

Foreign Language Anxiety in the Classroom:
How Can Teachers Support Learners to Alleviate Their Anxiety?

教室内における外国語不安

——不安を軽減するために教員はどのように学習者を支援できるか？——

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Abstract

There are far fewer studies on foreign language anxiety (FLA) among English learners from the viewpoint of teachers than from that of learners. Since FLA originates in learners, it is their role to alleviate it. On the other hand, teachers' personalities and teaching methods also have a great impact on their affective aspects. Therefore, it can be considered that teachers also have a role in dealing with learners' FLA. This study discusses effective teaching methods to reduce foreign language anxiety, not only from the perspective of learners but also from that of teachers, by reviewing previous studies conducted mainly in the contexts of Asian and Middle Eastern countries.

Key words: Foreign Language Anxiety, English learners, English teachers, teaching strategies

1. Introduction

Several studies have indicated that clarifying the characteristics of English learners' Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and its effects on their learning progress from students' and teachers' perspectives is of great value. Conducting semi-structured interviews with 20 Pakistani ESL students, Ali et al. (2021) found that alleviating their anxiety about speaking English acted as a re-motivator for them to learn English along with instructors' friendliness, a

communicative teaching approach, collaboration with class peers, building their confidence in English, use of information technology, and correcting their English errors. However, little attention has been paid to teachers' perspectives on FLA among learners and strategy use to alleviate FLA in classroom settings especially in Japan (Inada, 2021). As reported by Effiong (2015), teachers' age, clothing (casual or formal), degree of friendliness, and tone of voice influence the level of FLA among Japanese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in tertiary education. Because the effect of teacher-related factors on FLA is large, teachers' support may enable EFL learners to reduce their FLA. The purpose of this study is mainly to identify how university English teachers can support their students in English classes in order to alleviate their FLA with speaking English by reviewing previous studies.

2. Previous Studies on Foreign Language Anxiety and Other Affective Aspects

2.1 Causes of FLA

FLA has been conceptualized by Horwitz et al. (1986), as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning which arise from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p.128). Their Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) has been translated into many languages and has been used for research in many countries (e.g., Habiburrahim, 2020; Noguchi, 2006; and Ortega Cebrenos, 2003).

In this paper, studies conducted mainly in Asian and Middle Eastern settings will be reviewed. There are two reasons for this. Unlike the languages spoken in Europe and Latin America (e.g., French, German, and Spanish), there is a phonetic, grammatical, and semantic distance between the languages spoken in these settings (e.g., Japanese, Vietnamese, and Arabic) and English. Due to these issues, many students have anxiety in speaking English. Additionally, lack of opportunities to encounter and use English outside the classroom contributes to this affective state.

Tran and Moni (2015) explored causes of FLA among 351 Vietnamese university students majoring in subjects other than English and their eight teachers. Qualitative data were collected by autobiography with 49 students, interviews with 18 students, interviews with eight teachers and quantitative ones by an open-ended questionnaire with 351 students. In

regard to factors and activities which provoke FLA, nearly 90 percent of the students and all the teachers agreed that teacher-related factors can give rise to a significant degree of anxiety in learners. Analyses identified nine factors (e.g., striving to achieve goals, requirements for employment, and concerns about low grades) and nine activities (e.g., clearly explaining course requirements, providing students with rewards, and organizing group tasks).

Asif (2017) explored what factors could result in Saudi EFL learners' anxiety from the perspectives of public college or university teachers. For the analyses, not only quantitative data collected from 100 participants through a five-point-Likert questionnaire but also qualitative data from 15 other participants through structured interviews were included. The results indicated that the participants appeared to consider that the context of enhancing English speaking skills was the main factor which heightened their levels of FLA.

Concerning which factors which trigger FLA, the main issue was their L1. That is, learners are reluctant to express their opinions in the target language in the classroom, and the monoglossic nature of Saudi Arabia seldom makes them feel the necessity of learning English. Another factor was fear of making errors stemming from fear of inferiority to their classmates, interaction with native English speakers, a lack of confidence in pronunciation, and the L2 classroom atmosphere. Another factor was performance anxiety. One respondent stated that pressure of being evaluated by others provokes anxiety. This point of view matches the findings in an interview study addressing FLA among eight Korean EFL learners at an advanced level by Young (2004). As to the signs of xenoglossophobia, teachers referred to nonverbal ones typified by hesitation and non-active participation, e.g. keeping out of the teacher's sight. Regarding classroom contexts which induce anxiety, teachers can unintentionally be a source of anxiety for learners. According to one interviewee, a strict and autocratic classroom atmosphere in which speaking in front of other classmates, too much noise, and lack of IT skills may increase the level of FLA. Another interviewee stated that negative feedback from teachers was a major source of anxiety for learners. As the majority of teachers in Saudi Arabia's education sector are from other countries, many of them feel frustrated when learners' answers are not in line with their intentions.

The results of the analysis of the responses from 100 participants collected by a questionnaire were summarized into the following five points.

- 1) Speaking English is the main cause of FLA among Saudi EFL learners.
- 2) Saudi EFL learners' L2 learning skills are detrimentally influenced by FLA.
- 3) FLA inducing factors can be classified into two parts; one is psycholinguistic factors which are linked to L2 learning processes and the other one is socio-cultural factors which originate in the culture and society of the nation.
- 4) There are variations in the way anxiety manifests itself in Saudi EFL learners' behaviors, including under-achievement in L2 learning, frequently making errors, and nervousness when producing English phrases in front of class.
- 5) EFL teachers have an indispensable role to maintain the detrimental impact of FLA to a minimum in the L2 classroom.

According to Subekti (2018 b), language teachers are responsible for supporting their students in managing FLA, and many studies have reported that teachers' perspectives are not in synch with the affective needs of their students. Not only teachers' instruction but also students' learning could be negatively influenced by such a mismatch. In order to compensate for the gaps, beliefs of Indonesian EFL learners majoring in subjects other than English and their teachers were analyzed in respect to what provoked FLA and how it influenced their L2 learning processes. Six students having different FLA levels (low, moderate, and high) and six instructors were involved in data collection. An equal number of men and women were selected for the research based on Subekti's previous research (Subekti, 2018 a) using FLCAS. In Subekti (2018 a), 119 students were divided into three different groups according to their total score on the questionnaire, which indicates their level of FLA. One by one, they were invited to semi-structured interviews aiming to address the six questions in the study. In this way, Subekti gave a consideration to their privacy in disclosing their FLA. Six teacher participants were divided into two groups and attended one of two focus groups to share their responses to six questions by the author. The advantage of this method was that one person's opinion would encourage the others to speak up. Analysis of the interaction identified six themes concerning how the participants considered factors and effects of FLA on L2 learning: 1) positive and negative effects of FLA, 2) issues relating to their teachers' attitudes toward them, 2.1) teachers' strictness provoked students high levels of FLA, 2.2) teachers' positive facial expressions assisting in maintain a low level of FLA

in students, 3) students' views on the pedagogic efforts made by teachers influenced students' levels of FLA, 4) students' low L2 skills caused high levels of FLA, 5) use of the L1 kept students' FLA level low, and 6) group activities also kept students' FLA level low.

2.2 Students' Psychological Problems

Ohata (2005) addressed teachers' perspectives on learners' FLA with a focus on the way they notice student's FLA and their strategies to cope with it in their teaching. By reviewing related research on the characteristics of FLA in language learners, Ohata referred to teachers' opinions concerning a discrepancy laid between emotional support supplied by teachers and that demanded by learners in the classroom context. Through this approach, Ohata aimed to analyze FLA from the viewpoints of teachers and learners. Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with seven teachers from five different countries or regions with deep experience. The goal was to assess their views about FLA.

In the results, first, a common theme among the participants was found in terms of the importance of anxiety in both L2 learning and acquisition. Some of them described the debilitating effects of anxiety that can inhibit learners from achieving their full potential, and thereby their intrinsic motivation to continue learning would gradually dwindle. Others referred to the anxiety can also have a positive advantage in leading learners to spontaneously take countermeasures to reduce their anxiety. Second, concerning a facilitative effect of anxiety, one participant stated that anxiety can act as a strong motivator for some learners in the sense that they perceive it as a learning opportunity; however, excessive anxiety can detrimentally influence their mental health. Another claimed that although learning includes certain emotions, not all of them exacerbate the learning process. This is because people often want to learn while they are simultaneously and extremely nervous or defenseless. The fact that emotions cannot be easily dichotomized into positive and negative types means that people need to constantly balance them, and conflicts certainly take root in their learning process.

Third, all participants agreed that the level of anxiety about listening, writing, reading, and speaking could depend on individual differences in students' personality traits, L2 proficiency, and learning style preferences. Students who consider themselves as introverts and

choose a self-learning style might consider classroom speaking activities as the most stressful skill, while students who consider themselves as extroverts might prefer speaking activities to other learning activities. It is very difficult to determine which skill areas are more anxiety-provoking than others. Participants recognized not only the fact that there were a variety of factors behind students' anxiety that were related to individual learner differences but also the reality that they were not able to meet all of the affective needs of each student in their classrooms.

Fourth, they noticed some physical and psychological manifestations of anxiety in their students such as touching their hair, being reluctant to make eye contact with the teacher, sweaty palms, blushed faces, nervous expressions, trembling, and body shaking. In general, most of the participants agreed that it is impossible to perceive the true anxious feelings of the students unless the anxiety manifests itself as obvious physical symptoms.

Azarfam and Baki (2012) investigated FLA in oral production skills among Iranian EFL students from the perspectives of teachers and those of tertiary-level students. Qualitative data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with three teachers and three students. Summarizing the answers by student participants, they codified the data to extract three types of anxiety about a) difficulty in speaking English with classmates and teachers, b) speaking perfect English, and c) making oral mistakes; a fear that their teachers might call on them; and hesitating to ask questions to their teachers. First, regarding their anxiety about speaking in class, one participant explained that his anxiety was still persistent even though this was the second time he had taken an English course, another explained that his anxiety was much less than before, and the other had succeeded in dealing with his anxiety. Second, the student participants appeared to be pre-occupied with speaking perfect English, which consistent with the argument by Gregersen (2003) that form is valued more than content by learners with higher levels of anxiety. Third, the first participant had had less opportunity to speak than the other students due to anxiety about producing incorrect sentences. The second spoke slowly and occasionally in his native language to avoid the same problem mentioned by the first. The third participant eliminated this anxiety by stopping preparing too much before speaking. Fourth, the first and second participants were anxious about being called on by their teachers in class and said that their anxiety could not be minimized.

Fifth, all three were hesitant to ask questions of their teachers during class. The first participant explained that this is due to his reserved nature. The second one wanted other students to ask questions on his behalf during class. The third one wished that he could ask his teacher a question after the other students have left the classroom. The teacher participants stated that FLA had both facilitative and debilitating impacts on students' oral performance. They agreed that anxiety about oral ability was the greatest among the four skills. One participant attributed this to a lack of background knowledge and few opportunities to encounter English. The findings indicate that students' oral production skills could be influenced by FLA as the quality of oral performance decreases as anxiety increases.

Also in Iran, like Azarfam and Baki (2012), Toghraee and Shahrokhi (2014) performed a survey to elucidate three questions: the relationship between 60 Iranian university students' FLA levels and their perceptions about English learning, how students' perceptions about English learning differed from those of 15 teachers, and whether there are gender differences in the relationship between students' FLA levels and their perceptions about learning. Two questionnaires, the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) created by Horwitz (1987), were utilized to collect data from those students. Teachers provided additional data by completing BALLI. Correlational analysis *t*-tests revealed the following results. First, Iranian learners' FLA levels positively and significantly correlated with their perceptions about English learning ($r = 0.699$). Highly anxious learners were likely to have lower motivation in L2 learning. This result was backed up by Talebinejad and Nekouie (2013) and Wang (2005). Second, there was a huge discrepancy between what learners and their teachers felt about their learning. The amount of *t*-observed (5.128) was significant at the probability level of $p = 0.000$. An agreement or a disagreement was reported in Buyukyazi (2010), Peacock (1998), and Banya and Cheng (1997). Third, similar to the foregoing, female learners and their male counterparts did not reach consensus on their views of FLA and English learning. The amounts of *t*-observed (BALLI: 3.141, FLCAS: 5.368) were significant (BALLI: $p = 0.003$, FLCAS: $p = 0.000$). Female students appeared to have higher levels of FLA than male students. Mesri (2010) reported similar results in terms of how gender influenced FLA levels in classroom settings; on the other hand, no relationships were found between those variables in Naha-

vandi (2013) and Hu (2008). Toghraee and Shahrokhi rounded off their paper by emphasizing that what they had found would provide educational authorities with various implications for improving their instruction.

In Asif (2017), concerning the question of how learners' oral production is influenced by FLA, one interviewee stated that FLA has a detrimental effect on learners' language skills as it is more likely to encourage them to memorize model answers than to formulate their original answers. This idea is confirmed by empirical evidence that negative emotions interfere with learners' L2 learning and performance, as reported in Tanveer (2007).

In the same geographical context as the study above, Tanielian (2017) investigated the characteristics of FLA among 287 freshers at a Saudi university with the use of FLCAS. They were enrolled in a year-long English language preparation program before starting their major field of study in English. There were slightly more men than women. Their classroom performance was also incorporated into the quantitative data to analyze the relationship between anxiety levels and English language proficiency. It was found that the student participants reported moderate levels of FLA. The result of a one-way ANOVA showed there was a significant difference of FLA levels between students taking an English course in the Fall semester and Spring semester students ($F(130, 156)=2.048, p=.000$). A higher level of FLA was present among the Fall semester students ($M=3.12, SD=0.59$) than the Spring semester students ($M=2.28, SD=0.60$). No significant differences were identified between men and women, upper and lower course levels, or medical majors and other subject majors. Pearson correlations revealed that mean scores of FLA among Spring semester students moderately and negatively correlated with their English proficiency which was significant at the level of 0.01 ($r=-.430, n=48, p=.002$). EFL instructors were also invited to the study for the purpose of obtaining qualitative data. Their feedback was compared with findings from previous research. For example, according to Alsamaani (2012) Saudi EFL learners have a positive view of learning English. The instructors backed this up by reporting that their students' motivation to learn English had gradually increased. It was pointed out by them that the traditional English education in high schools was a cause of the students' lack of English skills.

2.3 Teachers' Strategies to Curtail FLA

According to Ohata (2005), the following strategies have been employed in participants' instruction for the purpose of alleviating students' anxiety in L2 classrooms. The teachers frequently stressed two components: 1) the creation of a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom (a. involving tasks which reduce students' nervousness, typically achieved by the use of games or songs, b. telling jokes to let students laugh, and c. playing some background music); 2) instructional procedures which facilitate students deliberately participating (a. posing display or open-ended questions than referential questions, b. setting group tasks, c. asking questions suited to students' L2 levels, and d. recasting rather than explicitly correcting errors). The participants' strategies were strongly connected to their teaching philosophy. Those teachers in Ohata (2005) stated the same beliefs that teachers should encourage a student-centered classroom rather than a teacher-centered one, and should create a relaxed classroom atmosphere so that students can demonstrate 100 percent of their capacity. However, there was a discrepancy among the participants' perspectives of teachers' roles. Some claimed that teachers should be a friend for students while others insisted the necessity of maintaining their authority.

Ohata contended that the participants' views had been generally consistent to students' needs. He referred to the finding in Young (1991), which shows that correcting students' errors is one of the factors which induced anxiety. However, there were some concepts which had been never pointed out by the participants such as existential anxiety, that is a sort of anxiety intrinsically incorporated into the process of language learning, as suggested in Rardin (1988). According to Young (1992), some learners are concerned that the second language learning might lead them to lose their self-identity. Ohata assumed that one of the possible reasons why the teachers had not mentioned this issue was because they themselves had been highly successful L2 learners and had not faced any difficulties which could provoke strong anxiety in their learning processes. Young (1992) provides four pieces of pedagogical advice in relation to how teachers can help students cope with anxiety: a) be sensitive to signs of anxiety shown by learners, b) perceive behaviors as they are, c) believe in your point of view, and d) make efforts to alleviate language anxiety.

Harumi (2011) designed a study to address the use of silence by Japanese EFL learners in

the settings of their own society and cross-cultural communication. She also investigated learners' and teachers' beliefs about effects of silence on learners' performance, and whether changes are needed in learners' learning styles and teachers' teaching methods by adopting questionnaire assessment. The results showed that there is a mismatch between students and teachers and among students themselves which is caused by silence in second language learning contexts. It also has a detrimental effect on students learning process. In the study, Harumi adopted an ethnographic approach to explain three factors of silence: roots, functions, and meanings. The participants were 197 Japanese intermediate EFL learners in a first-year English degree course, 52 native English teachers (NETs) and 58 Japanese English teachers (JETs) at Japanese universities. The questionnaires were compiled for the following three purposes:

- 1) Clarifying students' interpretations of the use of silence in the EFL classroom
- 2) Assessing possible differences between teachers' and students' perspectives on silence
- 3) Analyzing students' and teachers' views on the role of the teacher in easing student anxiety in the classroom

She described the issues of identity and the role of cultural and contextual factors in the use of silence and proposed three teaching methodologies.

- 1) Activities should be designed so that students are able to build up confidence and facilitate their autonomy.
- 2) Instruction should be reflective and interpretative in nature.
- 3) The classroom environment should encourage mutual participation to accomplish the aim of communication.

Through the results of the questionnaires, it was revealed that both students and teachers do not feel confident in managing silent moments in English classes.

Azarfam and Baki (2012) found that most teacher interviewees' responses about signs of anxiety among learners supported previous studies' results. For example, both teachers and students agreed that a student-centered approach was a possible method to alleviate students' FLA in the classroom context (e.g., involving pair and group work in instruction, praising students for their performance, not forcing students who are reluctant to speak English to answer questions, and understanding students' affective needs). Based on the per-

spectives of EFL teachers and students, some strategies were proposed to reduce students' FLA. Teachers and students should collaboratively set rules in class. For example, they need to regard errors as a natural process of L2 learning. Furthermore, explicit error corrections in speaking skills might cause students to lose self-esteem. Therefore, teachers should use implicit approaches instead. Teachers can utilize not only verbal strategies (telling a joke and calling students' by their given names) but also nonverbal ones (eye contact and uplifting gestures) for reduction of FLA among learners (Frymier, 1993). Finally, in order for teachers to be aware of FLA, they might need to attend special training courses on this issue.

In addition to FLA-provoking factors, Tran and Moni (2015) also investigated strategies for coping with FLA. Utilizing NVivo, it was found that both students and teachers agreed that learners should strive to minimize the debilitating effects of FLA, while maximizing the facilitative effects of it in their learning. Concerning people who play an important role in reducing anxiety, there was a consensus between the two groups that since anxiety is rooted in the learners themselves, they themselves are the people most suited to deal with it. In addition, teachers, friends, and family members could support them in that process.

As for strategies for FLA reduction, almost all students and teachers responded that improving English skills is key to dealing with anxiety in interviews. Teachers recommended that students employ 12 Learning strategies and four strategies for building positive attitudes toward learning in order to enhancing L2 skills and five strategies for dealing with problems. The teachers proposed 21 strategies for teaching interesting lessons based on students' proficiency levels, eight problem-solving strategies and five strategies for building mutual trusts with students.

When it comes to the percentage of agreement between students and teachers, there were 61.9% match on the factors and activities provoking FLA, 71.4 % match on the learning strategies, and 41.2 % match on the teaching strategies. Regarding strategies for coping with FLA reported by students and teachers, anxious students were less able to deal with their anxiety in the classroom and mainly found ways to avoid it. There was more emphasis on teachers addressing students' FLA in the classroom. The student-teacher data provided another method by which to explore how teachers manage FLA in the classroom. Concerning

teacher-reported strategies for coping with student FLA, 75% of teachers answered that they had focused on dealing with students' anxiety in class. Their reports clarified two purposes of coping with FLA: providing some level of anxiety to enable students to focus on their learning and preventing students from experiencing high levels of anxiety and stress. From the students' perspective, 16.6% of them said that their teachers paid a great deal of attention to FLA coping. According to one student, his teacher employed various kinds of strategies to help students cope with their anxiety and to avoid making them feel anxious. For example, involving more listening activities to boost students' listening skills and using the blackboard to share questions from some students with the whole class were mentioned. Concerning how students coped with FLA outside the classroom, an analysis of the quantitative data showed that 92% of them tried to relieve their anxiety in the short and long-term by using a variety of strategies. Outside the classroom, enjoying English media and chatting with others were reported as direct strategies for coping with anxiety. They also employed long-term strategies to cope with anxiety. They avoided the negative effects of anxiety by motivating themselves through methods such as listening to English songs and reading online articles written in English. Analyzing the autobiographies of students to determine the factors that influence their process in dealing with FLA, the following facts were revealed. Four students wanted to stop studying English, 15 students were mindful of the need to study English but were reluctant to do so, and 30 students were highly motivated to study English. Tran and Moni concluded that an effective solution for dealing with FLA is to find ways of making the most of it in a positive way.

Asif (2017) discusses strategies for FLA reduction.

- 1) EFL teachers should remain relaxed in any case so as not to induce learners' FLA.
- 2) EFL teachers should encourage learners to speak up without hesitation for fear of making errors.
- 3) EFL teachers should build a comfortable classroom environment which provides learners with abundant opportunities to learn L2 knowledge and skills.
- 4) EFL teachers should identify and deal with the difficulties that learners experience.
- 5) EFL teachers should employ various kinds of strategies (e.g., humor, maintaining warm relationships, creating a supportive atmosphere, utilizing IT devices, interesting

teaching material, and positive feedback).

- 6) EFL teachers should use the cognitive, affective, and behavioral methods devised by Hembree (1988).
- 7) EFL teachers should attend professional development training to equip them with the skills to understand and alleviate FLA of learners.

According to Tanielian (2017), there are many native English teachers in the English preparation program at the researcher's university, but more staff whose L1 is Arabic are needed to support students to smoothly communicate with them. These staff members can inform the students about the importance of attending class and submitting assignments within the deadline. EFL instructors should organize student-centered lessons which satisfy students' academic curiosity. Further, they should create a comfortable learning atmosphere for learners to avoid inducing FLA. They should take special classes where they can be exposed to the latest pedagogical research to improve their teaching methods. They have a responsibility to pursue ways to minimize the FLA of their students and provide them with a place where they can reach their full potential.

Subekti (2018 b) proposed advice to both teachers and learners. Namely, teachers should pay attention to the inner voice of their students (Young, 1992). They also need to give special guidance to learners with high anxiety. Evaluating the process of effort rather than the result can help to alleviate learners' anxiety. She recommended that students need to manage their FLA by increasing opportunities to study and speaking English in their daily lives. Both teachers and their close friends may be able to be great supporters of their learning (Trang & Moni, 2015).

Inada (2021) individually conducted semi-structured interviews with six university teachers for the purpose of clarifying their strategy use for reducing learners' FLA, and its negative effects on promoting their communication skills. Language classes need to be an environment where learners are provided with sufficient opportunities to speak and listen to the target language so that they can effectively acquire practical skills in EFL setting. Thus, teachers have a necessity to employ a wide variety of teaching approaches aiming at playing important roles in providing maximum opportunities for learners to produce the target language in dyadic or group activities and to create a comfortable environment where they can

express their opinions with confidence. Furthermore, effective use of group dynamics enables teachers to maintain their classroom running smoothly.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of literature review are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 The Results of Literature Review

Author(s)	Participants	Research Method(s)	Data Type(s)	Factors of FLA	Influence on FLA	Teachers' strategies	Other
Tren and Moni (2015)	351 Vietnamese university students; eight Vietnamese university teachers	Autobiography for 49 students; interviews for 18 students; interviews for eight teachers; An open-ended questionnaire for 351 students	Qualitative data; Quantitative data	Nine factors (e.g., striving to achieve goals, requirements for employment, and concerns about low grades); nine activities (e.g., clearly explaining course requirements, providing students with rewards, and organizing group tasks)	Influence on FLA	Improving English skills is key to dealing with anxiety; 12 learning strategies and four strategies for building positive attitudes toward learning in order to enhancing L2 skills; five strategies for dealing with problems; 21 strategies for teaching interesting lessons based on students' proficiency levels; eight positive mental health strategies were provided to students; 75 percent of teachers answered that they had focused on dealing with students' anxiety in class; Their reports clarified two purposes of coping with FLA, providing some level of anxiety to enable students to focus on their learning and preventing students from experiencing high levels of anxiety and stress	Both students and teachers agreed that learners should minimize the debilitating effects of FLA, while maximizing the facilitative effects of it; 61.9 percent match of the factors and activities provoking FLA; 71.4 percent match of the learning strategies; 47.2 percent match of the learning strategies; 19 percent of students were less able to deal with their anxiety in the classroom and mainly found ways to avoid it; 16.6 percent of students said that their teachers paid a great deal of attention to FLA coping; 92 percent of students tried to relieve their anxiety in the short and long-term using a variety of strategies outside the classroom; four students wanted to stop studying English; 19 students were indifferent to the subject; 10 students were reluctant to do so; and 30 students were highly motivated to study English
Asif (2017)	115 Saudi university teachers	A questionnaire for 100 participants; interviews for 15 participants	Quantitative data; Qualitative data	The context of enhancing English speaking skills; L1; fear of making errors; performance anxiety; English, speaking English, and socio-cultural factors; and socio-cultural factors	Negative impact on Saudi EFL learners' L2 learning skills and L2 performance	Remaining relaxed in any case so as not to induce learners' FLA; encouraging learners to speak up without hesitation for fear of making errors; building a comfortable classroom environment which provides learners with a safe and secure atmosphere; identifying and dealing with the difficulties that learners experience; employing various kinds of strategies (e.g., humor, maintaining warm relationships, creating a supportive atmosphere, utilizing IT devices, interesting teaching material, and positive feedback); using the cognitive, affective, and behavioral methods devised by Helmreich (1989); using a variety of assessment training to equip them with the skills to understand and alleviate FLA of learners	Nonverbal, linguistic, and psychological signs of FLA; EFL teachers' indispensable role to maintain the detrimental impact of FLA to a minimum in the L2 classroom

(Continued)

Author(s)	Participants	Research Method(s)	Data Type(s)	Factors of FLA	Influence on FLA	Teachers' strategies	Other
Subakti (2018b)	Six Indonesian university students; six Indonesian university teachers	Interviews for six students; Focus groups for six teachers	Qualitative data	Teachers' strictness; the pedagogic efforts made by teachers; and students' low L2 skills	Positive and negative impact	Teachers' positive facial expressions; the pedagogic efforts made by teachers; Use of the L1; Group activities; paying attention to the inner voice of their students; giving special guidance to learners with high anxiety; and evaluating the process of effort rather than the result	Students need to manage their FLA by increasing opportunities to study and speaking English in their daily lives
Chaita (2005)	Seven teachers from five different countries or regions	Interviews	Qualitative data	A variety of factors	Positive and negative impact on L2 learning and mental health	1) The creation of a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom (a. involving tasks which reduce students' nervousness, typically achieved by the use of games or songs, b. telling jokes to let students laugh, and c. playing some background music); 2) Teachers' attitudes which facilitate students' deliberately participating (a. posing display or open-ended questions than referential questions, b. setting group tasks, c. asking questions suited to students' L2 levels, and d. recasting rather than explicitly correcting errors); 3) Teachers should encourage a student-centered classroom rather than a teacher-centered classroom; and 4) Teachers should create a relaxed classroom atmosphere so that students can demonstrate 100 percent of their capacity	The level of anxiety about listening, writing, reading, and speaking could depend on individual differences in students' personality traits, L2 proficiency, and learning style preferences; some physical and psychological manifestations of anxiety in the classroom are blushing, sweating, and being reluctant to make contact with the teacher, sweaty palms, blushed faces, nervous expressions, trembling, and body shaking
Azariffam and Baki (2012)	Three Iranian university students; three Iranian university teachers	Interviews	Qualitative data	Lack of background knowledge; and few opportunities to encounter English	Positive and negative impact on students' oral performance	A student-centered approach; teachers and students should collaboratively set rules in class; implicit error corrections; Verbal and nonverbal strategies; and teachers might need to attend special training courses on FLA	Three types of anxiety about a) difficulty in speaking English with classmates and teachers, b) speaking perfect English, and c) making oral mistakes; A fear that their teachers might call on them; hesitating to ask questions to their teachers; and anxiety about oral ability was the greatest among the four skills

(Continued)

Author(s)	Participants	Research Method(s)	Data Type(s)	Factors of FLA	Influence on FLA	Teachers' strategies	Other
Toghiani and Shahrzoki (2014)	60 Iranian university students; 15 Iranian university teachers	Two questionnaires for students; one questionnaire for teachers	Quantitative data				Highly anxious learners were likely to have lower motivation in L2 learning; there was a huge discrepancy between what learners and their teachers felt about their learning; female students appeared to have higher levels of FLA than male students
Tajellian (2017)	287 Saudi university students; Some university teachers	A questionnaire; Students' classroom performance; Teachers' feedback	Quantitative data; Qualitative data			Organizing student-centered lessons which satisfy students' academic curiosity, creating a comfortable learning atmosphere for learners to avoid inducing FLA, and taking special classes where they can be exposed to the latest pedagogical research to improve their teaching methods	The student participants reported moderate levels of FLA, a higher level of FLA was present among the Fall semester students than the Spring semester students; and teachers reported that their students' motivation to learn English had gradually increased
Harumi (2011)	197 Japanese university students; 52 native English university teachers; 38 Japanese English university teachers	Questionnaires	Quantitative data; Qualitative data				1) Activities should be designed so that students are able to build up confidence and facilitate their autonomy. 2) Instruction should be reflective and interpretative in nature; the assessment should encourage mutual participation to accomplish the aim of communication
Inada (2021)	Six Japanese university teachers	Interviews	Qualitative data			Employing a wide variety of teaching approaches aiming at playing important roles in providing maximum opportunities for learners to participate in a variety of group activities and to create a comfortable environment where they can express their opinions with confidence	Effective use of group dynamics enables teachers to maintain their classroom running smoothly

Through a review of the previous studies on teaching strategies for FLA reduction, it was revealed that questionnaires and interviews have been utilized by many researchers to understand traits of FLA among learners and teachers' teaching methods to manage it. Many teachers appeared to believe that FLA had both negative and positive effects on students' speaking skills and learning processes. In order to reduce the level of FLA, it was suggested to employ learner-centered language activities typified by dyadic and group work, interact with other students, create a comfortable learning environment, and attend special training sessions so that teachers can learn more about the characteristics of FLA among learners and how to reduce it. None of the studies reviewed in the previous chapter used an online questionnaire. Research based on paper-questionnaires and interviews has various advantages as well as disadvantages. To compensate for this, online questionnaires can be regarded as an effective instrument in terms of consideration for participants, quality of data, getting all items answered. In addition, it is safe method to implement during a pandemic. Unlike interviews, participants are able to respond at their own pace and convenient time. Online questionnaires do not have the disadvantages of interviews, where the accuracy of the transcription is affected by the quality of the recording. By requiring all items to be answered, participants will more likely answer each question unlike in the case of paper questionnaires. This is because if any item is left unanswered, the survey cannot be completed. In this way, neither the author nor the participants were at risk of contracting COVID-19, since there was no physical contact via a paper questionnaire and those people were not in the same place at the same time. However, there are some drawbacks to administering the questionnaires online, such as the possibilities of participants answering more than once or the inability to immediately ask the person responsible for the study if the participant is unclear about the content of the questionnaire. Therefore, these could adversely affect the reliability of the data.

4. Conclusion

One of the limitations of this chapter is that it has not addressed studies on anxiety using biosignal measures, such as heart rate monitors. While the method has the advantage of providing researchers with objective results, it has the disadvantage of being costly to imple-

ment. Therefore, studies incorporating more practical methods have been reviewed.

In the current study, the characteristics of learners' FLA and teaching strategies to cope with it have been discussed mainly from the perspective of teachers. Teachers have a variety of indispensable roles and responsibilities to support learners to speak English with maximal confidence and to continue learning English with a higher level of motivation. As future studies will be conducted, researchers should select the most appropriate method to fulfill their purposes while giving consideration to not only participants' privacy but also both the physical and psychological burden on them.

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