

Factors of learners' foreign language anxiety on second language acquisition

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ABSTRACT

In second language acquisition, foreign language anxiety (FLA) is still happening up to the present time. Many studies show that FLA mostly interferes with learners' language learning and always appears among language learners with various factors. However, despite numerous studies on the topic, the factor of the occurrence of FLA in the context of second language acquisition is still rarely discussed. Thus, this study aims to explore deeper the factors which affect learners' FLA in second language acquisition. This research employs a systematic literature review as the method of research. The data are gathered from several journals and articles from previous years related to learners' FLA factors. The findings of this research give insight to educators in comprehending learners' anxiety in second language acquisition with its factors. The implication of the study is to increase educators' awareness of learners' FLA so it will not affect learners' performance in classroom language learning.



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1. INTRODUCTION

There are many people experience anxiety in their lives. Anxiety is a subjective feeling of tension, nervousness, and worry caused by the autonomic nervous system's arousal (Spielberger, 1983). As a result, anxiety commonly interferes with daily activities due to the presence of unpleasant feelings. Language learning, particularly for second languages, is no exception. Foreign language anxiety is a term for a feeling of worry and fear of learning a language that is not the learners' first language (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). When it comes to learning a foreign language, anxiety is not uncommon; in fact, most students have experienced worry at some point throughout their studies (Marwan, 2008), even if not everyone has encountered it (Worde, 1998). Many students think that being worried when studying a foreign language is the same as having a mental obstacle to learning it. Students are more inclined to avoid difficult or personal texts in the target language when they are concerned. As a result, anxiety is a significant barrier that must be overcome in order for learning a second language to progress properly.

Essentially, anxiety in the acquisition of a second language has two different roles. Foreign language anxiety can have a negative role where it interferes with the child's language performance. Anxiety can induce physiological and behavioral symptoms such as a lack of motivation to study and difficulty concentrating. FLA's negative consequences, cause specific impediments to second language acquisition, fluency, and performance (Horwitz et al., 1986; Zahra et al., 2023; Zahra et al., 2019; Febrina et al., 2022; Rosalina & Nasrullah, 2019; Putri & Nasrullah, 2023). On the other hand, some research demonstrate that anxiety and student performance are just influenced by one another, rather than being the cause of one another (Arnold & Brown, 1999;

Horwitz, 2001; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999; Skehan, 1989). Unfortunately, language anxiety mostly interferes with children's second language acquisition. Horwitz (2001) since the mid-1960s, researchers have considered the possibility that anxiety interferes with second language learning and performance. He also states that understanding the dissatisfaction and discomfort that many people feel when learning a second language is important.

It's natural to encounter learners who are not confident or anxious when learning a second language. Language acquisition is a cognitive job that needs encoding, storage, and retrieval processes, and anxiety can intervene in each of these processes by causing worried pupils to have divided attention, according to MacIntrye (1995) on how anxiety impacts second language learning. Anxiety has a moderately unfavorable connection with language achievement, with the negative consequences varied depending on the situation, educational levels of the pupils, and the target language (Teimouri et al., 2019). Language anxiety usually emerges when learners have doubts about their capacity to acquire a second language or when they have difficulty understanding the learning process. Based on Horwitz & Cope (1986), language anxiety is defined as "a complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors associated with classroom language learning that arises from the uniqueness of the language learning process". As a result, the factors that induce anxiety in learners must be identified so that the learners' ability to acquire a second language is not disturbed.

Language anxiety certainly does not present itself. There are various factors behind it. FLA is a complicated form that is influenced by a multitude of circumstances like as teachers, peers, and the degree of instruction (Subekti, 2018). Meanwhile, according to Duraku (2017), academic activity and stress are two major elements that influence students' anxiety. Another study by Muhlis (2017) found that text elements, such as new themes and terminology, and personal aspects, such as making mistakes, are two key possible drivers of foreign language anxiety. Additionally, FLA is also caused by the awareness of the importance of English and the volition control (Trang et al., 2012). Dread of making mistakes, bad pronunciation, a lack of vocabulary, worry of corrections, and fear of failing the class are all variables which also contribute to language anxiety (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004; Horwitz et al., 1986; Pappamihel, 2002; Tallon, 2006). Other variables contributing to learners' language anxiety are a lack of preparation and the fact that they are not allowed to use their original language in the classroom (Mak, 2011). Several other studies believe that the gender of the learners affects their language anxiety as well (Awan et al., 2010; Hasan & Fatimah, 2014).

Anxiety research has tended to focus on the teacher-student connection. As previously stated, several researchers claim that distinct instructor characteristics are linked to elements that influence learners' language anxiety (Al-Saraj, 2014; Huang, 2012; Tallon, 2006; Young, 1991). When teachers are overly strict, students feel uneasy (Effiong, 2016; Tran & Moni, 2015). Teachers must develop techniques to lessen students' anxiety and help them cope with the difficulties of learning a language. They must continually reflect on and enhance their teaching abilities in order to do so (Marwan, 2008). This is also critical for improving language learning among students (Subekti, 2018). Students identified the circumstance causing anxiety to teacher-related and classroom-related elements in a recent study by Djafri & Wimbarti (2018). They go on to say that students' views of instructor behavior have a big impact on their anxiety about learning a foreign language. It also implies that the more negative the perception, the more concerned the pupils are. Students were dissatisfied with a number of instructor activities, including unfavorable teacher comments when students made mistakes, teachers who were overbearing in the classroom, and teaching methods that did not aid them in learning the subjects.

In the previous study, the difficulties when learning a foreign language are positively correlated to learners' FLA (Chen & Chang, 2004). Anxiety itself is still considered a complex and complicated phenomenon even though it has been studied since 1970s (Anwar & Louis, 2017), including FLA, which is an indicator of achievement in a foreign language (Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). As a topic that interferes with learners' learning of foreign languages, there have been many studies on FLA, yet it is still rarely talked about in the context of second language acquisition. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the factors that caused learners' foreign language anxiety to occur in second language acquisition. The researcher hopes that the findings provide

educators with insight into the aspects that contribute to learners' anxiety during second language acquisition. Moreover, hopefully, it may raise educators' awareness of students' FLA so that it does not affect students' performance during the second language acquisition process.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a systematic literature review as design of the study. Systematic literature reviews are a method of collecting and systematically summarising previous research. Synder (2019) states that “the aim of a systematic review is to identify all empirical evidence that fits the pre-specified inclusion criteria to answer a particular research question or hypothesis”. He adds as well that because there is a certainty that all relevant data has been covered, a systematic literature review is likely the most accurate technique for collecting articles. This approach is also useful if the goal of the review is to analyze and synthesize evidence of a specific factor's effect. Meanwhile, Ribbins and Gunter (2002) believe that systematic literature reviews aim to maximize the benefits of procedural and analytical objectivity.

There are 8 steps in conducting systematic literature reviews: (1) formulating the research problem, (2) developing and validating the review protocol, (3) searching the literature, (4) screening for inclusion, (5) assessing quality, (6) extracting data, (7) analysing and synthesizing data, and (8) reporting the findings (Xiao & Watson, 2019, p. 102). All of the steps were done systematically.

For this study, the data collection are collected from journal articles in Google Scholar from the year 2012 to 2022 which related to learners' foreign language anxiety in second language acquisition. The search terms used for this paper can be divided into terms that relate to second language acquisition: “second language acquisition”, “second language learning”, “foreign language learning”, and terms related to learners' anxiety: “foreign language anxiety”, “FLA”, “learners' anxiety”, “FLA in second language acquisition”, and lastly terms related to learners' anxiety as well, but focusing on its' factors: “foreign language anxiety factors”, “foreign language anxiety sources”. As for the data analysis, thematic analysis is employed in this study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 30 articles in journals published between 2012 and 2022 were analyzed in this study. Descriptive analysis in the form of a table is used to list the findings from the analyzed articles. Discussions are carried out based on a table that describes systematically starting with the most frequent factors causing learners' foreign language anxiety in second language acquisition. The research findings can be summarized as follows, based on the articles reviewed.

3.1. Results

Table 1. The research results on factors of foreign language anxiety on second language acquisition

Researcher and year	Journals	Research results
Weda & Sakti (2018, p. 4)	Journal of Physics: Conference Series	The causes of FLA are fear of failing the course, nervousness when the teacher asks questions and when the class proceeds quickly without taking students' varying abilities into account, and an inability to comprehend the materials explained.
Hadriana (2020, p. 42)	Journal of Social Science Research	Low levels of student anxiety can be attributed, in part, to high levels of student confidence or self-efficacy in their ability to comprehend the lesson and their learning progress.
Dajfri & Wimbari (2018, p. 13)	Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education	External factors, such as the classroom environment, have a greater impact on the FLA of students. Students' perceptions of instructors' behaviors and classroom learning procedures also contribute to the occurrence of FLA among students.
Male (2018, p. 12)	Journal of English Teaching	It appears that failing to give students a variety of language-skills-related tasks and activities is what causes foreign language anxiety.

Abdurahman & Rizqi (2020, p. 16)	TEFLIN Journal	Students acknowledged that being selected at random to deliver a presentation was extremely stressful and induced anxiety. Additionally, they acknowledged experiencing anxiety when they made errors.
Subekti (2018, p. 238)	TEFLIN Journal	Students with high anxiety are more likely to feel neglected and left behind when instructors give them activities to help them overcome their anxiety.
Rahman (2017, p. 135)	Ethical Lingua: Journal of Language Teaching and Literature	This study demonstrates that FLA results from the inability to make a good impression and the worry of receiving unfavorable audience feedback. Additionally, students tend to view themselves as less intellectual or clever than their peers.
Ariyanti (2016, p. 80)	ASIAN TEFL	The psychological factors that contribute to foreign language anxiety are an excessive fear of making errors and a lack of self-esteem, both of which are related to their shyness and anxiety level.
Anandari (2015, p. 8)	TEFLIN Journal	Fear, shyness, and distress are the three root causes of anxiety in a foreign language.
Effiong (2016, p. 139)	TESOL Journal	The findings indicate that learners experience higher levels of FLA as a result of the teacher's age, friendliness, tone of voice, and attire code.
Al-Saraj (2014, p. 274)	Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching	The students most likely point to the teachers as causing their anxiety because the teacher is at the center of the classroom and is making demands on the student.
Trang, Baldauf, & Moni (2013, p. 721)	Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development	Anxiety in learners was a learned response to the learning conditions and occurred when conditions for learning were less ideal or when their FL learning became out of their control and they were unable to adapt to changes as they continued to learn.
Javed, Mohamed, & Eng (2013, p. 1569)	Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research	The majority of students in the study strongly agreed that it frightens them when they cannot comprehend what their English teachers are saying because they fear the teacher will discover their errors.
Zhang & Zhong (2012, p. 31)	Psychiatria Danubina	Four instructor factors may be associated with language anxiety: instructor beliefs about language teaching, the method of error correction, the perceived level of support, and the teaching style.
Jin, de Bot, & Keijzer (2015, p. 79)	Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics	Results indicated that proficiency in a foreign language, competitiveness, and self-esteem were all significant predictors of foreign language anxiety levels.
Trang, Moni, & Baldauf (2013, p. 128)	The Journal of Asia TEFL	Learner-related factors (learning ability, attitudes towards learning, and learning experiences), teacher-related factors (behaviors and professional skills), external factors (family, school, and contextual factors), and the complexity of the English language are the components of FLA.
Subekti (2018, p. 223)	TEFLIN Journal	High FLA was attributed to certain teacher characteristics (strict, serious, or too detailed instructors), students' perceptions of their teachers' attention and efforts in class, and students' lack of proficiency.
Dewaele, Witney, Saito, & Dewaele (2018, p. 17)	Language Teaching Research	Some teachers do, consciously or unconsciously, cause anxiety.

Aguila & Harjanto (2016, p. 30)	ANIMA Indonesian Psychological Journal	The internal factors relate to the sense of "self": self-esteem, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes. The external factors are: learning environment, teacher factors, classroom procedures and teacher-learner interactions, socio-cultural factors, etc.
Elaldi (2016, p. 220)	Educational Research and Reviews	High expectations from students studying English come first among the other FLA factors because they are going to be professionals who will be expected to use the target language properly, efficiently, and fluently.
Gregersen, Macintyre, & Meza (2014, p. 587)	The Modern Language Journal	The research indicates that a low level of anxiety is the result of a combination of positive power and adequate planning, preparation, and rehearsal.
Luo (2012, p. 59)	Contemporary Foreign Language Studies	The classroom environment, the characteristics of the students, the target language, and the process of acquiring a foreign language are the primary causes of foreign language anxiety.
Yoon (2012, p. 1105)	Theory and Practice in Language Studies	The results reveal a few causes of FLA, including the fear of English speech in the classroom, the self-confidence of the learners, and class preparation.
Han (2013, p. 445)	Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics	There are four factors that contribute to foreign language anxiety: speech anxiety and dread of negative evaluation; fear of failing the class; and comfort in speaking with learners' native speakers.
Liu (2012, p. 124)	Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching	Inability to comprehend, pedagogical and instructional practices, instructor attitudes toward error correction, and the presence of native speakers in the language classroom are some factors that provoke anxiety.
Suparlan (2021, p. 166)	JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching	Fear of speaking English, fear of the teacher's consequence, lack of self-confidence, fear of being less competent than other students, embarrassment, inadequate preparation, fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, habit of using the English language, and language tests are factors that contribute to FLA.
Mulyono, Ferawati, Sari, & Ningsih (2019, p. 124)	Register Journal	It has been identified that language barriers, negative attitudes, and intercultural communication apprehension contribute to foreign language speaking anxiety.
Quintos (2022, p. 119)	IOER International Multidisciplinary Research Journal	The high expectations that learners have for their ability to communicate and speak in a foreign language in public are what cause anxiety.
Zhang (2022, p. 962)	Psychiatria Danubina	Emotional reflection may undermine a person's self-respect and self-confidence or increase his or her sense of failure, causing anxiety and fear.
Huda & Ma'mun (2020, p. 81)	ELITE Journal	Overthinking, a lack of preparation, bad experience, low proficiency, a lack of self-confidence, a fear of making errors, and a test are all factors that contribute to anxiety regarding a foreign language.

3.2. Analysis

Many factors contributing to foreign language anxiety were found in the reviewed articles. Those factors are divided into two categories: internal factors and external factors. Aguila & Harjanto (2016, p. 30) state that "the internal factors relate to the sense of "self": self-esteem, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes." External factors: learning environment, teacher factors, classroom procedures and teacher-learner interactions, socio-cultural factors, etc". Any kind of foreign language anxiety that comes from what the learners have in themselves is included as an internal factor of foreign language anxiety. On the other hand, external factors mean that the causes of foreign language anxiety come from things outside the learners' control, such as the environment they live in, things they are doing, or people around them. This means that anxiety is not a very complex and complicated phenomenon, as Anwar and Louis (2017) state, as long as it can be classified into only two categories of factors.

The first factor to elaborate on is the internal factor. The first internal factor that is quite often mentioned is where students feel stressed, afraid, and anxious when they make mistakes or when teachers realize these mistakes (Abdurahman & Rizqi, 2020; Ariyanti, 2016; Huda & Ma'mun, 2020; Javed et al., 2013; Suparlan, 2021). This is related to the study of Rahman (2017) and Han (2013), where it was stated that students tend to feel afraid if they get a negative response from their interlocutor because of the language error. Other internal factors contributing to students' language anxiety are the fear of staying in class, ending to be slow to understand lessons (Weda & Sakti, 2018), and being unable to adapt to learning (Trang et al., 2013). These struggles of the students in acquiring a foreign language are supported by the previous study from Chen and Chang (2004), which states difficulties in learning a foreign or second language are positively correlated to FLA..

Additionally, lack of self-confidence in learning abilities, unpleasant experiences in learning, overthinking, and lack of self-preparation also contribute to the causes of student anxiety (Ariyanti, 2016; Hadriana, 2020; Huda & Ma'mun, 2020; Suparlan, 2021; Zhang, 2022). Students' perceptions of the teacher's attention and habits in the classroom (Aguila & Harjanto, 2016; Subekti, 2018), lack of understanding of target languages (Javed et al., 2013; Liu, 2012) as well as the shyness students have (Suparlan, 2021) are other internal factors that cause anxiety. On the other hand, the expectations of students indeed affect their learning process. Too high expectations of students in mastering the target language can be a boomerang for them (B. Quintos, 2022; Şenel, 2016). Some students have higher expectations for learning the language successfully. However, sometimes students were unable to meet those expectations and became anxious afterward.

After internal factors, foreign language anxiety has external factors. It can be seen from the data findings, that the first external factor that is often mentioned by some researchers is the factor that comes from the teacher. Subekti (2018) said in his study that teachers who are too serious or strict, which include teacher attributes, cause student anxiety. In addition to the nature, age, friendliness, tone of speech, and teaching style, dressing style also affects the level of anxiety of students (Effiong, 2016; R. Zhang & Zhong, 2012). Al-Saraj (2014) suggests that students' anxiety is also based on when the teacher is in the middle of the classroom and seems demanding of students. As for this, some studies show that some teachers are aware that they are the cause of student anxiety, but some others are not (Dewaele et al., 2018).

External factors other than teacher attributes, conditions and situations in the learning environment in the classroom can be external factors of foreign language anxiety (Aguila & Harjanto, 2016; Djafri & Wimbarti, 2018). This is supported by the other findings where the atmosphere in the classroom and classroom readiness affect students' anxiety (Han, 2013; Luo, 2012; Suparlan, 2021). The lack of a variety of activities in the classroom can also reduce students' enthusiasm for learning (Male, 2018). In essence, if the learning conditions in the classroom are monotonous or do not attract the attention of students, then they will feel anxious (Trang et al., 2013). Another external factor is that students' nervousness arises when they are randomly selected to answer questions in class (Abdurahman & Rizqi, 2020). The presence of native speakers, such as teachers who have an English mother tongue, can make students nervous as well (Liu, 2012). Another thing related to intercultural communication (Mulyono et al., 2019) and language testing are also contribute to factors of students' FLA (Suparlan, 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

In this study, the researcher identified seven types of internal factors of foreign language anxiety: students make mistakes and teachers are aware of it; students fear a negative response due to a language error; students tend to be slow to understand and adapt to the learning; lack of self-confidence and preparation; their perceptions of teachers' classroom habits; students' shyness; and high expectations in mastering the target language. On the other hand, eight types of external factors of FLA have been identified: teachers who are too serious and strict; teachers' age, teaching style, and clothing style; teachers' high demands of the students; situations in the learning environment; classroom atmosphere and preparedness; the absence of classroom activities; students being randomly selected to answer questions in class; and the presence of a native speaker.

FLA is one of many obstacles that learners encounter when learning a foreign language. Even though it is proven that anxiety in learning a language has both positive and negative sides, FLA is dominating as a bad effect on learners' performance. FLA does not come only from the learners; it comes from a variety of factors or sources. The findings of the factors contributing to learners' foreign language anxiety in this study are divided into two categories: the internal factors, which relate to a sense of "self," and the external factors, which relate to things that come from outside of the body and the mind of learners. FLA can be hindered with the help of teachers' awareness of each student's learning struggles in the classroom. So that they can learn without feeling fear or worry. The limitation of this study is that the researcher focused solely on the classification of two types of FLA factors. Thus, future researchers are suggested to examine each factor in greater detail, such as which factor contributes the most to FLA.

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