process or the teacher's English may be hard for students to understand.

5.2.2. Classroom characteristics

Classroom procedures and other classroom's characteristics are the third major source of foreign language learning anxiety.

Young (1990, cited in Tallon, 2008, p. 6) proposed a list of classroom activities which are perceived as anxiety-provoking: (1) spontaneous role play in front of the class; (2) speaking in front of the class; (3) oral presentations or skits in front of the class; (4) presenting a prepared dialogue in front of the class; and (5) writing work on the board. Similarly, Palacios (1998, cited in Tallon, 2008, p. 6) found "demands of oral production, feelings of being put on the spot, the pace of the class, and the element of being evaluated (i.e., fear of negative evaluation)" to be anxiety-producing to students.

Notably, Oxford (1999, cited in Tallon, 2008, p. 7) emphasized learning and teaching styles as a potential source of language anxiety. If the instructor's teaching style and a student's learning style are not compatible, "style wars" can trigger or heighten anxiety levels.

In addition, it is understandable that **language testing** may lead to foreign language anxiety (Young, 1991, p. 428). For example, difficult tests,

especially tests that do not match the teaching in class, as well as unclear or unfamiliar test tasks and formats can all create learner anxiety.

6. Effects of Foreign Language Learning Anxiety

6.1. Foreign Language Learning Anxiety and its Associations with the three stages of the Language Acquisition process (Input, Processing, and Output)

The effects of language anxiety can be explained with reference to the cognitive consequences of anxiety arousal (Eysenck, 1979; Schwazer, 1986; cited in MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 2). When an individual becomes anxious, negative self-related cognition begins: thoughts of failure (e.g. "I will never be able to finish this"), self-deprecation ("I am just no good at this"), and avoidance ("I wish this was over") begin to emerge. They consume cognitive resources that might otherwise be applied to the learning task. This then creates even more difficulties in cognitive processing because fewer available resources may lead to failure, which results in more negative cognitions that further consume cognitive resources, and so on. According to MacIntyre (1995, p. 26), anxiety can be problematic for the language learner because language learning itself is a fairly intense cognitive activity that relies on "encoding, storage, and retrieval" processes (MacIntyre, 1995, p. 26), and anxiety interferes with each of these cognitive processes by creating a "divided attention scenario" (Krashen, 1985, cited in Horwitz, 1986, p. 127) for anxious students as they focus on both the task and their negative reactions to it.

In addition, Tobias (1976, 1989; cited in MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 2-3) presented a model of the cognitive effects of anxiety. In this model, learning is divided into three stages: input, processing, and output. The input

stage consists of the individual's first exposure to a stimulus. According to Wang (2005, p. 26), if anxiety is aroused during this stage, it may cause attention deficits and poor initial processing of information because anxiety can create an "affective filter" (Krashen, 1985, cited in Horwitz, 1986, p. 127) or a "mental block" (Ouwegbuigie, 1999, p. 218) that may distract the individual's attention and make the learner unreceptive to language input. Fewer stimuli may be encoded, and repeated exposure to the task may be necessary to overcome the effects of anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 3). At the processing stage, incoming messages are understood and learning occurs as new words are given meaning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 3). If anxiety is aroused at this stage, it can interfere with the organization and assimilation of information, hindering a student's ability to understand messages or learn new vocabulary items in the foreign language (Wang, 2005, p. 26). Finally, during the output stage, second language material is produced in the form of either spoken or written messages (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 3). Anxiety arousal at this stage may interfere with the retrieval and production of previously learned information (Wang, 2005, p. 26). This may cause ineffective retrieval of vocabulary and inappropriate use of grammar rules or even result in an inability to respond at all (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 3).

6.2. Foreign language learning anxiety and its associations with language achievement

6.2.1. Debilitating anxiety

Most research on foreign/second language anxiety has focused on investigating the relationship between anxiety and language achievement. Empirical research has established that language anxiety is associated with "deficits in listening comprehension, reduced word production, impaired

vocabulary learning, lower grades in language courses, and lower scores on standardized tests" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 2-3).

Numerous studies have found that anxiety has a moderate negative correlation with language performance with some researchers claiming it is one of the strongest predictors of success in foreign language learning (MacIntyre, 1999, cited in Woodrow, 2006, p. 312). The following table summarizes the findings of some of the correlational studies involving foreign/second language anxiety.

FIGURE 3. Relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Performance Variables (Woodrow, 2006, p. 312)

Researcher	Measure	Performance	Correlation
Horwitz (1986)	FLCAS	Final course grade	$r = -.54, p = <.001$
Aida (1994)	FLCAS	Course grade	$r = -.38, p = <.01$
Phillips (1992)	FLCAS	Oral test grade	$r = -.40, p = <.01$
Cheng (1999)	FLCAS	Speaking course grade	$r = -.28, p = <.001$
Saito and Samimy (1996)	Language class anxiety	Final course grade	$r = .-51 - -.52, p = <.01$
MacIntyre and Gardner (1989)	French class anxiety	Vocabulary test	$r = .-31 - -.42, p = <.001$
	French use anxiety		$r = .-32 - -.50$

6.2.2. Cause or effect? A "vicious circle" between anxiety and language achievement

According to Wilson (2006, p. 93), various writings about language anxiety indicated that it is difficult to determine whether anxiety is a cause

or an effect of poor language learning and achievement. She claimed that researchers who have used correlational procedures in their study of language anxiety have been unable to confirm the directionality of cause and effect.

It would seem logical that poor language ability might be a source of anxiety. As Horwitz (2001, cited in Wilson, 2006, p. 85) pointed out "it is easy to conceptualize foreign language anxiety as a result of poor language learning ability. A student does poorly in language learning and consequently feels anxious about his/her language class." However, it is possible that anxiety is not simply a result of poor language capacity and achievement, but that anxiety itself may interfere with an individual's existing language ability and, consequently, become a cause of poor language learning and performance.

Wilson (2006, p. 95-96) cited several studies by Saito and Samimy (1996), MacIntyre et al. (1997), Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999), and Cheng et al. (1999) to demonstrate that there might be a recursive effect between anxiety and language achievement: a "vicious circle" going on continuously between learners' negative feelings and undesirable performance.

6.2.3. Facilitating Anxiety

It might appear that anxiety is mostly debilitating to foreign language learning or performance. Nonetheless, several studies (Alpert & Haber, 1960; Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006; cited in Kao & Craigie, 2010, p. 61) showed positive correlation between anxiety and language performance, demonstrating that facilitative anxiety could, in fact, serve as "alertness" to promote foreign language learning. Generally, it is possible that the two-

sided effects of anxiety may occur alternately and interchangeably to harm or foster language achievement (Bailey, 1983; Young, 1986; cited in Kao & Craigie, 2010, p. 61). The teachers' real job is to help students keep adequate anxiety, neither too high nor too low, because a proper level of anxiety plays a positive role and can motivate students to maintain their efforts in learning (Na, 2007, p. 30-31).

7. Alleviation of foreign language learning anxiety

7.1. Students' coping strategies

In general, there are three approaches to the alleviation of anxiety: cognitive, affective, and behavioral approaches (Hembree, 1988, cited in Kondo & Ying-ling, 2004, p. 259). These three intervention approaches provide the basis for the types of strategies students may use to tackle their language anxiety. According to Kondo & Ying-ling (2004, p. 259), if students think that their cognition (worry, preoccupations, and concerns) creates anxiety, they may attempt to suppress or alter the thought processes related to language learning. Those who believe that somatic arousal (physiological responses to anxiety) is the main concern may find ways to ease bodily reactions and tension. If students assume that anxiety arises because they lack the necessary academic skills, they may study harder. However, if students perceive that their anxiety is too much to cope with, they may not invest effort in reducing the anxiety.

In his study which was designed to develop a typology of strategies that Japanese students use to cope with English language learning anxiety, Kondo (2004) identified 70 basic tactics and put them into five strategy categories. Those include:

(1) Preparation (e.g. studying hard, trying to obtain good summaries of lecture notes), (2) Relaxation (e.g. taking a deep breath, trying to calm down), (3) Positive thinking (e.g. imagining oneself giving a great performance, trying to enjoy the tension), (4) Peer seeking (e.g. looking for others who are having difficulty controlling their anxiety, asking other students if they understand the class), and (5) Resignation (e.g. giving up, sleeping in class) (Kondo, 2004, p. 258).

7.2. Teachers' classroom interventions

According to Horwitz (1986, p. 131-132), in general, educators have two options when dealing with anxious students: 1) they can help students learn to cope with the existing anxiety-provoking situation; or 2) they can make the learning context less stressful. However, what is the most important is that the teacher must first acknowledge the existence of foreign language anxiety in the classroom before attributing a student's poor language performance to "lack of ability, inadequate background, or poor motivation" (Horwitz, 1986, p. 131-132). The author argued that a supportive teacher who acknowledges students' feelings and offers concrete suggestions for building up foreign language confidence can play a key role in alleviating learner anxiety.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

1. Participant selecting method

Six 1st-year classes (out of eleven classes) majoring in English Language Teaching (ELT) at FELTE, ULIS, were randomly selected to complete the student questionnaires. The participants consisted of 135 students: 6 males and 129 females (ELT-major classes at FELTE, ULIS, are dominated by female students with a male-female ratio of 12:257). According to the FELTE's course outline for 1st-year students majoring in English Language Teaching, the surveyed students' proficiency level is pre-intermediate. However, it is important to note that all mainstream classes at FELTE are mixed-ability classes with students having different background in English training prior to college because they come from different regions and might have specialized in either English or another academic subject (e.g. Math, Literature, etc.) at junior and senior high school. In terms of school curricula, there is no single integrated-skill class; instead, students study the four language skills in four different classes: listening and reading classes meet once a week for 100 minutes; speaking and writing classes meet once every week for 150 minutes.

All teachers who have had experience teaching 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS, were invited to complete the questionnaires. After that, to gain further insights into the teachers' attitudes, opinions and beliefs, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight teachers who have taught or are currently teaching the surveyed classes.

2. Data collection methods

To address the research questions, the researcher used both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) methods.

Investigations of second/foreign language anxiety have been, for the most part, quantitative studies, primarily correlational studies of anxiety in relation with language achievement and with other cognitive and affective factors (Price, 1991, cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 33). According to Kassin, Fein, and Markus (2008, p. 35-36), correlational research has a serious disadvantage which is its inability to demonstrate a cause-effect relationship. Instead of revealing a specific causal pathway from one variable, A, to another variable, B, a correlation between A and B could be explained in three ways: A could cause B; B could cause A; or a third variable, C, could cause both A and B. As a result, correlational studies of anxiety have been unable to draw a clear picture of the causes and effects of this multifaceted phenomenon. For that reason, Tanveer (2007, p. 33) asserted that there is a need for a different approach to studying the construct of language anxiety in order to gain deeper insight into the issue. The rationale for choosing both quantitative and qualitative designs in this current study was to apply triangulation, an "attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behavior by studying it from more than one standpoint" (Cohen & Manion, 1994, cited in Celebi, 2009, p. 15). Two types of triangulation were achieved in this study: "methods triangulation" (by using both qualitative and quantitative methods) and "triangulation of sources" (by gaining insights into both teachers and students' perceptions) (Patton, 1990, cited in Celebi, 2009, p. 15).

The "feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry" - as Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 125) defined foreign language learning anxiety - is a "subjective" experience, which varies from individual to individual. The use of interviews as a data source can provide access to things that cannot be directly observed, such as feelings, thoughts, intentions, or beliefs (Denzin, 1989; Merriam, 1998; cited in Ohata, 2005, p. 140). As Seidman (1998, cited in Ohata, 2005, p. 140) clearly notes, "at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience." In other words, interviews provide participants with opportunities to "select, reconstruct, and reflect upon details of their experience within the specific context of their lives" (Ohata, 2005, p. 141). Given that one of the major goals of this study is to explore students' and teachers' perceptions of foreign language learning anxiety, interviews proved to be an effective way of investigating and understanding their unique perceptions and interpretations of the phenomenon.

3. Data collection instruments

PHASE 1

The survey instruments included:

- *The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)*: The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), is a self-report instrument including 33 items which ask students to respond to statements regarding their reactions to foreign/second language classes. The items use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from **strongly agree** (5 points) to **strongly disagree** (1 point) with items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32 being key-reversed, i.e., negatively worded. The total scale scores range from 33 to 165 with a hypothetical mean of 99. The higher the score, the higher the level of

foreign language anxiety. The scale which was used to measure students' anxiety in Phase 1 was adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). It was translated into Vietnamese and then checked by the supervisor and some other experienced L2 teachers and researchers to ensure the practical equivalence and clarity of translation. It was also piloted with the help of two 1st-year classes at FELTS, ULIS.

- *Survey questionnaire of students' perceptions of foreign language anxiety*: This survey questionnaire collected data about students' perceptions of the anxiety-provoking levels of the four language skills, change in anxiety level over time, and some factors contributing to language anxiety.

(See Appendix A for the Student Questionnaire)

PHASE 2

The questionnaire for the teachers included the following parts:

- Teachers' information: This will collect some background information about the examined teachers (such as the number of years teaching 1st-year speaking classes at FELTE, ULIS)
- Teachers' perceptions of the anxiety phenomenon in 1st-year classes at FELTE, ULIS: anxiety level, which language skills are most anxiety-provoking, if students' anxiety level changes over time, and the possible sources of language anxiety

(See Appendix B for the Teacher Questionnaire)

4. Data collection procedure

PHASE 1:

The questionnaire was piloted with the help of two 1ˢᵗ-year classes at FELTS, ULIS, who did not participate in the study. Necessary changes were made to improve the clarity of the questionnaire.

The survey was administered to the participants by the researcher. After the questionnaire data was analyzed, to gain further insights into the students' attitudes, opinions and beliefs, semi-structured interviews were conducted with several students. The students were selected according to the extreme case sampling strategy. Patton (1990, cited in Celebi, 2009, p. 18) stated that extreme or "deviant case sampling" strategy "focuses on cases that are rich in information because they are unusual or special in some way." Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994, cited in Celebi, 2009, p. 18) claimed that this strategy is carried out to learn "from highly unusual manifestations of the phenomenon of interest." With that in mind, semi-structured interviews were conducted with some students whose questionnaires show highest levels of language anxiety in order to identify the potential sources of anxiety. Also, those whose questionnaires demonstrate a significant change or no change at all in anxiety level over time were chosen in order to identify the factors contributing to the escalation and alleviation of anxiety.

The interviews were conducted in the participants' native language, which is Vietnamesese, in order to overcome the incapabilities of self-expression in the target language. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

PHASE 2:

The questionnaires were piloted by the supervisor and some experienced teachers who did not participate in the study. Necessary changes were made to improve the clarity of the questionnaire.

The survey was administered to the participants by the researcher. The survey results were then analyzed by the researcher. After that, to gain further insights into the teachers' attitudes, opinions and beliefs, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight teachers who have taught or are currently teaching the surveyed classes. The interviews were conducted in the participants' native language, which is Vietnamese. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

5. Data analysis methods

The *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) version 16.0 for Windows was used to analyze the quantitative data. For the interviews, the data were first transcribed and then analyzed by the researcher.

5.1. Quantitative data analysis

5.1.1. Instrument Reliability Test

To ensure that the instrument is reliable, researchers consider three types of reliability testing: test-retest, equivalence of forms of a test (e.g., pretest and posttest), and internal consistency (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 129). In a test-retest method, the same test is given to the same group of individuals at two points in time. In a pretest-posttest method, two versions of a test are administered to the same individuals and a correlation coefficient is calculated. However, it is not always feasible to administer tests twice to the same group of individuals (either the same test or two different versions of a test). In such cases, researchers may use statistical methods to determine the reliability of the instrument, among which is Cronbach's alpha.

Nunnally (1978, cited in Chu, 2007, p. 27) claimed that a Cronbach alpha value of 0.70 or above is considered acceptable. Besides, George and Mallerry (2003, cited in Chu, 2007, p. 27) also presented a standard as follows:

Cronbach α value range	Reliability
$1.0 > \alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha \geq 0.4$	Unacceptable

The instrument used in this research to measure students' anxiety was adapted from Horwitz et al.'s (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and was translated into Vietnamese. The Vietnamese-translated version of the scale was then carefully checked by the supervisor and some other experienced L2 teachers and researchers to ensure the practical equivalence and clarity of translation. It was also piloted with the help of two 1st-year classes at FELTS, ULI to identify any ambiguity to students. However, to further confirm the reliability of the instrument, the researcher used the SPSS version 16.0 for Windows to calculate Cronbach's alpha value.

5.1.2. Measures of Central Tendency and Measures of Dispersion

According to Woods, Fletcher, and Hughes (1986, cited in Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 251), after the data has been collected, a linguistic researcher will be faced with the prospect of understanding, and then explaining to others, the meaning of the data. They argued that an essential first step in

this process is for researchers to identify ways of summarizing the results which can bring out the most obvious features.

Therefore, in order to organize and describe the collected data in an informative way to give a precise picture of the anxiety phenomenon in 1st-year classes at FELTE, ULIS, this study used three different types of descriptive statistics: measures of frequency, measures of central tendency, and measures of variability or dispersion.

The data collected by using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was analyzed by the SPSS version 16.0 for Windows to obtain the mean, mode, median, as well as range and standard deviation (SD) of the anxiety scores. The mean was compared with the hypothetical mean of the scale and with what has been reported in previous studies to indicate the anxiety level of FELTE first-year students. The standard deviation was analyzed to see whether the subjects in this study were homogenous in terms of their experience with language anxiety. Frequencies were used in the component analysis of the FLCAS to report the trends of students' responses to specific items in the scale as well as to indicate which language skills are perceived as most anxiety-provoking to students and if their anxiety level changes over time.

Although measures of frequency and measures of central tendency may give both the researcher and the reader an idea of the typical behavior of the group with respect to a particular phenomenon, the use of such measures alone may also "obscure" some important information (Mackey & Gass, 2003, p. 258). For instance, consider the case when we have two classes who take a final exam with approximately the same mean of scores but one class' scores are all close to the mean while the other class' scores are more widely dispersed (some students get very high scores while some

others get really low scores). If we report only the mean, we will not be able to show that the two classes have a fairly different dispersion of scores, thus failing to provide a precise picture of the situation. Presenting the range of scores (the number of points between the highest and lowest scores) might be a way to present such additional information on the dispersion, or variability. However, Mackey & Gass (2005, p. 259) argued that the range, although easy to calculate, is "sensitive" to extreme scores and thus is not always a reliable indicator of variability. They suggested that a more reliable way of measuring variability is through the calculation of the standard deviation, a number that shows how scores spread around the mean. The standard deviation can be interpreted as followed: the larger the standard deviation, the more variability there is in a particular group of scores; conversely, a smaller standard deviation indicates that the group is more homogeneous in terms of a particular behavior (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 260). Emphasizing the importance of the standard deviation, Mackey & Gass (2005, p. 260) asserted that the standard deviation (SD) should always be reported in second language research, often in a table along with the mean (M) and the number of subjects (n). They added that measures of dispersion (particularly standard deviations) can serve as a quality control for measures of central tendency: the smaller the standard deviation, the better the mean captures the behavior of the sample.

5.1.3. Component analysis of the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), is a self-report instrument including 33 items which ask students to respond to statements regarding their reactions to

foreign/second language classes. The items use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from **strongly agree** (5 points) to **strongly disagree** (1 point) with items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32 being key-reversed, i.e., negatively worded. The total scale scores range from 33 to 165 with a hypothetical mean of 99. The higher the score, the higher the level of foreign language anxiety.

According to Horwitz (1986, p. 129), the items presented are reflective of three related anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. This scale also measures the degree of anxiety, as evidenced by negative performance expectancies and social comparisons ("I never feel quite sure of myself when speaking in my foreign language class" or "I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am"), psycho-physiological symptoms ("I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in my language class"), and avoidance behaviors ("During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course") (Horwitz, 1986b, p. 559).

Although the authors of the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) have never proposed a model for component analysis for this scale, various L2 researchers have presented and applied several component analysis models in their research, which can be seen in the following table:

TABLE 1: Component Analysis Model of the FLCAS in previous studies

Researchers	Component analysis model
Burden (2004)	• Speaking anxiety: 1, 3, 9, 13, 20, 23, 24, 27, 30, 31, 33 • Foreign language classroom anxiety: 4, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 19, 21, 25,

	26, 29
	• Foreign language classroom non-anxiety: 2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, 18, 22, 28, 32
Na (2007)	• Communication anxiety: 1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, 329
	• Fear of negative evaluation: 3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, 33
	• Test anxiety: 2, 8, 10, 19, 21
	• Anxiety of English classes: the remaining 11 items
Lan (2010)	• Communication Apprehension: 1, 4, 9, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30, 32
	• Test anxiety: 3,5,6,8,10,11,12,16,17,20,21,22,25,26,28
	• Fear of negative evaluation: 2,7,13,19,23,31,33
Zhang (2010)	• Communication apprehension: 1, 4, 9, 12, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30, 32
	• Test anxiety: 8, 10, 21
	• Fear of negative evaluation: 2, 3, 7, 13, 19, 20, 22, 23, 31, 33
	• Negative attitudes towards the English class: 5, 6, 11, 16, 17, 25, 26, 28

There might be no single best model to group the 33 items of the scale into finite categories as foreign language anxiety is a multidimensional phenomenon and needs to be addressed from a variety of perspectives and approaches (Ohata, 2005, p. 133).

As an attempt to organize and describe the collected data in a way that facilitates the understanding and interpretation of the students' responses, this current research used the following component analysis model:

TABLE 2: Component analysis of the FLCAS in this current study

Test anxiety	8. I am usually at ease (comfortable) during tests in my language class.
	10. I worry about the consequences of failing my language class.
	21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.
Fear of negative evaluation	2. I DON'T worry about making mistakes in language class.
	3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.
	9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.
	13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.
	19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
	20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.
	31. I am afraid that the other students in the class will laugh at me when I speak in English.
	33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.
Communication apprehension	1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.
	4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the English language.
	14. I would NOT be nervous speaking the English language with native speakers.

	15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
	18. I feel confident when I speak in English in my language class.
	24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of the other students.
	27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.
	29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
	30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak the English language.
	32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the English language.
Negative performance expectancies and social comparisons	1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.
	7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am.
	18. I feel confident when I speak in English in my language class.
	23. I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.
Negative attitudes toward the English class	5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes.
	11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over language classes.

	16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.
	17. I often feel like not going to my language class.
	22. I DON'T feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.
	25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
	26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
	28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
Anxiety manifestations (psycho-physiological symptoms & avoidance behaviors)	3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.
	6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
	12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
	20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.

Some items were put in more than one category in this component analysis model because "anxiety is not a unitary, uni-dimensional phenomenon but involves various response dimensions" (Cheng, 2004, p. 318). After reviewing the literature of anxiety research, Cheng (2004, p. 318) reported that various multidimensional measures of anxiety have been developed in fields such as test anxiety and speech anxiety, and that in these

measures, anxiety symptoms are grouped along several relatively independent dimensions, including somatic/physiological (e.g., upset stomach, pounding heart, excessive sweating, and numbness), cognitive (e.g., worry, preoccupation, and negative expectations), and behavioral (e.g., procrastination, withdrawal, and avoidance). The researcher believed that the measure employed in this current study also included items that examine anxiety in relation with various response dimensions.

5.2. Qualitative data

The qualitative data analysis method employed in this study was adapted from Tanveer's (2007) and Celebi's (2009) studies.

The audio-recorded interviews were first transcribed by the researcher. Then the verbatim data were analyzed through content analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 1999; cited in Celebi, 2009, p. 30). To begin with, the researcher read through the transcriptions carefully and coded the participants' responses into meaningful concepts. After that, the concepts were put into categories on the basis of common themes. These categories were given suitable headings like 'beliefs about language learning', 'fear of making mistakes,' etc., and were used to explain the phenomenon under investigation (English language learning anxiety).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the study. The findings are discussed by addressing each of the research questions.

1. **Research Question 1: How pervasive is foreign language anxiety among 1ˢᵗ-year students at FELTE, ULIS, and what is the degree of this anxiety?**

1.1. Reliability of the FLCAS

The current study used the Vietnamese-translated version of Horwitz's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to measure anxiety of 135 first-year students at FELTE, ULIS. The reliability analysis of the Vietnamese-translated scale was conducted by Cronbach's alpha using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 for Windows.

Nunnally (1978, cited in Chu, 2007, p. 27) claimed that a Cronbach alpha value of 0.70 or above is considered acceptable. Besides, George and Mallerry (2003, cited in Chu, 2007, p. 27) also presented a standard as follows:

Cronbach α value range	Reliability
1.0 > α ≥ 0.9	Excellent
0.9 > α ≥ 0.8	Good
0.8 > α ≥ 0.7	Acceptable
0.7 > α ≥ 0.6	Questionable
0.6 > α ≥ 0.5	Poor
0.5 > α ≥ 0.4	Unacceptable

The Vietnamese-translated version of the FLCAS achieved Cronbach alpha value of 0.909, which demonstrates an excellent reliability level.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.909	33

1.2. Descriptive statistics analysis of the FLCAS

Horwitz (1986, p. 560) stated that possible scores on the FLCAS ranged from 33 to 165; the theoretical mean of the scale was 99. This study showed that the mean of anxiety scores measured by the FLCAS for the entire group of 135 subjects was 97.90, and the range was 61-139, indicating moderate levels of anxiety among the surveyed students.

TABLE 3: Descriptive Statistics of the FLCAS

Sum

N	Valid	135
	Missing	0
Mean		97.90
Median		98.00
Mode		87
Std. Deviation		15.247
Range		78
Minimum		61
Maximum		139

Followed is a summary and comparison of the results found in previous studies and this current study. These studies used the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale to measure the anxiety of students at different educational levels in various educational and cultural contexts.

Researcher	Sample Size	Educational Setting	Students' status	L2	Cronbach's Alpha	Range	Mean	SD
Horwitz et al. (1986)	108	US	Freshmen	Spanish	0.93	45-147	**94.5**	21.4
Aida (1994)	96	US	Freshmen	Japanese	0.94	47-146	**96.7**	22.1
Rodriguez & Abreu (2003)	110	Venezuela	University	English	0.90		**85.98**	21.03
				French	0.90		**89.69**	20.11
Matsuda & Gobel (2004)	252	Japan	Freshmen, sophomore, & junior	English		72-133	**100.77**	11.428
Goshi (2005)	62	Japan	Freshmen	English			**123.95**	26.486
Wang (2005)	175	China	Freshmen & sophomore	English		69-147	**101**	12.62
Wilson (2006)	40	Spain	Sophomore & Junior	English	0.93	63-136	**101.15**	19.34
Zhang (2010)	147	China	Vocational high school	English	0.93	50-161	**98.23**	20.31
Kao & Craigie (2010)	101	Taiwan	Sophomore, junior & senior	English			**98.05**	
Lan (2010)	212	Taiwan	7th grade	English		43-158	**101.8**	23.27
The current study	*135*	*Vietnam*	*Freshmen*	*English*	*0.909*	*61-139*	*97.90*	*15.247*

TABLE 4: Summary and comparison of the results found in previous studies and this current study

Not including the exceptionally low and high results found in the studies of Rodriguez and Abreu (2003) and Goshi (2005), the mean of anxiety scores measured by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) has been quite consistent. The result indicated in this current research (97.90) showed that there was no significant difference between the hypothetical mean (99) and mean scores of this study and those found in other studies in the literature. This implies that the current sample revealed similar anxiety levels to what their previous counterparts in other educational contexts reported.

One of the major aims of this current study was to identify the levels of foreign language anxiety of the first-year students at FELTE, ULIS. The researcher decided to use the anxiety-level scales developed by Krinis (2007). The five levels of anxiety were created by using the 20th, 40th, $60^{th,}$ and 80th percentiles, and Krinis (2007) divided the 71 subjects into five anxiety groups:

TABLE 5: Anxiety levels found in Krinis' (2007) study

Scores	Level of Foreign Language Anxiety	Level	Number of subjects	Percentage
33-82	Very low anxiety	1	14	19.7%
83-89	Moderately low anxiety	2	16	22.5%
90-98	Moderate anxiety	3	14	19.7%
99-108	Moderately high anxiety	4	14	19.7%
109-165	High anxiety	5	13	18.3%

Based on Krinis' (2007) scales, the 135 subjects in this current research were also divided into the five anxiety groups which are depicted in the following table:

TABLE 6: Anxiety levels found in the current study

Scores	Level of Foreign Language Anxiety	Level	Number of subjects	Percentage
33-82	Very low anxiety	1	21	15.56%
83-89	Moderately low anxiety	2	24	17.78%
90-98	Moderate anxiety	3	24	17.78%
99-108	Moderately high anxiety	4	33	24.44%
109-165	High anxiety	5	33	24.44%

Compared with the anxiety level found in Krinis' (2007) study of 71 Greek students, the anxiety levels of first-year students at FELTE, the subjects in this current research, seem to be significantly higher. While only 18.3% of the Greek students were identified to be highly anxious, 24.44% of the surveyed FELTE first-year students had a high anxiety level. Almost two-thirds of the students had moderate or higher levels of anxiety, with almost half of them (48.88%) having an alarming level of anxiety (moderately high and high). The result of this current study is similar to what has been reported in the literature of anxiety research. For example. Worde (1998, cited in Zheng, 2008, p. 1) found one third to a half of the examined students experienced high levels of anxiety, and Campbell and Ortiz (1991, cited in Worde, 2003) argued that perhaps one-half of all language students experience a startling level of anxiety. This supports the

common belief among L2 researchers and educators that a foreign language class can be highly anxiety-provoking for many students (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a; MacIntyre, 1995; Ohata, 2005; Liu, 2007; cited in Subasi, 2010, p. 29).

FIGURE 4: Anxiety levels found in Krinis' (2007) study and the current study

Percentages of different anxiety levels
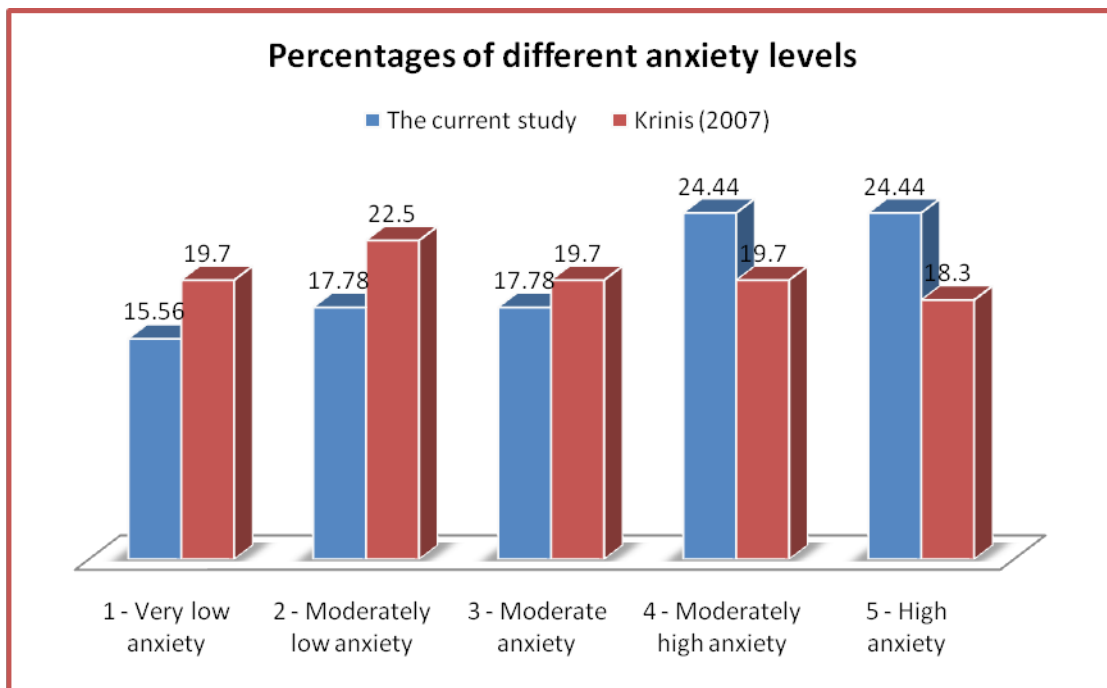
In terms of the variability of the mean anxiety scores measured by the FLCAS in this research, the data has a Standard Deviation (SD) of 15.247. In comparison with other studies like those conducted by Horwitz (1986), Aida (1994), Rodriguez and Abreu (2003), Goshi (2005), Zhang (2010), and

Lan (2010), the set of mean scores in this study is significantly smaller. According to Mackey & Gass (2005, p. 260-261), the larger the standard deviation, the more variability there is in a particular group of scores, while a smaller standard deviation indicates that the group is more homogeneous in terms of a particular behavior. They also argued that measures of dispersion (particularly standard deviations) can serve as a quality control for measures of central tendency (e.g. mean); the smaller the standard deviation, the better the mean captures the behavior of the sample. As a result, with a relatively small Standard Deviation (SD), it can be stated that the mean of anxiety scores achieved in this study is likely to depict the current situation of the anxiety phenomenon among first-year students at FELTE, ULIS. Also, a smaller SD may indicate that the anxiety levels do not vary much among those students; many of them experienced similar levels of anxiety.

1.3. Components of the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale
1.3.1. Test Anxiety

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9. **I am usually at ease (comfortable) during tests in my language class.**				
1.5	18.5	40.7	28.9	10.4
11. **I worry about the consequences of failing my language class.**				
28.9	42.2	22.2	4.4	2.2
21. **The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.**				
0.7	14.1	31.9	39.3	14.1

71.1% of the surveyed students worried about the consequences of failing the English classes; the figures shown are much higher than what has been reported in other studies: 42% (Horwitz, 1986), 57% (Aida, 1994), and 61.3% (Burden, 2004). In addition, 39.3% of the students reported uneasy feelings in test-taking situations. It can be seen that 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS, are highly anxious about language tests. In addition, it is quite alarming that around half of the students (46.6%) agreed or partly agreed that studying for a test might make them feel even more confused. It appears that many students, despite their apprehension of tests, might not know how to prepare for them.

1.3.2. Fear of negative evaluation

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. **I DON'T worry about making mistakes in language class.**				
2.2	20.7	31.9	41.5	3.7
19. **I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.**				
1.5	8.1	15.6	49.6	25.2

45.2% of the students worried about making mistakes in their English class. However, one positive thing is that most students (74.8%) were not afraid of being corrected by their teacher. This implies 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS, might not experience constant and harsh error correction in the English classroom.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4. **I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.**				
6.7	28.9	38.5	23.7	2.2
20. **I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.**				
5.9	22.2	43	25.9	3
33. **I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.**				
5.9	28.1	48.1	13.3	4.4
10. **I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.**				
8.9	28.9	36.3	23.7	2.2

The above statements describe situations in which students are called on by the teacher to answer questions or to speak in class. About 33.875% of the surveyed students felt nervous in these situations. This percentage is lower than what has been found in other studies: 35.6% (Burden, 2004), 37.75% (Horwitz, 1986), and 42.25% (Aida, 1994). 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS, tend to be somewhat more anxious when they have to speak without preparation (35.9%) in class, yet they are still much less anxious about such circumstance than the students in the mentioned research: 46.05% (Burden, 2004), 49% (Horwitz, 1986), and 46% (Aida, 1994). It is possible that FELTE teachers may not usually put their students on the spot without allowing adequate preparation; the students are, therefore, not too concerned about being called on to answer questions or to speak in the English classroom.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.				
4.4	7.4	28.1	49.6	10.4
31. I am afraid that the other students in the class will laugh at me when I speak in English.				
3.7	12.6	26.7	48.1	8.9

It is an encouraging finding that only 11.8% of the students felt embarrassed about volunteering answers in class and that only 16.3% were afraid of being laughed at by their peers when speaking English. Although other researchers (Horwitz, 1986; Aida, 1994; Burden, 2004) also reported similarly low percentages of students who are concerned about being ridiculed by their classmates, 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS, appear to be least embarrassed about volunteering answers: 25% of the students in Aida's (1994) study and up to 44% of the students in Burden's (2004) study felt discouraged from taking the initiative to raise opinions in the lesson.

1.3.3. Communication apprehension

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15. I would NOT be nervous speaking the English language with native speakers.				
4.4	14.8	40.7	32.6	7.4
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the English language.				
3.0	19.3	52.6	20.0	5.2

Regarding the fear of communicating with native speakers, the students' responses presented a mixed result: 40% of the students might feel nervous when speaking to native speakers; on the other hand, it appears that many students might not feel too uncomfortable around them. It might be because 1ˢᵗ-year FELTE students have not had much chance to meet foreigners; therefore, when being asked to picture a situation in which they meet and talk to native speakers, they might imagine experiencing mixed feelings of nervousness and excitement.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. **It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the English language.**				
8.9	31.3	39.1	17.8	3.0
16. **I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.**				
11.1	40.0	31.1	15.6	2.2
30. **I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.**				
4.4	36.3	32.6	25.2	1.5

The above statements refer to students' anxious feelings caused by their inability to understand and follow the teachers in English lessons. On average, 44% of the students reported that being unable to understand what the teacher was saying or correcting in English could contribute to anxiety. This figure is similar to what has been reported by Aida (1994) and Burden (2004), indicating that the difficulty in understanding and following the teachers is considered a serious problem by most language learners regardless of the second/foreign language and classroom settings.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2. **I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.**				
9.6	22.2	51.9	11.9	4.4
19. **I feel confident when I speak in English in my language class.**				
0.7	13.3	45.2	34.1	6.7
25. **I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of the other students.**				
2.2	15.6	34.8	41.5	5.9
28. **I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.**				
1.5	20.0	40.7	33.3	4.4

The first two statements refer to students' self-confidence when speaking English. It can be seen that 1st-year FELTS students are not confident of their oral ability: only around 15.15% of the students felt sure of themselves when speaking English. On the other hand, despite their low self-esteem, 1st-year FELTE students might not feel too uncomfortable or embarrassed when speaking English: just around 19.65% felt awkward, nervous, or confused.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
31. **I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak the English language.**				
2.2	17.8	39.3	38.5	2.2

It appears that 1ˢᵗ-year FELTE students might not feel puzzled by the number of rules they had to learn to speak English. While 33% of the students in Horwitz's (1986) study, 40% of the students in Aida's (1994) study, and 53% of the students in Burden's (2004) study reported experiencing such problem, only 20% of the surveyed students in this current research felt overwhelmed by the number of rules. It is possible that 1ˢᵗ-year FELTS students may encounter other problems such as lack of vocabulary or poor pronunciation.

1.3.4. Negative performance expectancies and social comparisons

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2. **I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.**				
9.6	22.2	51.9	11.9	4.4
19. **I feel confident when I speak in English in my language class.**				
0.7	13.3	45.2	34.1	6.7

Again, there seems to be a problem among 1ˢᵗ-year students at FELTE, ULIS, as they appear to lack confidence in their oral ability, which may discourage them from speaking in class or hinder their performance.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. **I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am.**				
9.6	38.5	39.3	11.9	0.7

23. I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.				
8.9	34.8	43.0	11.1	2.2

In addition to negative performance expectancies caused by low self-confidence in speaking ability, another prevalent issue among 1st-year FELTE students is negative social comparisons: 43.7% believed they could not speak English as well as other students, and 48.1% considered their English proficiency was lower than that of others. Based on the data, it can be seen that the survey students have the tendency to compare themselves with other students and form a negative self-concept, which may account for their lack of confidence in speaking in English classes. In comparison with the students in Aida's (1986) and Burden's (2004) research, 1st-year FELTE students share a common characteristic of negative social comparisons. It is possible that negative social comparisons contribute to anxious feelings in students.

1.3.5. Negative attitudes toward the English class

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes.				
15.6	38.5	33.3	8.9	3.7
12. I don't understand why some people get so upset over language classes.				
2.2	17.8	32.6	42.2	5.2
17. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.				
2.2	22.2	33.3	33.3	8.9
18. I often feel like not going to my language class.				
0.7	5.2	25.9	50.4	17.8

23. **I DON'T feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.**				
7.4	23.0	40.0	23.7	5.9
26. **Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.**				
2.2	17.0	40.7	33.3	6.7
27. **I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.**				
5.9	36.3	32.6	23.7	1.5
29. **When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.**				
4.4	25.2	45.9	22.2	2.2

The above statements aim to measure students' negative attitudes towards the English classroom.

It is quite a positive sign that 1st-year FELTE students did not seem to lack interest in English language learning, demonstrated by their willingness to go to or even take more language classes: more than half of the students (54.1%) would not bother taking more classes, and only 5.9% indicated that they did not like English lessons. These students showed a much more positive attitudes toward English classes than the students in other studies: 47% of the students in Horwitz's (1986) research expressed their dislike of English classes, and 80% of the students in Aida's (1994) study chose not to increase the hours of language learning.

Although a large number of students (42.2%) in this current research claimed that they experience a higher level of tension and nervousness in English classes than in other academic subjects, many students seem to have somewhat control over their learning in the English classroom. Only less than 20% of the students felt they could not follow the classroom procedures and might get left behind (in comparison with 59% in Horwitz's (1986)

study and with 58% in Aida's (1994) study). Many students (42.2%) believed that good preparation for class coulf ease their anxious feelings.

1.3.6. Anxiety manifestations (psycho-physiological symptoms and avoidance behaviors)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4. **I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.**				
6.7	28.9	38.5	23.7	2.2
20. **I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.**				
5.9	22.2	43.0	25.9	3.0

The above statements illustrate two common physiological manifestations of anxiety which are trembling and heart pounding. As shown in the data, 35.6% of the students tended to tremble and 28.1% tended to feel their heart beating faster. These symptoms are similar to what has been reported in Horwitz (1986), Aida (1994), and Burden (2004).

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13. **In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.**				
8.9	31.1	39.3	16.3	4.4

A possible psychological manifestation of anxiety is that students may become so anxious that they forget things they know. In other words, anxious thoughts may exhaust the available cognitive resources and hamper

an individual's working memory (Zheng, 2008, p. 5-6). This seems to be a prevalent phenomenon among students: in this current study, 40% of the students reported "poor memory recall and retention" (Williams & Andrade, 2009, p. 4), which is similar to what has been found in the literature of anxiety research: 57% in Horwitz (1986), 44% in Aida (1994), and 46% in Burden (2004).

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. **During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.**				
5.9	43.0	39.3	9.6	2.2

According to Horwitz (1986b, p. 559), the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) measures the degree of anxiety, as evidenced by negative performance expectancies and social comparisons, psycho-physiological, and avoidance behaviors. The avoidance behavior "thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course" mentioned in the above statement can be considered both a psychological and a behavioral manifestation of anxiety in students. Anxiety occupies students' cognitive capacity and thus makes it harder for them to concentrate; therefore, teachers and students may find some individuals thinking about things irrelevant to the lesson and not being able to follow the classroom procedures, possibly leading to lack of participation in class (Horwitz, 1986, p. 126). Based on the data, it can be seen that almost half of the surveyed students (48.9%) experienced difficulty in concentrating on the lesson. This result is distressing because it is much higher than what has been reported of other

student groups: only 15% in Burden (2004), 26% in Horwitz (1986), and 38.4% in Aida (1994).

1.4. Summary of quantitative data analysis

The analysis of the quantitative data collected from the responses of 135 first-year English-major students at Faculty of English Language Teacher Education to the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) has obtained several significant results.

The Vietnamese-translated version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (originally developed by Horwitz et al. in 1986) was tested and achieved Cronbach alpha value of 0.909, indicating an excellent level of reliability of the instrument. Together with other studies also employing and testing this scale, the current research further confirmed the reliability of the FLCAS as a measure of second/foreign language anxiety regardless of the L2 language and specific classroom settings.

This current research showed that the mean of anxiety scores measured by the FLCAS for the entire group of 135 subjects was 97.90, and the range was 61-139.

In comparison with what has been reported in the literature of anxiety research, the result of this current study showed that 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS, experienced moderate levels of language anxiety, and that their anxiety levels seemed to be quite homogeneous.

This study proposed a component analysis model to organize and interpret the students' responses to the FLCAS items. It found that although the students reported a higher level of tension and nervousness in English lessons than in other academic subjects, they did not show many negative

attitudes towards the English classroom. Despite their fear of making mistakes, the students were not preoccupied with fear of negative evaluation, so they generally did not feel highly anxious about volunteering answers, being called on in class, or having mistakes corrected by the teacher. Some potential sources of their anxiety have been identified, including language tests, difficulty in understanding and following what the teacher was saying or correcting, as well as negative social comparisons with peers and low self-esteem. The responses to the FLCAS items also specified several psycho-physiological symptoms and avoidance behaviors as manifestations of anxiety in the students: trembling, heart pounding, and more seriously, forgetfulness, lack of concentration, and possibly lack of participation.

2. Research Question 2: Do students and teachers think students' anxiety level changes over time?

2.1. Students' perceptions of changes in anxiety level over time
2.1.1. Data collected from the questionnaires

The questionnaires were delivered to 135 first-year students during week 5 and 6 of the second semester. Data collected from the questionnaires for the students indicated that around three-fourths of the surveyed students (77%) found that their anxiety level at that moment was lower than that at the beginning of the first semester when they started college. A small number of students (8.1%) reported no changes in their anxiety level, and 14.9% stated that their anxiety increased over time.

The following chart illustrates students' responses when being asked to compare their anxiety level when they were doing the questionnaire (week 5 or 6 in the second semester) with the level of anxiety they experienced at the beginning of the first semester.

FIGURE 5: Students' perceptions of changes in learner anxiety
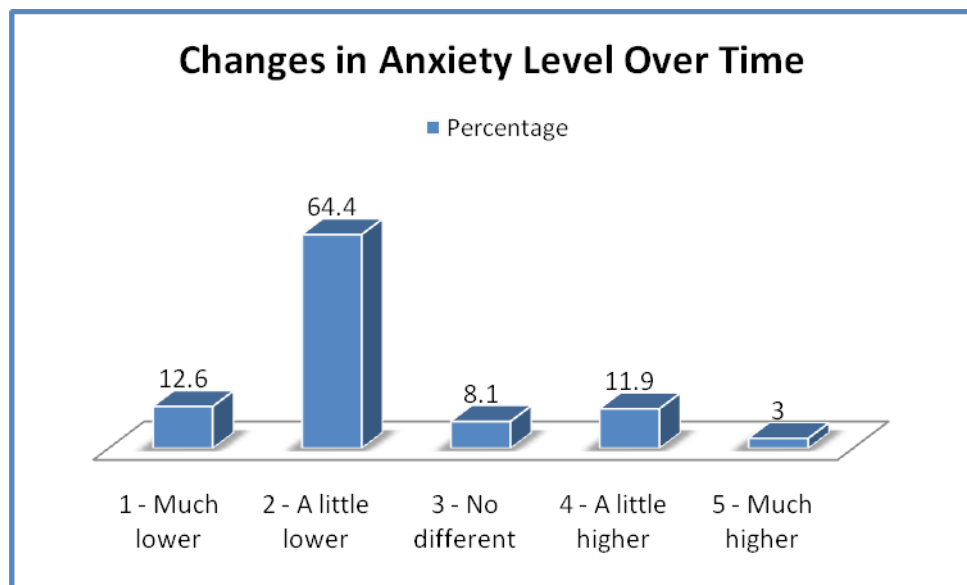
2.1.2. Data collected from the interviews

As this current study aimed to identify the factors contributing to the development and alleviation of language anxiety, the researcher decided to interview students with different answers about changes in anxiety level over time. Participants for the interviews include: five students with "much lower" anxiety level compared with the beginning of the first semester, five students with "a little lower" level, three students who reported "no different" in anxiety level, four students with "a little higher" level of anxiety, and three students with "much higher" level.

For those who found that their anxiety decreased over time, the reason most students agreed with was that they got used to the new learning environment and learning methods at university, and that they became acquainted with their new teachers and friends.

When I first entered university, I was really scared to find my teachers and other classmates all speaking in English, and I could not

understand much. Now that I have been able to follow my teachers and peers and got used to the learning environment at university I feel less anxious. (Student J)

At first, I was very anxious about some activities in English lessons because they were so different from the way I studied at high school. Day by day, similar activities recur in different lessons, so I became familiar with them and feel more comfortable with the learning activities in class. (Student P)

Some students stated that one advantage of majoring in English was the opportunity to practice the language skills regularly and thus being able to see progress in studies.

Most of my classes are English language skills, so I got to practice the skills regularly; therefore, I can see improvement in my English. Moreover, there are some excellent students in my class; studying with them motivated me to become better. As I see I have made progress in my learning, I feel more positive about myself and my studies. (Student E)

It is also probable that students recognized their strengths and weaknesses after some time, thus being less worried.

At the beginning of the first semester, I was nervous about all language skills. After a while, I came to realize which language skills I am good at and which I still have to improve. Therefore, I became less worried. (Student G)

For those who claimed that their anxiety went up after the first semester, the most commonly stated reason was that learner anxiety increased in accordance with the difficulty level of the language skills.

"I am more anxious now because there are more assignments and the classes are getting more and more difficult." (Student M)

In addition, after one semester, some students were still unable to get used to the new learning environment as well as the new teaching and learning styles at university.

The learning environment at university is nothing like what I was used to at high school. I have to be responsible for my own studies and have to be

much more independent and active. I find it really hard to do that. (Student F)

Moreover, some felt hopeless about their problems because they had not found the solutions to their language learning difficulties.

I feel anxious about my English classes as they are getting more difficult but I don't know what I can do about that. I haven't found the methods to improve my weaknesses. (Student K)

I feel that I am left behind in class. My classmates are much better at English than I am; especially, they can speak English very well and confidently. I have been trying, but I know I am still much worse than my peers because I cannot improve my skills. I am afraid I will never become as good as my classmates. (Student I)

As for those who reported no difference in their anxiety level, one student said that she usually did not feel anxious about English classes, and the other two shared the same problems as mentioned above, which are inability to find solutions to their learning problems and constant worry about having lower English proficiency than their peers.

I am always worried about my English classes. I do not see any progress in my listening skill. I always feel inferior to my classmates. However, I haven't found better learning methods. (Student C)

2.2. Teachers' perceptions of changes in learner anxiety over time
2.2.1. Data collected from the questionnaires

Before discussing the teachers' perceptions of changes in learner anxiety over time, it is necessary to talk about how the teachers perceived of the anxiety level among 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS.

Among the 21 surveyed teachers, 9 teachers believed that 1st-year students' level of anxiety was moderate, 10 teachers indicated that the students were instead moderately highly anxious, while only two teachers reported a moderately low learner anxiety level.

Compared with the data collected from the students' responses, it can be seen that the teachers were aware of the anxiety level in their 1st-year classes, which was moderately high with almost half of the students being moderately or moderately highly anxious.

FIGURE 6: Teachers' perceptions of students' anxiety level

Teachers' perceptions of learner anxiety level

■ Number of teacher responses
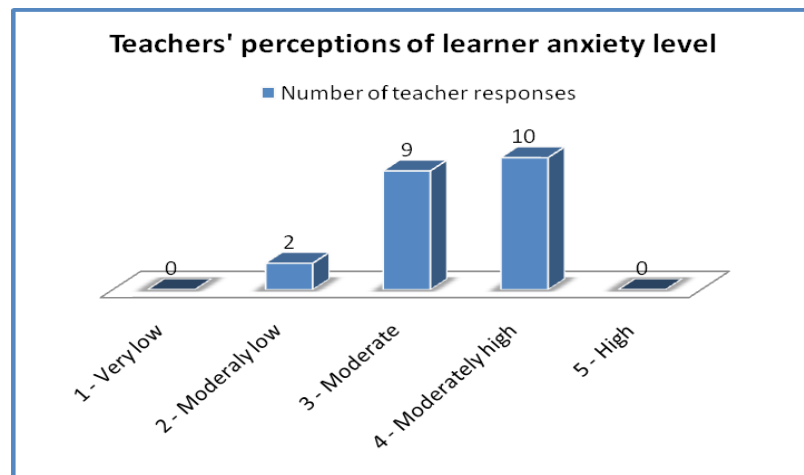
Regarding the teachers' perceptions of changes in learner anxiety level over time, 14 teachers indicated that students' level of anxiety decreased, and only one claimed there was no difference, while 6 stated that students became more anxious over time.

FIGURE 7: Teachers' perceptions of students' anxiety level
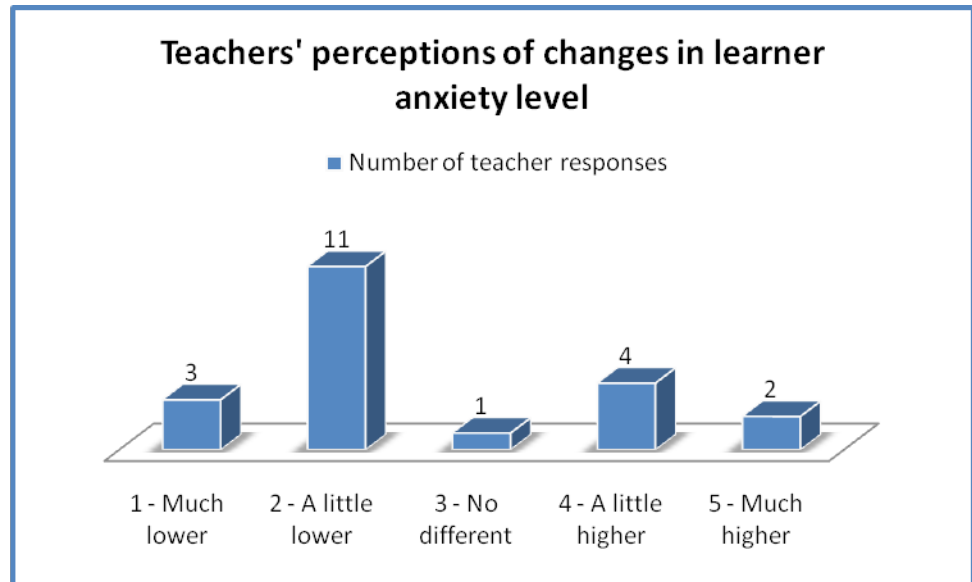
2.2.2. Data collected from the interviews

The following table summarizes the responses of the eight teachers who participated in the interviews:

Teacher	Teaching experience with 1st-year students	Perceived level of learner anxiety	Perceived changes in learner anxiety level over time
1	10 years	3 - Moderate	3 – No different
2	9 years	3 - Moderate	2 – A little lower
3	7 years	3 - Moderate	2 – A little lower
4	4 years	4 - Moderately high	4 – A little higher
5	4 years	3 - Moderate	1 – Much lower
6	2 years	3 - Moderate	2 – A little lower
7	2 years	4 - Moderately high	2 – A little lower
8	1 year	3 - Moderate	2 – A little lower

a) Teachers' perceptions of learner anxiety level

Most teachers agreed that 1st-year FELTS students experienced a moderate to moderately high level of anxiety, and such level was considered not too alarming.

Some teachers (Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 8) argued that different groups of students (classes) shared different levels of anxiety: several classes tended to have more anxious students than others. Also, most teachers believed that students experienced different anxiety levels in certain language skills. Therefore, the teachers rated students' general anxiety level as moderate or moderately high but not high.

In addition, the interviews revealed some interesting findings about the teachers' viewpoints on a moderate anxiety level among 1st-year FELTE students:

> The learning environment at university is less stressful than at high school. There is no longer constant pressure of tests and exams. Also, there are no more tests without advanced announcement. The number of assignments also reduces at university, while high school students have tons of homework in almost all academic subjects every day and their homework is even checked by their teachers at the beginning of each lesson. (Teacher 2)
> Students these days seem to be more confident than the previous generations used to be. That's why there are less anxious students among this group of 1st-year students. (Teacher 6)

Teacher 3 gave several reasons to explain why he thought most 1st-year students did not worry too much about their English language classes. Firstly, all language skills had clear syllabi, so students were well informed of what they were going to study and how they were going to be assessed. There were also review lessons to familiarize students with the exam format. Secondly, the

curriculum was updated every semester to match with students' interest and ability. In addition, all language skills are taught in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. Thirdly, the teachers were well equipped with knowledge of teaching methodology, were constantly assessed by the Faculty, and were motivated to teach well because in the near future the university planed to let students to choose which teachers they want to study with. Finally, it had become much easier for students and teachers to connect with and understand each other thanks to mobile phone, email, and especially social networks like Facebook.

b) Teachers' perceptions of changes in learner anxiety level over time

Most of the interviewed teachers indicated that students are less anxious at that moment (week 5-6 in the second semester) than they were when they first started learning at university.

98% of the students can adapt to learning at university, so most students gradually become less anxious."(Teacher 3)

According to Teacher 7, although at first students might have felt timid, nervous, and worried, they soon got acquainted with their teachers and classmates, recognized their strengths and weaknesses, and came to understand that they were in the process of practicing and improving their language skills. As a result, after some time, most students no longer worried too much about their classes.

On the other hand, Teacher 4 argued that 1st-year students became more anxious after the first semester. She believed that many students set too high expectations for themselves at the beginning of their studies at university. After a semester, they realized that they

failed to meet such expectations and thus felt disappointed and upset. Moreover, they did not learn from that lesson but continued setting unrealistic expectations. Additionally, they were still unable to find appropriate learning methods to improve their language skills to achieve their desired proficiency. One semester seemed to be a rather short amount of time to train students to have better study skills which might help them deal with problems in their studies and reduce their anxiety.

Another viewpoint on changes in learner anxiety level over time is that anxiety is inevitable and students are always anxious:

> Anxiety is a complex psychological phenomenon that is constantly changing. Students are always anxious about learning. They do not worry more or less at different times; it is not their anxiety level that varies but what makes them anxious. (Teacher 1)

In general, it appears the interviewed teachers and students agreed on the reasons why most 1st-year students gradually became less anxious than when they first entered university. More importantly, it is a positive finding that some teachers were able to identify why some students still worried much about their English language classes. As there seems to be no significant gap between the teachers' and students' perceptions, it can be expected that teachers will find some ways to assist the students who have not been successful at solving their anxiety problems.

3. Research question 3: Which language skills are most anxiety-provoking to students as perceived by the students and teachers?

3.1. Students' perceptions of the four language skills

3.1.1. Data collected from questionnaires

Students were asked to rank the four language skills in the order of anxiety-provoking level from 1 (least-anxiety provoking) to 4 (most anxiety-provoking). It can be seen that the most anxiety-provoking skill was listening, followed by speaking, while reading and writing were considered quite equal in terms of the extent to which they caused anxiety in 1st-year FELTE students.

FIGURE 8: Students' perceptions of the anxiety-provoking levels of the four language skills

Order of Anxiety-provoking Level

■ Writing ■ Reading ■ Speaking ■ Listening

4 - Most anxiety-provoking
- Writing: 14.1
- Reading: 7.4
- Speaking: 16.3
- Listening: 63

3
- Writing: 15.6
- Reading: 26.7
- Speaking: 42.2
- Listening: 14.8

2
- Writing: 33.3
- Reading: 29.6
- Speaking: 23.7
- Listening: 12.6

1 - Least anxiety-provoking
- Writing: 37
- Reading: 36.3
- Speaking: 17.8
- Listening: 9.6
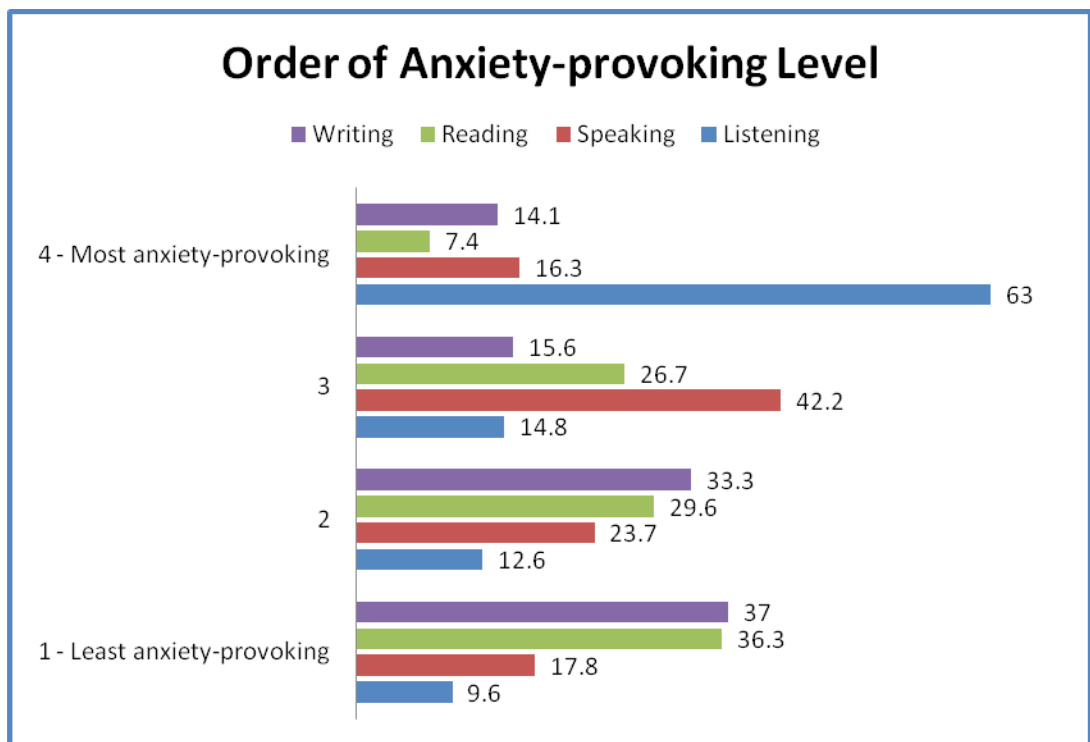
63% of the surveyed students ranked listening as the most anxiety-provoking skill, and 42.2% of the surveyed students indicated speaking caused most anxiety to them, while around 37% chose reading or writing to be at the lowest end of the scale with 1 indicating the lowest anxiety-provoking level.

3.1.2. Data collected from interviews

According to Elkhafaifi (2005, p. 207), some language students report experiencing foreign language learning anxiety in general while others say they become anxious only when participating in skill-specific activities, i.e. speaking, listening, reading, or writing. Although the two types of anxiety might appear to be "independent, distinguishable" affective constructs (Kimura, 2008, p. 174), it is argued that they share several common features, including negative influence on language learning and performance (Elkhafaifi, 2005, p. 207).

In discussions of anxiety in foreign language learning, speaking is the skill that has been most emphasized (Kimura, 2008, p. 174); however, listening can also be highly anxiety-provoking to language learners (Arnold, 2000, p. 778). Indeed, this current study found that 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS, were most anxious about listening comprehension. Among 20 interviewed students, 12 ranked listening as the most anxiety-provoking skill. Most of those students indicated that the reason for their apprehension of listening was little listening practice prior to university. This result is similar to what has been reported in Yan's (2005) study of Chinese students: 23 among the 30 subjects stated that they felt anxious about listening comprehension because they had never had any listening course before entering college. Many students attributed their inability to recognize words in the recording to their poor pronunciation.

> I mispronounce many words, so I cannot recognize them when they are spoken by native speakers. (Student M)

Other common explanations provided by the interviewed students include: lack of vocabulary, difficulty in listening to native speakers'

accents, speed of listening materials, etc. Also, some students claimed that they had a habit of translating the words they heard into Vietnamese, which made it difficult for them to follow the speed of the recording.

> I can hear the sounds and put them into words but somehow cannot comprehend them quickly enough. It might be because I tend to translate the words into Vietnamese.(Student Q)

Horwitz (1986, p. 132) affirmed that "speaking in the target language seems to be the most threatening aspect of foreign language learning." The participants in this research appeared to partly agree with this statement because 12 out of the 20 interviewed students reported high anxiety level toward speaking skill. All of those students cited their lack of speaking practice at high school, poor pronunciation, lack of vocabulary, and inadequate background knowledge of certain topics as the reasons why they felt nervous about this skill. Especially, a student was concerned about her "l-n" speech defect which made her unable to correctly pronounce some English words and embarrassed her when speaking in the target language. In addition, some students expressed fear of speaking in front of other people.

Although it might not seem that foreign language reading would be a source of anxiety for students, results from empirical research have suggested that some people actually find reading in the target language to be anxiety-provoking (Elkhafaifi, 2005, p. 209). Alderson (2005, cited in Shariati & Bordbar, 2009, p. 180) presented several factors possibly contributing to reading anxiety in language learners. The students who participated in this current research also

indicated some factors similar to what has been suggested in Shariati & Bordbar's (2009) study, including lack of reading skills or low reading abilities, difficult vocabulary in the texts, and text length.

> I feel I lack reading skills, especially critical reading skills. There are many times I thought I got the correct answers, and when the teacher checked the exercise I found out that I was wrong.(Student E)
> I find the texts too long given that we have to read them in such a short amount of time in class. (Student G)
> Finally, some students reported writing apprehension due to

lack of vocabulary and insufficient writing skills. Although students spent much time studying English grammar at high school, they mostly studied isolated phrases and structures. As a result, many learners experienced difficulty writing a coherent and cohesive paragraph in English.

3.2. Teachers' perceptions of the four language skills
3.2.1. Data collected from questionnaires

It appears that the teachers at Faculty of English Language Teacher Education are aware of the extent each language skill causes anxious feelings to their 1st-year students. The data collected from the questionnaires for the teachers resemble what was collected from the student questionnaires: listening and speaking were considered most anxiety-provoking. However, the teachers seemed to regard listening less threatening than how students perceived of that skill (10 teachers ranked listening 4 and 10 teachers ranked speaking 4 on the scale), and the teachers had a greater tendency to consider reading to be least anxiety-provoking (14 out of 21 teachers assumed reading was at the lowest end of the scale).

FIGURE 9: Teachers' perceptions of the anxiety-provoking levels of the four language skills
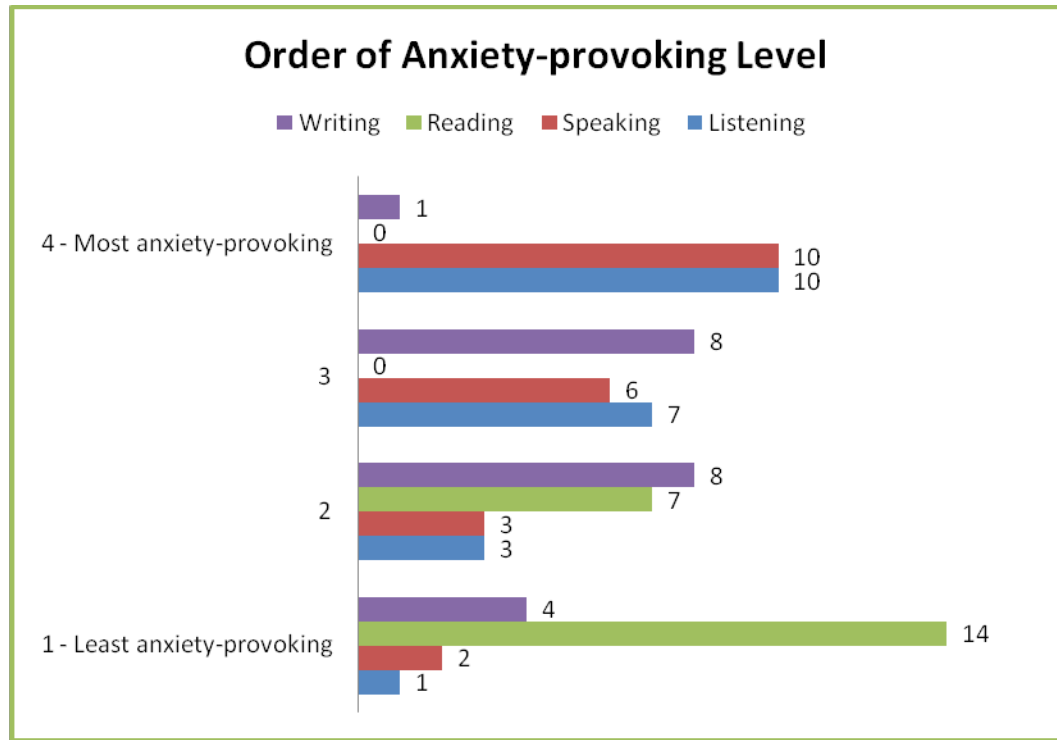
3.2.2. Data collected from interviews

Most interviewed teachers agreed that listening and speaking contributed to anxiety in 1st-year students to the greatest extent because students had little practice with these skills before entering university. Particularly, Teacher 4 emphasized that students had little idea about listening comprehension. Even if their high school teachers had given them some listening practice with the textbook exercises, the book itself was not skill-based, so those tasks did not train the sub-skills students needed to become successful at listening tasks in college classrooms. Listening is a complex skill that requires many sub-skills such as listening for main ideas, listening for specific information, making inference, understanding connected speech, etc.

Lack of proper skill training at high school made 1st-year students feel anxious about listening skill at university. Moreover, although some people believed that productive skills like speaking and writing were more anxiety-provoking to students, it was possible that these two skills were actually less intimidating than listening and reading. It was because students still had somewhat control over their oral and written performance and most of the times they could still perform the task or create language output even though the result might not be as good as they desired. Conversely, regarding receptive skills like listening and reading, students could not manage or control the input. They might fear that they would be evaluated based on their ability to "receive" and comprehend the input, and that failing to give the correct answers might be considered to be a sign of incompetence. This viewpoint is similar to MacIntyre's (1995, cited in Kimura, 2008, p. 175): "L2 listeners cannot manage or control the input… [They] worry about misunderstanding or non-understanding, and they fear embarrassing outcomes." Teacher 2 added that listening to tapes was demanding for the students because they were afraid that if they happened to lose attention for a moment they might miss the key information and not be able to listen again to get it. However, it is probable that some teachers believed listening anxiety among 1st-year students was not significant:

> "Students only feel intimidated when listening to extremely difficult tasks. However, such cases are quite rare because most listening materials in 1st-year curriculum are suitable for the level of students." (Teacher 7)

Regarding speaking anxiety, Teacher 2 commented that in addition to the lack of oral practice prior to college, oral performance

brought about the risk of showing all possible weaknesses like poor pronunciation, or lack of vocabulary and structures, as well as revealing one's emotional state; therefore, speaking might be problematic to many students. A different viewpoint on speaking anxiety was that of Teacher 5. She argued that the pace of reading lessons might cause more anxiety to students because each lesson is only two periods (100 minutes) in comparison with three periods (150 minutes) for speaking skill. In reading lessons, students may have a feeling that they had to do too much in a short amount of time. In contrast, during the three periods of a speaking lesson, there were many activities, and there was always time students did not have to work (for example, when they were listening to other students' performance), so students might feel more "relaxed."

Also comparing speaking skill with another language skill, Teacher 3 asserted:

> Students are even more anxious about writing than about speaking. Writing under time pressure, poor brainstorming skills, and fear of making mistakes are some reasons why students dread in-class writing. In contrast, in speaking lessons, most teachers are aware of shy students and usually organize activities involving group work, so even anxious students do not feel too uncomfortable.

This perspective is similar to that of Teacher 1. She argued that students might have a feeling that they received less support from the teacher when producing a written work than when they gave an oral performance. In speaking lessons, there was direct interaction between teachers and students, and thus teachers could identify students' difficulties and provide timely assistance. Conversely, in-class writing required students to work by themselves and to overcome their own

problems arising in the writing process. Also, Teacher 2 added that when students had to write the 20-minute first draft in class at the end of the lesson, they were likely to be afraid of making mistakes, writing off-topic, or failing to meet the requirements. The result collected from the teachers' responses in this study supported Kim's (2002, cited in Tallon, 2008, p. 9) idea that writing performance anxiety might be due to finding the right vocabulary and lack of confidence in meeting the instructor's expectations.

4. **Research question 4: What are some personal and instructional factors contributing to anxiety as perceived by the students and teachers?**

4.1. Data collected from interviews with students

4.1.1. Personal factors

All of the interviewed students attributed their language learning anxiety mostly to personal factors. The most frequently cited anxiety-generating factors which are related to learner's characteristics included: shy personality, lack of learning strategies, low language proficiency, low self-esteem, negative social comparisons with peers, and unrealistic expectations or perfectionism.

i. Shy personality

Among the cited potential sources of anxiety, shy personality and low language proficiency were reported to be the major factors contributing to anxious feelings in 1st-year FELTE students. It appears that students believed that anxiety, just like shy personality, was a personal trait. However, it is important to note that when asked about whether they felt equally anxious in other academic subjects as they felt anxious in English language classes

most of the interviewed students claimed that they were only apprehensive about English classes (especially some felt nervous about only certain language skills) or that they were much more tense and nervous in their English classes than in any other academic subjects. This confirmed the hypothesis that foreign language learning anxiety is not merely a trait anxiety; indeed, it is "a construct of anxiety which is not general but is specific to the language acquisition context" (Gardner, 1985, cited in Horwitz, et al., 2010, p. 96). Such situation-specific anxiety is similar to trait anxiety except that it applies to a single context or situation only, in this case to the language learning settings.

ii. Lack of learning strategies

Several students claimed that lack of learning strategies make them anxious about their English language classes which are much different from what they were used to at high school. Failing to identify appropriate learning strategies to solve their learning difficulties makes students feel frustrated and worried.

> I feel anxious about my English classes as they are getting more difficult but I don't know what I can do about that. I haven't found the methods to improve my weaknesses.(Student K)
> I am always worried about my English classes. I do not see any progress in my listening skill. I always feel inferior to my classmates. However, I haven't found better learning methods. (Student C)

iii. Low language proficiency

Regarding low language proficiency, students expressed concern about their lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation, and low-level language skills, and claimed that such difficulties prevented them from performing well in class, which made them feel anxious.

iv. Negative social comparisons with peers and low self-esteem

Although low language proficiency was one of the two factors rated by most students to be a major source of language anxiety, one important question should be raised here: Does a student's self-perception accurately reflect his or her actual abilities? Some students, especially those with low self-esteem, may rate their abilities lower than they really are (Kitano, 2001, p. 559). Language researchers like Foss and Reitzel (1991, cited in Subasi, 2010, p. 33) and Young (1991, cited in Kitano, 2001, p. 550) considered self-perception as a strong source for language anxiety. Students who start out with a self-perceived low ability level in the target language are the most likely to be anxious in the classroom because they may have low self-esteem, perceive themselves as less worthy than others, perceive their communication as less effective than that of their peers, and expect continued failure no matter what feedback they actually receive (Foss & Reitzel, 1991, cited in Subasi, 2010, p. 33; Young, 1991, cited in Kitano, 2001, p. 550). Similarly to what has been reported in previous anxiety studies and what has been found in research question 1 (43.7% believed they could not speak English as well as other students, and 48.1% considered their English proficiency was lower than that of others), negative social comparisons with peers and low self-esteem stood out as two factors closely related to anxious feelings in the interviewed students. 14 among the 20 students who participated in the interviews mentioned desperation and low self-confidence as consequences of constantly comparing their language skills negatively in relation with their peers and seeing themselves as less competent.

> I like speaking English, but I only like communicating with native speakers. In class, I would rather remain silent because I feel that my English is much worse than that of my friends. I do not mind speaking to native speakers because I know that they are certainly

> better at English than I am, and thus I do not have to worry about the comparison between us (Student D)

The assumption that students' self-assessment might not accurately mirror their actual ability was confirmed by the fact that the students at different proficiency levels (determined by their final English course grades in the 1st semester) all reported experiencing pressure, worry, and negative emotions aroused by their perception of low ability in relation to their peers.

> Even though my classmates keep telling me that I am not less competent at English than they are, I think they are all wrong. I don't believe in their assessment criteria. I am the one who can understand myself best. However hard I try, I have a feeling that I will never be able to become as good as my friends. Studying with people who are much more competent than me makes me anxious and dissatisfied all the times.(Student I, who actually received As in her English classes in the first semester)

v.   Unrealistic expectations or perfectionism

Another potential source of language anxiety has been indicated to be unrealistic expectations or perfectionism. Gregersen and Horwitz (2002, cited in Tallon, 2008, p. 3) report that language learners with perfectionist trait may have higher standards for their English performance, more worry over the opinions of others, and a higher level of concern over their errors, all of which make English learning become anxiety-provoking.

In the interviews conducted in the current research, some students shared that they set too high expectations for themselves and when they failed to achieve such goals they felt disillusioned and worried. For example, Student J was always concerned about making mistakes when speaking English in class because she wanted her performance to be flawless; she felt she was under the pressure to be accurate and fluent whenever she spoke English in front of the class. As a result, Student J easily became tense and nervous if she felt she had not prepared well enough to give a "perfect"

performance, and she usually got frustrated with herself for failing to do as well as she desired. Likewise, Student M felt really nervous about being called on by the teacher in class because she never wanted to give a wrong answer. This faulty belief about language learning is not a unique characteristic of 1st-year FELTE students. In fact, Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009, p. 41) previously found that some subjects in their study assumed they should produce faultless sentences and suggested that anxious learners tend to focus on form rather than content. In addition, some students might become highly anxious when their unrealistic expectations combined with self-perceived low ability level in relation with peers. As one student shared:

> There are many students in my class whose language skills are excellent. Therefore, I set big goals for myself with the determination to improve my English skills so that I can become as competent as my classmates. However, I feel so hopeless because I cannot achieve my goals. The language classes seem to get more and more difficult. My friends are still so much better than me. I have a feeling that I will never be able to become as good at English as I wish.(Student B)

Perfectionism was also manifested among students with high English proficiency. They might experience another form of pressure other than what concerned low-level students. These advanced students also compared themselves with others and might be oversensitive to making mistakes or being negatively evaluated; however, the underlying motive was not to "chase after" other better students but to maintain their high positions or rankings in class (Student G, Student O).

> I have been used to being among the top students in class since secondary school. Therefore, I always set high expectations for myself and feel pressured to meet them. I am a perfectionist, competitive person who can never accept mistakes or failure. (Student G)

4.1.2. Instructional factors
a) Factors related to the teacher's characteristics

Among the six potential sources of language anxiety proposed by Young (1991, p. 427), two are closely related to the teacher: instructor beliefs about language teaching and instructor-learner interactions. This suggests teachers may have an important role in the issue of anxiety among language learners.

Overall, the interviewed students provided positive and encouraging feedback about their teachers. Most students stated that their instructors were nice, understanding, and supportive.

However, it was indicated that when a teacher was perceived as difficult to approach, unfriendly, too serious about assessment, or too demanding, students were likely to experience tension and nervousness in the classroom (Student B). Particularly, the way teachers responded to students' performance might be an important anxiety-generating factor. According to student E, students were sensitive to teachers' attitudes after they gave the answers or performed an activity in class; if teachers were harsh and showed little sympathy or encouragement, students might feel they created a negative image in their teachers' eyes and became intimidated. This finding is consistent with what has been suggested by Samimy (1994, cited in Tallon, 2008, p. 5) and Aida (1994, cited in Tallon, p. 5): a judgmental teaching attitude and a harsh manner of teaching are linked to student fear in the classroom.

Moreover, "a sense that the class does not provide students with the tools necessary to match up with the teacher's expectations, and the sense of being judged by the teacher" are closely associated with anxiety (Palacios,

1998, cited in Tallon, 2008, p. 5). In other words, if teachers' requirements are considered too demanding, students might also feel highly anxious:

> My Listening teacher requires us to repeat the exact phrases we hear in the recording. When we cannot give the answers, she seems upset and sometimes even complains about why we cannot do such a simple task. She appears not to understand that listening skill is new to us. We always feel discouraged and nervous in listening lessons. (Student K)

In addition, sometimes teachers spoke English too fast that students could not follow, which made students anxious (Student C). This comment supports the findings of the component analysis of the FLCAS in Research Question 1: 44% of the surveyed students reported that being unable to understand what the teacher was saying or correcting in English could contribute to anxiety.

Ando (1999, cited in Tallon, 2008, p. 5) also found that having a native speaker for a teacher could cause anxiety, which was also reported by the interviewed students in this study:

> Sometimes I find it hard to understand my foreign teacher. She also asks us to discuss some very unfamiliar topics. Now and then I feel confused and nervous in her speaking lessons.(Student I)

b) Factors related to classroom's characteristics

i.   Classroom atmosphere

According to Ghaith, Shaaban, & Harkous (2007, p. 230), research on the efficacy of teaching and learning has highlighted the importance of classroom climate as a key determinant of learners' achievement and psychosocial adjustment. The students' responses in this current study are consistent with such finding. Most of the interviewed students claimed that a stressful classroom atmosphere made them highly anxious. It can be said that when the whole class seems to feel tense and quiet, the learners who are

already nervous will become even more apprehensive and those who are usually not anxious will also be negatively affected and thus feel uneasy.

ii.   Pace of the lesson

Some students expressed concern about the pace of listening and reading lessons. There were usually two or three tasks in each 100-minute lesson, so students were expected to do the task quickly and teachers were under the pressure to correct the answers in the given amount of time. As a result, many students had a feeling that they did not have enough time to comprehend the input, and they were frightened when being asked to give the answers which they were not sure of (Student E, Student G, and Student R). Due to time limitation, sometimes teachers had to rush through the correction part, leaving students confused about the exercises (Student B, Student C).

iii.   Competitive games/activities

Although most interviewed students showed a positive attitude toward and even an interest in competitive games or activities in the classroom, some individuals found those competitive activities not as fun but rather threatening.

To those who had introverted personality trait, they might not enjoy such types of activities. One student put it:

> I know those competitive games are just for fun, but I still don't like them. I do not want to compete with others. I also do not like being moved or moving around in class. I just want to sit at one place. Moreover, I hate the chaotic atmosphere aroused by those games. I just wish the classroom environment is calm and peaceful. (Student D)

Another reason why competitive games/activities could be anxiety-provoking is that some students who possessed competitive personality trait might no longer see the competitive activity as a fun game but a "battle" and

any failure or even threats of failure might cause them to feel highly anxious (Student G, Student O).

In addition, to those who had low self-esteem and self-perceived low ability level, they might fear that their incompetence might prevent them from performing as well as other peers in the game and that they might cause their team to lose.

> Other teams have stronger members than me, and I am just afraid that my team will lose because of my incompetence. Therefore, when it comes to my turn, I am really nervous and pray that I will perform well. If there are chances that one person may have to take several turns, I tend to find ways to let others take my turns because I know they will do better than me. (Student I)

iv.   Work arrangement

According to Tanveer (2007, p. 2-3), several recent approaches to foreign language teaching, such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are explicitly directed at reducing learner anxiety with an emphasis on pair or group work as a way to reduce language anxiety. Such approaches are believed to enable students to avoid exposing their weakness in front of others. However, the students who participated in this current study seemed to have contrasting viewpoints on this matter. While some individuals preferred working in pair or groups (Student J, Student M), others considered such work arrangements unfavorable. One possible explanation is that introverts usually prefer individual work more than group work, so they may easily become anxious if they are put in more communication-oriented classroom settings (Zheng, 2008, p. 3).

In addition, regarding learning styles, particularly "sociological styles" of each learner, it is possible that some students have a preference for working individually while others may have a preference for working in groups (Krinis, 2007, p. 8). Student D said:

> I have a habit of working and thinking on my own, and I tend to work better individually than with others.

Another explanation for dislike of group work that was cited by the students was lack of the teacher's supervision of how the groups conducted the task. When the teacher failed to perform their facilitating and supervising role, group work might go out of control and students might not discuss what was required. Besides,, some confident or more capable students might dominate the group and made the more timid and less able students feel intimidated (Student D, Student Q). Student Q shared:

> Working in pairs is fine, but working in groups allows me less chance to raise voice. Working with the more confident and better students makes me nervous.

v.   Other factors

Consistent with what has been reported in the literature of anxiety research (Koch & Terrell, 1991; Young, 1990; Young, 1999; cited in Zhang, 2010, p. 12-13), some other factors related to classroom procedures have been identified by some students to be anxiety-provoking: activities requiring performance in front of the class like role-play or presentation, being called on to answer the teacher's questions (especially without adequate time to prepare in advance), as well as language tests. However, most of the interviewed subjects claimed that they were not too nervous about these factors, not as much as they felt apprehensive of the classroom characteristics discussed above.

4.2. Data collected from interviews with teachers

   4.2.1.   Personal factors (Learner's characteristics)

i.   Shy personality

All of the 8 teachers participating in the interviews agreed that shy personality was a major determinant in the development of foreign

language learning anxiety. Some students were inherently more timid than others. Those students tended to be introverted and might feel uncomfortable about communicating with others or exposing their weaknesses.

While some teachers believed that it was hard to make a student with shy personality trait become more confident and active in class, most teachers emphasized the role of the teacher in making the classroom and the lesson less stressful as well as identifying and motivating timid students in class.

It is also important to note that affective variables do not operate independently of one another, and the complex relationships among them call for further inquiry (Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997, cited in Zheng, 2008, p.3). In other words, shy personality may not be the only affective factor related to the multidimensional psychological construct of anxiety. There are possibly other affective factors also closely associated with this phenomenon (e.g. self-esteem, motivation, etc.)

ii.   Low language proficiency

Most teachers believed that low language proficiency or linguistics difficulties such as lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation, immature language skills, etc. were major sources of anxiety among 1st-year FELTE students. Some claimed that low proficiency students tended to be more anxious than the high proficiency ones. Young (1991) also found significant differences in the anxiety levels experienced by students belonging to various proficiency groups.

iii.   Negative social comparisons and low self-esteem

The findings from the students' questionnaires and interviews clearly indicated that actual low language proficiency seemed to be not as a major

problem as the imagined or faulty self-perceived low language proficiency. In many cases, students are unable to accurately assess their own ability; instead, they engage in negative social comparisons with peers and develop a negative self-concept, which leads to low self-esteem and may discourage them from actively participating in the lesson. Although students appeared not to recognize that such a problem existed, it is a positive sign that the interviewed teachers were aware of that phenomenon. Here are some of the teachers' opinions:

> Some students in my class always tell me about how inferior they feel to their classmates, especially to those coming from popular high schools. (Teacher 2)
>
> Students usually assess their ability based on their comparisons with their peers. Many fail to see that each individual has certain strengths and weaknesses. They tend to focus too much on what they can't do as well as their classmates can, so many feel upset and anxious. (Teacher 6)

iv.   **Unrealistic expectations**

The teachers' viewpoints on learners' unrealistic expectations were quite similar to those of the students. The interviewed teachers were aware that 1st-year students might have faulty beliefs about language learning, which led to unrealistic expectations about their learning and performance.

> "At the end of the first semester, I asked my students to write a reflection on their studies. Many claimed that they failed to achieve the goals they set and that they feel really disappointed. I know that a problem among my students is they set unrealistic expectations and do not know how to meet them or in some cases will never be able to do that." (Teacher 4)

v.   **Lack of learning strategies and lack of motivation**

As stated by the interviewed teachers, closely related to the problem of unrealistic expectations was the students' lack of learning strategies and

lack of motivation. Many students are worried about their language skills, especially when they compare themselves with others and consider their ability to be lower. After that, it is natural for students to set goals and make plans to improve their skills. However, in addition to the fact that they tend to set unrealistic expectations or impractical plans, students may also lack appropriate learning strategies to effectively assist their learning or may lack motivation to follow their plan over a period of time long enough to see any progress.

The interviewed teachers shared some examples of their students. For instance, a student might indicate in their self-study timetable that she planned to self-study on certain days of the week. However, when asked by her teacher about her specific plan such as what skills she was going to practice, what resources and materials she was going to use, etc., she might simply respond that she had not thought about that (Teacher 5). Other students might set goals for themselves which were surely too ambitious; for example, that week she was going to memorize all of the English vowels and consonants, or in three days she was going to complete that listening practice book, etc. (Teacher 4).

In other cases, even though the students might be nervous about their English classes and felt upset that they were not as competent as other classmates, they might lack the necessary motivation to push them to find learning strategies which helped improve their language skills (Teacher 5). This finding is consistent to what was reported by some interviewed students. Student A and Student C both claimed that they found listening to be intimidating because they had not studied listening at high school. However, neither of them spent much time practicing this skill at home; instead, they only listened to English songs and sometimes did the exercises

in the course book. Student C added that there were some resources suggested by her teacher but she found those materials difficult and soon gave up.

4.2.2. Instructional factors
a) Factors related to the teacher's characteristics

Among the teacher factors identified by Palacios (1998, cited in Horwitz, et al., 2010, p. 105), three factors were also mentioned by the interviewed teachers in this current research, which were absence of the teacher's support, lack of time for personal attention, and a sense that the class did not provide students with the tools necessary to match up with the teacher's expectations.

According to Teacher 6, first-year students were expected to become active and independent learners who were responsible for their own studies. Their teachers no longer supervised and guided their learning process as closely and regularly as the teachers at high school. Instead of being able to meet and ask for support from their teachers almost every day like they used to do, now 1st-year students met each of their language teachers only one time a week in different skill-based classes. There was little time to communicate with the teachers about their problems given the short amount of class time. That added to the difficulties caused by the new learning environment, as well as the new teaching and learning styles at university. In addition, Teacher 5 affirmed that the teachers themselves were very busy with various responsibilities and concerns. Each teacher usually taught at least three classes and even two or three different language skills. Therefore, the teachers generally could not keep track of individual

students' personal and academic problems to offer as much support as students might need or desire.

Also commenting on the absence of teacher support as a source of learner anxiety, Teacher 4 shared a quite different viewpoint. Instead of discussing the absence of teacher support outside the classroom, she talked about the absence of teacher support in the language lessons, which she believed to have a more significant effect on students' anxious feelings in class.

> I used to attribute learner anxiety to students' personal factors. Gradually, I came to realize that the major causes lie in instructional practice, including inappropriate tasks, ambiguous instructions and assessment criteria; lack of scaffolding; as well as pace of the lesson. (Teacher 4)

She further explained that if tasks were too demanding for students' level, they were likely to feel discouraged and worried. Sometimes the tasks might not be too difficult, but the teachers might fail to provide clear instructions and assessment criteria, which made students confused and nervous about how to perform the tasks and to meet the teachers' requirements. This comment goes in line with what Palacios (1998, cited in Horwitz, et al., 2010, p. 105) has suggested: students feel anxious when they feel that the class does not provide students with the tools necessary to match up with the teacher's expectations. Moreover, some teachers shared that there were cases in which the teachers were preoccupied with their lesson plans and were not flexible enough to adapt the tasks in a way that best suited their students. They might be under the pressure to rush through the tasks in order to achieve what was planned and might forget an important fact that learner motivation and attention did not remain at the same level during the lesson but there were always continuous intervals of

high and low motivation and attention. Therefore, the teachers mighty fail to notice if the students were able to follow what was going on in the classroom.

Another problem is lack of scaffolding. 1st-year students need much support from the teachers in terms of vocabulary input, provision of background knowledge, as well as training of necessary sub-skills to perform the tasks. Lack of scaffolding might cause a lot of difficulty for students and thus might generate a high level of anxiety.

b) Factors related to classroom's characteristics

i. Classroom atmosphere

It is generally believed among the teacher participants that classroom atmosphere could contribute to language learning anxiety. Teacher 2 argued that a motivating classroom atmosphere was able to raise the spirit of even the anxious learners. On the other hand, a quiet and passive atmosphere was likely to lower the mood of every student, including those who usually were not anxious. Teacher 4 stated that a competitive classroom atmosphere might account for a high level of anxiety while a supportive classroom atmosphere might ease students' anxious feelings. This belief is consistent with what has been generally agreed among language educators and researchers (Ghaith, 2002; Huang, Eslami, & Hu, 2010).

Moreover, some teachers claimed that there was a certain anxiety trend in each group of students (each class): some groups of students seemed to exhibit higher levels of anxiety than others. One explanation provided by the interviewed teachers was that the overall anxiety level of the class was likely to be higher in a mix-ability group of students in which there was a

significant gap between the top students and the bottom students with the top being the minority and the bottom being the majority. As the students tended to negatively compare their ability with their peers, the self-perceived low ability students might constantly experience pressure and negative emotions. Another reason why there were different general anxiety levels across classes was what some teachers termed an "infectious" syndrome in the language classroom. If there were more anxious students than active and confident ones in a group of student, the whole group's emotional state might be dominated by feelings of tension and apprehension. These anxiety trends are illustrated in the mean anxiety scores of the surveyed classes as followed:

FIGURE 10: Anxiety trends among the surveyed classes
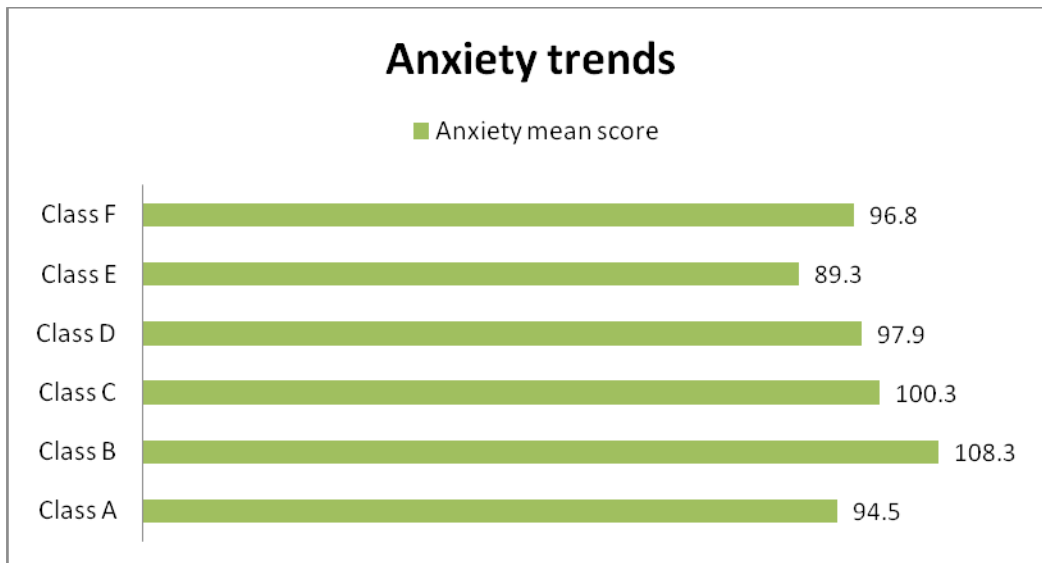
ii.   Other factors

All of the teacher participants believed that the pace of the lesson, activities requiring performance in front of the class (role-play, presentation, writing answers on the board, etc.), being called on to answer teachers' questions (especially when without preparation), and language tests were factors related to English language learning anxiety among 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS. However, the extent to which each factor contributed to students' anxiety is different.

It is a common belief among the teachers that the pace of most lessons in 1st-year language classes was appropriate for the students' level. However, Teacher 4 expressed concern about the curriculum of Reading and Listening classes and commented that the number of tasks on the class handout was rather too much in some lessons. Teacher 5 also stated that the amount of time given to Listening and Reading classes had been reduced from three periods (150 minutes) last year to two periods (100 minutes) this year, so the teachers and students sometimes might feel they had to rush in order to finish all tasks in the class handout. When asked about this problem, Teacher 3 explained that the group of teachers who were responsible for designing the 1st-year curriculum did not intend that all tasks in the class handout had to be done in class, so they just chose the reading texts and listening recordings that matched the themes and students' level and they even did not arrange the texts in the order of difficulty. Therefore, Teacher 3 suggested teachers be flexible when using the class handout in particular contexts.

Most teachers showed awareness that being called on to answer the teachers' questions was anxiety-provoking to students, so were activities requiring the students to perform in front of the class. Nonetheless, the

students were unlikely to be asked to spontaneously perform role-play or give presentations in front of others; rather, at the beginning of the semester the students were carefully informed of the task requirements and assessment criteria as well as the schedule of performance in class (Teacher 2). Therefore, most students did not feel too nervous about role-play or presentation, except for only a few students who generally feared to speak in the public. In regard to the students' apprehension of being called on to answer the teachers' questions, most of the interviewed teachers and students stated that the teachers tended to give students adequate time to prepare for the answers and that even if the students did not give the correct answers they did not experience harsh error correction manner of their teachers. Consequently, 1st-year students were not highly anxious about being called on to give answers or being corrected. The teachers' and students' responses in the interviews were found consistent with the data collected from the component analysis of the FLCAS in Research Question 1.

Finally, it is understandable that both the teachers and students indicated that language tests might contribute to learner anxiety to a great extent. However, most teacher participants believed that tests were not a constant source of anxiety in 1st-year classes at FELTE. Students only experienced test anxiety when mid-term and final exams approached. Moreover, as Teacher 3 and Teacher 4 stated, the students were clear about the test format and how to prepare for them, so it was expected that they were not too anxious about tests.

4.3. Summary of findings about the causes of language anxiety in 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS

	Students' perceptions	Teachers' perceptions
Learner-related factors	• Shy personality • Low language proficiency • Negative social comparisons with peers & Low self-esteem • Unrealistic expectations or perfectionism • Lack of learning strategies	• Shy personality • Low language proficiency • Negative social comparisons with peers & Low self-esteem • Unrealistic expectations or perfectionism • Lack of learning strategies & lack of motivation
Teacher-related factors	• Unsympathetic personalities: unfriendly, difficult to approach, too serious about assessment, & too demanding • Harsh error correction manner • Others: foreign teachers, teachers speaking too fast.	• Absence of teacher's support • Lack of time for personal attention
Classroom-related	• Classroom atmosphere • Pace of the lesson	• Classroom atmosphere • Pace of the lesson

factors	• Competitive games/activities • Work arrangement • Others: activities requiring performance in front of the class, being called on to answer teacher's questions, & language tests	• Others: activities requiring performance in front of the class, being called on to answer teacher's questions, & language tests

5. Research question 5: How is anxiety manifested in the students (psychologically, physiologically, as well as behaviorally) as perceived by the students and teachers?

The following table summarizes the findings about the students' and teachers' perceptions of anxiety manifestations in the learners (the differences between their viewpoints are *italicized*):

TABLE 7: Anxiety manifestations

	Students' perceptions	Teachers' perceptions
Physiological manifestations	• Rapid heartbeat • Blushed face • Trembling	• Rapid heartbeat • Blushed face • Trembling • *An anxious look on the face or in the eyes* • *Sweat*
Psychological manifestations	• Fear • Inability to concentrate • Forgetfulness (poor memory recall and retention) • Feelings of helplessness • *Negative performance expectancies*	• Fear • Inability to concentrate • Forgetfulness (poor memory recall and retention) • Feelings of helplessness
Behavioral manifestations	• Avoidance of eye contact • Not finishing the task and passively waiting for the teacher to check the answers • Talking with peers instead of doing what is required • Asking peers for the	• Avoidance of eye contact • Not finishing the task and passively waiting for the teacher to check the answers • Talking with peers instead of doing what is required • Asking peers for the answers

	answers	• Short answer responses
	• Short answer responses	• Unwillingness to participate in group work or whole-class activities
	• Unwillingness to participate in group work or whole-class activities	• *Speaking softly when giving responses*
	• *Not wanting to go to class*	• *Opening books that are unrelated to the lesson*
	• *Napping in class for a few minutes*	

It can be seen from the findings that the interviewed teachers and students appeared to agree on the most typical anxiety manifestations. In addition, the teachers seemed to recognize even more symptoms of anxiety than the students did, indicating that the teachers were aware of the anxiety phenomenon in their students and that the teachers were likely to be able to identify anxious students in class.

6. Research question 6: What are some effects of anxiety on language learning and performance as perceived by the students and teachers?

Is anxiety debilitating or facilitating to 1st-year FELTE students' language learning and performance? Is anxiety a cause or an effect of poor performance or is it a vicious circle between anxiety and language achievement? When answering these questions, only two of the 20 interviewed students explicitly stated that anxiety was facilitating to their learning while most of the student participants saw its detrimental effects outweighed its positive influences. Student E and Student O claimed that their moderate level of anxiety motivated them to study harder and to improve their language skills. Some teachers also agreed with this

viewpoint. For example, Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 argued that the anxiety level among 1st-year FELTE students was not alarming; instead, a little worry was essential for the students' success because anxiety made students aware of their challenges and motivated them to overcome the obstacles, which would lead to progress in their learning. This perspective is similar to what has been suggested by some researchers like Scovel (1991, cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 11) and Oxford (1999, cited in Subasi, 2010, p. 31).

On the other hand, other students and teachers listed several negative manifestations of anxiety and explained how anxiety adversely affected their language learning and performance. The detrimental effects of anxiety are suggested to be projected on at least five aspects (MacIntyre, 1998, cited in Zheng, 2008, p. 5), which is illustrated by the responses of the interviewed students and teachers in this current study.

First, academically, higher levels of language anxiety are associated with lower language achievement. Student F and Student M claimed that anxiety affected their learning in class and their performance in tests, which resulted in their low language achievement. Teacher 5 argued that most students experienced debilitating anxiety rather than facilitating anxiety because only a small percentage of students were able to turn anxious feelings into a source of motivation for their learning. She believed the students tended to let negative emotions take control and their learning might be badly affected by anxiety. Moreover, Teacher 4 argued that the relationship between anxiety and poor language achievement was indeed a circle, a "vicious circle" going on continuously between learners' negative feelings and undesirable performance (Wilson, 2006, p. 95-96).

Second, socially, the learners with higher level of language anxiety have the tendency to avoid interpersonal communication more

often than less anxious learners. Student J and Student N reported that anxious feelings discouraged them from volunteering answers or participating in class activities. Most teacher participants also cited student unwillingness to engage in class activities as a common manifestation of language anxiety.

Third, cognitively, anxiety can occur at the first two stages of language acquisition and influenced both the speed and accuracy of learning. Anxiety aroused during the input stage may distract the individual's attention and make the learner unreceptive to language input (Wang, 2005, p. 26). Student O stated that anxiety made it harder and slower for her to learn new knowledge. Student C and Student H asserted that anxiety made them unable to concentrate on the reading text; therefore, they could not understand the information to find the answers. Similarly, Student Q said she could be so anxious that she could not comprehend the sounds she heard from the recording. According to Wang (2005, p. 26), if anxiety is aroused at the processing stage, it can interfere with the organization and assimilation of information, hindering a student's ability to understand messages or learn new vocabulary items in the foreign language Student H reported inability to remember the words or whatever she learned in class that day if she was feeling anxious during the lesson.

Fourth, anxiety arousal can impact the quality of communication output because it may interfere with the retrieval and production of previously learned information (Wang, 2005, p. 26) and cause ineffective retrieval of vocabulary and inappropriate use of grammar rules, or even result in an inability to respond at all (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 3). Student I affirmed that anxiety adversely affected her oral performance in class: she might be able to give only short responses because she could not think of anything to say or might feel really frustrated because

she could not remember the words or structures to express her ideas. Teacher 8 also commented that he could clearly see the direct impact of anxiety on the students' performance in class.

Finally, personally, anxiety may turn language learning into an unpleasant experience which deeply disturbs one's self-esteem or self-confidence as a learner. Most students believed that anxiety lowered their self-confidence. Particularly, student F expressed concern about the circle of anxiety and low self-esteem. She used to be quite confident about her language skills, and then she experienced anxiety in class and became less confident, which prevented her from participating in class activities and interfered with her learning. Lower language achievement increased her anxiety level, which further lowered her self-esteem, and she felt that she could never break that circle. Sharing a similar opinion, Teacher 1 affirmed that recurring anxiety would make a student become more and more timid in the English classroom.

In a nutshell, as Teacher 6 stated, language learning anxiety was inevitable and might have either positive or negative effects depending on various factors such as the level of anxiety or individual students' characteristics. What was most important is that both teachers and students should be aware of the existence of such phenomenon and found ways to maximize its potential facilitating effects while minimizing any possible debilitating impacts on language learning (Teacher 1, Teacher 6).

7. **Research question 7: What are some personal and instructional factors contributing to the alleviation of anxiety as perceived by the students and teachers?**

7.1. Students' coping strategies

In his study which was designed to develop a typology of strategies that Japanese students use to cope with English language learning anxiety, Kondo (2004) identified 70 basic tactics and put them into five strategy categories. Those include:

> (1) Preparation (e.g. studying hard, trying to obtain good summaries of lecture notes), (2) Relaxation (e.g. taking a deep breath, trying to calm down), (3) Positive thinking (e.g. imagining oneself giving a great performance, trying to enjoy the tension), (4) Peer seeking (e.g. looking for others who are having difficulty controlling their anxiety, asking other students if they understand the class), and (5) Resignation (e.g. giving up, sleeping in class) (Kondo, 2004, p. 258).

Such typology of students' coping strategies is considered helpful to categorize the strategies discussed in the interviews with 20 first-year FELTE students in this current study. Findings related to these coping strategies are provided in the following table:

TABLE 8: Students' anxiety-coping strategies

| 1. Preparation | The students assumed that anxiety arose because they lacked the necessary academic skills, so they might study harder or prepare better for their performance in class. Student E often prepared for her oral performance by writing the main points on a piece of paper. Student G and Student M usually spent time reflecting on their in-class learning to identify their weaknesses and tried to study at home to improve them. Student N was anxious about her listening skill, |

	so she spent much time at home practicing listening to English, mostly through cable TV programs. Student Q was concerned about her lack of vocabulary and background knowledge, so she usually previewed the text book before each lesson to get some ideas about the theme and prepared some related vocabulary. Student H and Student K, despite their apprehension of speaking English in class, tried to find as many opportunities as possible to practice speaking in the lesson. Also, attributing her anxiety to low self-confidence, Student K took the initiative to participate in various extra-curricular activities on campus to make herself more confident.
2. Relaxation	The students might try to ease bodily reactions and tension by trying to take a deep breath (Student B, F, G, I, J, K, M, Q, S).
3. Positive thinking	The students thought that their cognition (worry, preoccupations, and concerns) created the anxiety, thus attempting to suppress or alter the thought processes. Students might try to navigate their thoughts away from anxious feelings and focus their thoughts on the task (Student B, F, J, K, M, S). Students might also try to think more positively (Student G, Q, R). Especially, student R usually mumbled her favorite song "Niem Tin Chien Thang" or "Belief in Victory" whenever she felt anxious in the lesson in order to raise her spirit.
4. Peer seeking	The students mighty turn to their peers to share their anxious feelings. That way, they might either receive

	encouragement or learn that they were not the only anxious learners, which made them feel less anxious (Student H, J, K, Q, R).
5. Resignation	The students felt there was nothing they could do about their anxiety. Student L and Student P tended to continue doing the task without trying to repress or reduce their anxious feelings but simply waited for their anxiety to go away by itself. Student C and Student D tended to stop doing the required task and waited for the teacher to give the answers. Student H sometimes took a quick nap in class for just a few minutes.

7.2. Instructional factors

The student and teacher participants in this current study have identified several instructional factors which may contribute to the alleviation of learner anxiety.

7.2.1. Supportive and motivating classroom atmosphere

Most students reported that their mood is affected by the classroom atmosphere. Student O and Student M reported feeling anxious when the learning environment is stressful. On the other hand, Student H, J, K emphasized the positive effect of positive classroom atmosphere on their emotional state, especially in speaking lessons. Particularly, Student Q stated that her anxiety reduced over time because she was lucky enough to study in a class in which peers are friendly and supportive to each other.   Huang et al.'s (2010, p. 35) study found that

both academic and personal support from peers was positively correlated with students' comfort with English-language learning. Therefore, the interviewed students and instructors suggested teachers create a supportive, motivating, and stress-reduced learning environment in the English classroom. Only in such a class might teachers be able to create opportunities for shy individuals to practice speaking in front of others without making them feel highly anxious (teacher 6).

7.2.2. Group work and group performance

Many students expressed a strong preference for group work and group performance over tasks requiring individual work and performance in front of the class (Student B, D, L, N). Teacher 6 also suggested that 1st-year students should be allowed to work in groups, and the output should be some types of tangible products instead of individual oral performance in front of others.

7.2.3. Appropriate pace of the lesson

Students have identified pace of the lesson as an anxiety-generating factor and indicated a wish that the pace of the lesson should not be too fast. Students would like to have enough time to comprehend the input and prepare for the answers or task performance (Student E, J, K, M); they would also want the exercises to be checked and explained in a thorough manner (Student A, F, Q). As a result, they do not want the teacher to rush through the exercises and force them to work under strict time pressure because that makes students feel like the lesson is turned into a test and they cannot learn much from such lesson. This belief is shared by most interviewed teachers. Teacher 2, 3, and 4 all suggested that teachers be flexible when using the in-class handout in specific classroom contexts. If there are too many tasks on the handout to be

covered in one lesson, teachers should discuss with students to learn their preference: whether they would like to complete all tasks to practice working under time pressure or they would rather finish only one or two tasks with adequate time for them to think carefully about the answers and for the teacher to give detailed explanation. In addition, Teacher 4 and Teacher 7 emphasized that teachers should constantly evaluate the pace of the lesson to see if students are able to follow what is going on in the classroom so that the pace is most suitable and not anxiety-provoking to students.

7.2.4. Fun activities

To make the classroom atmosphere less stressful, both students and teachers agreed that fun activities should be integrated in the lesson. Teacher 3 suggested that highly-anxiety provoking lessons like listening should start with a fun warm-up game. While most students enjoy participating in competitive games, some expressed unfavorable attitude toward activities that require them to compete with others. As a result, some students and teachers considered fun cooperative activities to be a good idea. For example, Teacher 6 suggested playing a song for the class to sing along, and Teacher 4 suggested conducting Total Physical Response (TPR) activities to stir the classroom atmosphere.

7.2.5. Teachers' Scaffolding

Huang et al. (2010) studied the relationship between language learning anxiety and various types of support (academic and personal support from teachers and peers) and found that such support can help learners feel at ease in a language class. Particularly, teacher academic support was identified as the most pervasive variable in relation to the alleviation of language learning anxiety.

In terms of academic support from the teachers, the interviewed students (A, M) and teachers (3, 4) stated that clear instructions and assessment criteria as well as adequate input of vocabulary, background knowledge, and necessary sub-skills should be provided to students before they are asked to perform a language task. It is also favorable that teachers can recognize when the assigned task seem to be too demanding for the students and take immediate actions. Teacher 4 and Teacher 7 indicated that if students seem to be confused or the class atmosphere appears to be tense, teachers should immediately identify the problems; they may slow down the lesson, provide assistance, or cut short the demanding task. In addition, when students are working in groups, it is expected that the teacher acts as a facilitator and supervisor to provide help when necessary and to ensure that the more confident and capable students do not dominate the more timid group members (Student D, N).

7.2.6. Teacher's supportive manner when responding to students' performance

It is commonly agreed among students and teachers that how the instructor responds to the learner's performance plays an important role in the development or alleviation of learner anxiety. All student participants stated that they loved to be encouraged and praised by their teachers after they raise their opinions. Positive reinforcements like praise, encouragement, or bonus points were claimed to motivate students to speak in class. In addition, if a student is not sure about the answer and shows much hesitation when speaking, the teacher is expected to be patient and to demonstrate that he or she is still paying attention to the students (Student I). Moreover, teachers should elicit to help anxious students generate more ideas when they are called on to speak or answer

questions in class (Student J, P). However, when eliciting, teachers should be careful about not asking too many questions, especially questions in English, because it may confuse the anxious students even more. When a student cannot provide an answer, it might be a good idea not to push him or her too much because it can be perceived as highly intimidating (Student J, Q). What a teacher might want to do in that situation to help the student feel less anxious is to show understanding toward his or her difficulties and giving soothing statements such as "It's fine. Don't worry. I know this is a tough question" (suggested by Student A, Q).

Aware that a judgmental attitude or a harsh error correction manner is highly anxiety-provoking, the interviewed teachers shared some ideas about giving corrective feedback to students. Teacher 2 argued that when a student is speaking, teachers should try to focus other students' attention on the content rather than the form of the answer by asking them to take notes of the presented ideas. When giving feedback, teachers should not focus too much on the errors nor single out individual students' mistakes to correct in front of the class. Teachers should emphasize to students that language learning is a trial and error process: making mistakes means that they are learning and making progress, and the important thing is not to produce flawless sentences but to learn from the mistakes they make to improve their language proficiency (Teacher 2). According to Teacher 4, when giving feedback, teachers may ask other students to give comments first, and then teachers should discuss both strengths and weaknesses, usually praising the good points before talking about what students have not done well. Teacher 7 also suggested teachers use informal or funny language to give comments to anxious learners with the purpose of making the feedback sound less serious.

7.2.7. Positive Teacher-Learner Relationship

Several characteristics the student participants claimed to expect of an ideal teacher are: friendly, humorous, and understanding. Among those characteristics, it is possible that "teachers' support and understanding are particularly important" (Hoang et al., 2010, p. 36). The learners like teachers who show an interest in getting to know their students personally. They want to be able to share with teachers their feelings as well as their difficulties and to receive teachers' advice.

The teacher participants in this current study appear to possess such desired characteristics. Teacher 2, 3, and 6 stated that they usually tell jokes and integrate social chat in their lessons to make the English classroom less stressful. Teacher 4 said she always spends the first lesson to get to know her students by asking them to write a short introduction about themselves, including their interests as well as concerns. Other teachers shared that they often try to give students advice about learning strategies to help them improve their language skills as well as tell students about teachers' own experience as language learners. Some teachers try to befriend with their students and show students that they are available to give assistance even outside the classroom and students can always contact them via email for support (Teacher 1, 6).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This present study investigated the phenomenon of foreign language learning anxiety among 1st-year students at the Faculty of English language Teacher Education (FELTE), University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS). The research aimed to investigate the anxiety level among the students, to explore students' and teachers' perspectives on English language learning anxiety (anxiety's manifestations, causes, and effects, as well as factors alleviating anxiety), and to identify gaps between students and teachers' perceptions.

As the conclusion of the whole research, the last chapter first gives a summary of the major findings. Then, some pedagogical implications

for English instruction are provided. Finally, some limitations of the current study are acknowledged, and several suggestions for further research are proposed.

1. Major findings of the study

This study was conducted with 135 first-year English-major students and 21 teachers from FELTE, ULIS. Both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) research methods were utilized. The main quantitative data collection instrument in this research is the Vietnamese-translated version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which was developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). Based on the results of quantitative and qualitative data collection in Chapter 4, the researcher presents the conclusions by integrating the research questions, the data analysis, and discussions as the following:

1.1. Research question 1: How pervasive is foreign language anxiety among 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS, and what is the degree of this anxiety?

Horwitz (1986, p. 560) stated that possible scores on the FLCAS ranged from 33 to 165; the theoretical mean of the scale was 99. This study showed that the mean of anxiety scores measured by the FLCAS for the entire group of 135 subjects was 97.90, and the range was 61-139.

In comparison with what has been reported in the literature of anxiety research, the result of this current study shows that 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS, experience moderate levels of language anxiety and the anxiety levels do not vary much among those students. Also, foreign language learning anxiety appears to be a pervasive phenomenon in 1st-year FELTE classrooms. It is probable that there might be some common sources of the anxious feelings experienced by this group of students.

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This study proposed a component analysis model to organize and interpret the students' responses to the FLCAS items. Some potential sources of their anxiety have been identified, including language tests, difficulty in understanding and following what the teacher is saying or correcting, as well as negative social comparisons with peers and low self-esteem. The responses to the FLCAS items also specify several psycho-physiological symptoms and avoidance behaviors as manifestations of anxiety in the students: trembling, heart pounding, and more seriously, forgetfulness, lack of concentration, and possibly lack of participation.

1.2. Research question 2: Do the students and teachers think students' anxiety level changes over time?

The questionnaires were delivered to 135 first-year students during week 5 and 6 of the second semester. Data collected from the questionnaires for the students indicated that 77% of the surveyed students found that their anxiety level at week 5-6 of the second semester was lower than that when they started college, 8.1% reported no changes, and 14.9% stated that their anxiety increased over time.

Data collected from student interviews provided insights into their perceptions. Some possible reasons why the anxiety level decreased were: getting used to the learning environment and methods at university, becoming acquainted with teachers and peers, regularly practicing with language skills, as well as recognizing one's strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, inability to adapt, failure to find solutions to learning difficulties, and constant worry about being less competent than other classmates might account for no different or higher level of anxiety in students. Some also found that their anxiety increased as language classes tend to get more difficult over time.

Data collected from teacher questionnaires and interviews demonstrated no significant gap between the teachers' and students' perceptions of the reasons why most 1st-year students gradually became less anxious than when they first entered university while some other students still worry much about their English language classes.

1.3. Research question 3: Which language skills are most anxiety-provoking to the students as perceived by the students and teachers?

The students and teachers were asked to rank the four language skills in the order of anxiety-provoking level from 1 (least-anxiety provoking) to 4 (most anxiety-provoking). It appears that the teachers are aware of the extent each language skill causes anxious feelings to their 1st-year students. The data collected from questionnaires for the teachers resemble what was collected from student questionnaires: listening and speaking are considered most anxiety-provoking. However, the teachers seemed to regard listening less threatening than how the students perceived of that skill, and the teachers had a greater tendency to consider reading to be least anxiety-provoking while the students saw reading and writing as quite equal in terms of anxiety-generating level.

1.4. Research question 4: What are some personal and instructional factors contributing to language anxiety as perceived by the students and teachers?

Data collected from the student and teacher questionnaires provided insights into the potential sources of language anxiety among 1st-year learners at FELTE, ULIS, and confirmed the result of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale's (FLCAS) component analysis in Research Question 1.

The following table summarizes the findings of the students' and teachers' viewpoints on factors related to language anxiety:

Learner characteristics	• Shy personality • Low language proficiency • Negative social comparisons with peers & Low self-esteem • Unrealistic expectations or perfectionism • Lack of learning strategies • Lack of motivation
Teacher	• Unsympathetic personalities • Harsh error correction manner • Absence of teacher's support • Lack of time for personal attention
Classroom procedures	• Classroom atmosphere • Pace of the lesson • Competitive games/activities • Work arrangement • Activities requiring performance in front of the class • Being called on to answer teacher's questions • Language tests

In addition, it is important to note that most student participants in this study attributed their language learning anxiety to personal factors like shy personality, low language proficiency, and low self-esteem. However, the findings from students' questionnaires and interviews clearly indicated that the actual low language proficiency seemed to be not as a major problem as the imagined or faulty self-perceived low ability level.

1.5. Research question 5: How is anxiety manifested in the students (psychologically, physiologically, and behaviorally) as perceived by the students and teachers?

The interviewed teachers and students appeared to agree on the most typical anxiety manifestations. In addition, the teachers seemed to recognize even more symptoms of anxiety than students did, indicating that the teachers are aware of the anxiety phenomenon among their students.

The most commonly cited manifestations of anxiety in students include:

- Physiological symptoms: rapid heartbeat, blushed face, trembling, sweat, and anxious look
- Psychological symptoms: fear, inability to concentrate, forgetfulness, and feelings of helplessness
- Behavioral symptoms: avoidance of eye contact, short answer responses, unwillingness to participate in class, and postponing studying

1.6. Research question 6: What are some effects of anxiety on language learning and performance as perceived by the students and teachers?

Language learning anxiety is inevitable and may have either positive or negative effects depending on various factors such as the level of anxiety or individual students' characteristics. While facilitating anxiety may motivate students to study harder and become better at English, debilitating anxiety and poor language achievement may form a "vicious circle" which adversely affects learners (Wilson, 2006, p. 95-96). Some negative effects of anxiety are: harder and slower process of learning new words, lack of concentration, inability to respond, avoidance of interpersonal communication, and less confidence and low self-esteem.

1.7. Research question 7: What are some personal and instructional factors contributing to the alleviation of language anxiety as perceived by the students and teachers?

1.7.1. Students' Anxiety-Coping Strategies

This current study employed Kondo's (2004) typology of Japanese students' anxiety-coping strategies to categorize the techniques suggested by the student participants:

- Preparation: Students assume that anxiety arises because they lack the necessary academic skills, so they may study harder or prepare better for their performance in class.
- Relaxation: Students may try to ease bodily reactions and tension
- Positive thinking: Students think that their cognition (worry, preoccupations, and concerns) creates the anxiety, thus attempting to suppress or alter the thought processes.
- Peer seeking: Students may turn to their peers to share their anxious feelings.
- Resignation: Students perceive that their anxiety is too much to cope with, so they may not invest effort to reduce the anxiety but simply wait for the anxious feelings to go away.

1.7.2. Instructional factors contributing to the alleviation of language learning anxiety

The student and teacher participants in this current study have identified several instructional factors which may contribute to the alleviation of learner anxiety:

- Supportive and motivating classroom atmosphere
- Group work and group performance
- Appropriate pace of the lesson
- Fun activities
- Teachers' scaffolding
- Teachers' supportive manner when responding to students' performance
- Positive teacher-learner relationship

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2. Pedagogical implications from the findings

The findings of this current research have some meaningful educational implications for EFL instructors. They are pointed as follows:

1) English language learning anxiety is pervasive among 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS, and the anxiety levels are moderate and above. This indicates that anxiety is an important affective factor in language learning, so both the teachers and students should become aware of such phenomenon. Moreover, the role of language teachers is not to merely recognize the presence of foreign language anxiety in learners but also to help learners acknowledge, cope with, and reduce their debilitating anxiety as well as to make the learning context less stressful.

2) While anxiety gradually decreased in many students, some individuals still struggle with the "feelings of tension and apprehension" (MacIntyre, 1994, cited in Wang, 2005, p. 16) that they experience in their English classroom. It is due to students' lack of learning strategies and constant worry about their ability, especially in comparison with peers. Teachers can assist these students by getting to know students' problems in their studies and providing them with the necessary learning strategies though both informal sharing in class and systematic training of study skills. There seems to be a need for further research on the effectiveness of the Study Skills course (which is being offered to 1st-year students in their second semester) in order to make the course more helpful to the students. As regard to students' constant worry about their ability, especially in comparison with peers, it is important that students learn to form accurate self-assessment of their ability. Research on the relationship between self-esteem and achievement has shown that "self-esteem can be modified through direct instruction and such instruction can lead to achievement gains" (Covington, 1989, cited in Andres, 2002).

Teachers may help students increase self-esteem and form a more accurate self-concept by creating opportunities for them to first explore their strengths and then perform their strong points in class. It might also be a good idea for teachers to create a supportive classroom environment with cooperative tasks in order to limit students' chances of engaging in negative social comparisons with peers.

3)   Among the five categories of students' anxiety-coping strategies, preparation and peer seeking might be most effective in reducing learner anxiety. Again, this finding underscores the teacher's important role in helping students with their "preparation" by giving advice or training studying skills as well as in creating a classroom environment which values peer academic and personal support among classmates.

4)   Of all the instructional factors believed to contribute to the alleviation of anxiety, the teacher-related factors, especially a positive teacher-student relationship, seem to be most highly regarded by students. Such beliefs have significant pedagogical implications for the teaching of English at FELTE, ULIS. Since teacher academic support has been discussed above, this section will mainly focus on the importance of teacher personal support to language learners. It aims to advocate the belief that "as teachers we can exert an influence both on the performance and well-being of our students" because

> …every learner requires first and foremost: to be noticed, to be attended to, to be valued, to be affirmed. Out of that attention and affirmation grow the confidence and, yes, the courage to learn: if the teacher dares to teach, that is, to attend to and care for the learners, then the learners in their turn can dare to learn. (Whitaker, 1995, cited in Andres, 2002)

3. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

First, replication of this study is needed to validate the present findings and to determine whether the reported findings hold true with

other populations, such as students from other universities and areas in Vietnam.

Second, the results of the study are found both similar to and different from those of previous studies that involve students from other cultures. Therefore, the study should be replicated with a larger sample size as well as with Vietnamese students learning other different foreign languages before any generalizations could be made.

Third, this study revealed the pervasiveness and degree of the anxiety phenomenon as well as the views of teachers and students about English language learning anxiety in the context of the Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, ULIS; however, it dealt with the situation only at one level (the 1st-year). Further studies could look into the same subject by diversifying the group levels so as to disclose the similarities and differences among the anxiety of students at different proficiency levels.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Questionnaire for students

PHIẾU KHẢO SÁT DÀNH CHO SINH VIÊN

Chào bạn. Tôi là Nguyễn Thùy Linh, sinh viên năm thứ 4, khoa Sư Phạm Tiếng Anh, ĐHNN-ĐHQGHN. Khóa luận tốt nghiệp của tôi nghiên cứu về "Cảm giác lo âu căng thẳng của sinh viên Tiếng Anh Kinh Tế năm thứ nhất trong các lớp học môn thực hành tiếng (Nghe, Nói, Đọc, Viết)" *(Foreign Language Learning Anxiety among 1st-year Double-Major Students at FELTE, ULIS)*. Các câu trả lời của bạn trong phiếu khảo sát này là một phần không thể thiếu trong quá trình nghiên cứu và sẽ giúp tôi tìm ra những kết quả có giá trị, đóng góp cho việc dạy và học tiếng Anh tại ĐHNN-ĐHQGHN. Đây không phải là một bài kiểm tra nên các câu trả lời sẽ không được đánh giá tính Đúng, Sai. Ý kiến cá nhân của bạn sẽ giúp tôi tìm hiểu được một cách tốt nhất về thực trạng của vấn đề được nghiên cứu. Tôi xin đảm bảo các thông tin cá nhân cũng như các câu trả lời của bạn sẽ được giữ bí mật tuyệt đối và chỉ được dùng cho mục đích nghiên cứu. Cảm ơn bạn rất nhiều vì đã tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.

I/ THÔNG TIN CÁ NHÂN:

Tên đầy đủ:

Lớp:

II/ MỨC ĐỘ GÂY RA CẢM GIÁC LO ÂU CĂNG THẲNG CỦA CÁC MÔN HỌC THỰC HÀNH TIẾNG

Sắp xếp bốn môn học thực hành tiếng (Nghe, Nói, Đọc, Viết) theo mức độ mà chúng gây ra cảm giác lo âu căng thẳng cho bạn (từ **thấp nhất (1)** đến **cao nhất (4)**). Ghi mức độ tương ứng vào các ô bên cạnh các môn học.

Ví dụ: Nghe 1, Viết 2, Nói 3, Đọc 4.

1   2   3   4

→

Môn gây lo âu căng thẳng thấp nhất   *Môn gây lo âu căng thẳng cao nhất*

Nghe ☐   Nói ☐   Đọc ☐   Viết ☐

III/ SỰ THAY ĐỔI MỨC ĐỘ CỦA CẢM GIÁC LO ÂU CĂNG THẲNG THEO THỜI GIAN

Hãy chỉ ra nếu mức độ cảm giác lo âu căng thẳng trong các lớp học môn thực hành tiếng của bạn thay đổi theo thời gian (*từ đầu học kì 1 năm thứ nhất đến hiện tại*) bằng việc đánh dấu vào một ô thích hợp:

	Giảm đi nhiều	*Giảm đi một chút*	*Không thay đổi*	*Tăng lên một chút*	*Tăng lên nhiều*
Cảm giác lo âu căng thẳng của tôi trong các lớp học môn thực hành tiếng vào thời điểm **hiện tại** so với thời điểm **đầu học kì 1 năm thứ nhất**:					

IV/ CẢM GIÁC LO ÂU CĂNG THẲNG TRONG GIỜ HỌC MÔN THỰC HÀNH TIẾNG

Các câu 1-33 dưới đây muốn nói đến cảm giác của bạn trong các lớp học thực hành tiếng. Hãy chỉ ra tính chính xác của chúng đối với cảm giác thật của bạn bằng việc đánh dấu vào một ô thích hợp sau mỗi câu (Hoàn toàn đồng ý, Đồng ý, Đồng ý một phần, không đồng ý một phần, Không đồng ý, hay Hoàn toàn không đồng ý). Hãy đưa ra ý kiến của bạn đối với *tất cả các câu 1-33*:

	Hoàn toàn đồng ý	Đồng ý	Đồng ý một phần, không đồng ý một phần	Không đồng ý	Hoàn toàn không đồng ý
1. Tôi không bao giờ cảm thấy tự tin về bản thân mình mỗi khi nói tiếng Anh.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Tôi không lo lắng về việc mắc lỗi sai trong giờ học môn thực hành tiếng.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Tôi cảm thấy run khi biết mình sắp bị giáo viên gọi trả lời câu hỏi.	5	4	3	2	1
4. Tôi cảm thấy sợ khi mình không hiểu được giáo viên đang nói gì bằng tiếng Anh.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Tôi không ngại việc tăng số lớp/số tiết học môn thực hành tiếng.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Trong giờ học môn thực hành tiếng, tôi nghĩ về những thứ không liên quan gì đến môn học.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Tôi luôn cảm thấy rằng các sinh viên khác giỏi tiếng Anh hơn mình.	5	4	3	2	1
8. Tôi thường cảm thấy bình tĩnh trong các bài kiểm tra/kì thi môn thực hành tiếng.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Tôi bắt đầu hoảng loạn khi phải nói mà không có sự chuẩn bị trong giờ học thực hành tiếng.	5	4	3	2	1
10. Tôi lo lắng về hậu quả của việc trượt các môn thực hành tiếng.	5	4	3	2	1
11. Tôi không hiểu tại sao các sinh viên khác lại có thể cảm thấy quá lo âu căng thẳng về các lớp học môn thực hành tiếng.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Trong giờ học môn thực hành tiếng, tôi có thể lo âu căng thẳng đến nỗi quên mất cả những kiến thức mình biết.	5	4	3	2	1
13. Tôi cảm thấy xấu hổ khi xung phong trả lời câu hỏi trong giờ học môn thực hành tiếng.	5	4	3	2	1
14. Tôi sẽ không cảm thấy lo âu căng thẳng nếu nói tiếng Anh với người bản xứ.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Tôi cảm thấy lo lắng khi mình không hiểu những gì giáo viên đang chữa.	5	4	3	2	1

16. Kể cả khi tôi chuẩn bị tốt cho giờ học môn thực hành tiếng, tôi vẫn cảm thấy lo âu căng thẳng.	5	4	3	2	1
17. Tôi thường không thích đến lớp học môn thực hành tiếng.	5	4	3	2	1
18. Tôi cảm thấy tự tin khi nói tiếng Anh trong giờ học môn thực hành tiếng.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Tôi sợ rằng giáo viên sẽ chữa bất kì lỗi sai nào tôi mắc phải.	5	4	3	2	1
20. Tôi thấy tim mình đập thình thịch khi giáo viên sắp gọi tôi trả lời câu hỏi.	5	4	3	2	1
21. Càng học nhiều để chuẩn bị cho bài kiểm tra/kì thi thực hành tiếng thì tôi lại càng cảm thấy bối rối.	5	4	3	2	1
22. Tôi không cảm thấy áp lực phải chuẩn bị thật tốt cho giờ học môn thực hành tiếng.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Tôi luôn cảm thấy rằng các sinh viên khác nói tiếng Anh tốt hơn mình.	5	4	3	2	1
24. Tôi cảm thấy rất xấu hổ và không thoải mái chút nào khi nói tiếng Anh trước các sinh viên khác trong lớp.	5	4	3	2	1
25. Mọi thứ trong giờ học môn thực hành tiếng diễn ra nhanh đến nỗi tôi lo sợ rằng mình không thể theo kịp và bị tụt lại phía sau.	5	4	3	2	1
26. Tôi cảm thấy lo âu, căng thẳng, bồn chồn, trong các lớp học môn thực hành tiếng nhiều hơn là trong các lớp học khác.	5	4	3	2	1
27. Tôi cảm thấy bồn chồn, căng thẳng, và bối rối khi tôi nói tiếng Anh trong lớp học thực hành tiếng.	5	4	3	2	1
28. Trên đường đến lớp học môn thực hành tiếng, tôi cảm thấy rất tự tin và thoải mái.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Tôi cảm thấy lo âu căng thẳng khi không hiểu được tất cả những gì giáo viên đang nói trong lớp học môn thực hành tiếng.	5	4	3	2	1
30. Tôi cảm thấy bị ngợp trước số lượng các quy tắc tôi phải học để nói tiếng Anh.	5	4	3	2	1
31. Tôi sợ rằng các sinh viên khác sẽ cười mình nếu tôi nói tiếng Anh trong lớp học môn thực hành tiếng.	5	4	3	2	1
32. Tôi có thể sẽ cảm thấy thoải mái khi gặp người bản xứ.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Tôi cảm thấy lo âu căng thẳng khi giáo viên hỏi tôi những câu hỏi mà tôi không được chuẩn bị trước.	5	4	3	2	1

CẢM ƠN BẠN RẤT NHIỀU VÌ ĐÃ THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU NÀY!

APPENDIX B. Questionnaire for teachers

Dear teacher,

My name is Nguyen Thuy Linh, a 4th-year student of the Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, ULIS. This questionnaire was designed as part of my graduation paper, **"Foreign Language Learning Anxiety** *(the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a foreign language)* **among 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS."** I would be really grateful if you could help by filling in the questionnaire. I hereby guarantee that all of the required information will be dealt with anonymously and only used for research purposes. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at *thuylinh_6ams@yahoo.com* or 098 2007 288. Thank you very much for your time and effort!

PART 1: PERSONAL INFORMATION:

- Full name:
- Years you have been teaching 1st-year students at FELTE, ULIS:

PART 2: LEVEL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING ANXIETY

In your opinion, the **level** of foreign language learning anxiety *(the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a foreign language)* among 1st-year students at FELTE is *(please check the appropriate box)*:

1. Very low	
2. Moderately low	
3. Moderate	
4. Moderately high	
5. High	

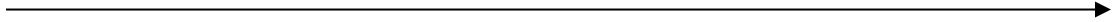**PART 3: FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING ANXIETY & THE FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS**

Please rank the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in the order of LEAST anxiety-provoking (**1**) to MOST anxiety-provoking (**4**).

1		2		3		4

LEAST anxiety-provoking skill   MOST anxiety-provoking skill

Listening ☐   **Speaking** ☐   **Reading** ☐   **Writing** ☐

PART 4: CHANGES IN ANXIETY LEVEL OVER TIME

In your opinion, in comparison with the beginning of the 1st semester when they first started college, 1st-year students' anxiety level **at this moment** is *(please check the appropriate box)*:

1. Much lower	
2. A little lower	
3. No different	
4. A little higher	
5. Much higher	

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY!

APPENDIX C. Foreign (second) language classroom anxiety scale

Directions: Each of the following statements refers to how you feel about your English language class. Please indicate whether you:

- Strongly agree = SA
- Agree = A
- Neither agree nor disagree = N
- Disagree = D
- Strongly disagree = SD

Indicate your feelings by checking the appropriate box next to each statement. Please give your first reaction to each statement. Please mark an answer for EVERY statement.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1) I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.					
2) I DON'T worry about making mistakes in language class.					
3) I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.					
4) It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the English language.					
5) It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes.					
6) During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.					
7) I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am.					
8) I am usually at ease (comfortable) during tests in my language class.					
9) I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.					
10) I worry about the consequences of failing my language class.					
11) I don't understand why some people get so upset over language classes.					
12) In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.					
13) It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.					
14) I would NOT be nervous speaking the English language					

with native speakers.					
15) I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.					
16) Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.					
17) I often feel like not going to my language class.					
18) I feel confident when I speak in English in my language class.					
19) I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.					
20) I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.					
21) The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.					
22) I DON'T feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.					
23) I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.					
24) I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of the other students.					
25) Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.					
26) I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.					
27) I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.					
28) When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.					
29) I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.					
30) I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak the English language.					
31) I am afraid that the other students in the class will laugh at me when I speak in English.					
32) I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the English language.					
33) I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.					