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**Investigating EFL Students' and Teachers' Attitudes towards
the Impact of Anxiety on Students' Oral Performance
The Case of First-Year LMD Students of English at Larbi Tebessi
University -Tebessa-**

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Abstract

The main goal behind learning a foreign language is to be able to speak it. However, just like any other activity, there are various obstacles which may retard language learning and affect speaking, and anxiety is the most common one. Foreign language students proclaim having such obstacles in achieving a real and perfect oral performance. Accordingly, the overall objective of the current study is to investigate EFL students' and teachers' attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on students' oral performance. The sample study consisted of 48 first-year LMD students of English and five EFL teachers at Larbi Tebessi University (Tebessa) during the academic year 2019/2020. To achieve the study aim, a descriptive-analytical method of research was adopted using two questionnaires administered online to both EFL students and teachers. The collected data from these questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The study findings indicate that anxiety affects negatively the students' English language learning in general and oral performance in particular. Also, the findings point out that fear of negative evaluation is the most anxiety provoking trigger and that the teacher plays an important role in reducing the students' speaking anxiety by adopting a variety of techniques that feat the learners' interest, needs and level, and exposing them to a lot of oral presentations is one of these techniques. Based on the findings, the study proposes recommendations on how to reduce students' anxiety and enhance their oral performance in EFL contexts.

Keywords: anxiety, oral performance, attitudes, negative evaluation, oral presentations

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to both our dear parents for their endless love and support,

To our brothers and sisters for their encouragement during hard times,

To all our teachers for their precious help in our journey,

To the memory of our beloved friend Asma SOUAN,

To all with our eternal love.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FL: Foreign Language

FLA: Foreign Language Anxiety

FLCAS: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

LA: Language Anxiety

LMD: Licence, Master and Doctorat

L2: Second Language

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الملخص

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and teachers tend to face numerous difficulties in the process of language learning or teaching due to the fact that it is not their first language. EFL learners sometimes, consider language learning as a traumatic experience by reason of factors that may negatively influence their language learning. One of these factors is anxiety. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) were the first authors that established a difference between anxiety as a general notion and Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) which refers to the situation in which a student is engaged to in the acquisition of a second language in a classroom context. They (1986) added that it is “a distinct complex construct of self-perception, beliefs and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128).

In fact, the process of learning a second/foreign language is not simple, neither is the moment in which learners are supposed to perform and demonstrate what they know. This situation generates a feeling of anxiety that could precisely affect in moments of high tension as, for instance, oral examinations or presentations in front of a whole class, as it could affect in moments of doing some speaking activities in the classroom. As a matter of fact, the development of the student’s skills may be frustrated and could even stop improving due to this phenomenon.

Most of EFL students, including Algerians, express feelings of failure in learning to speak the language. In addition, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) stated that both teachers and students point strongly that anxiety is associated with situations in which the language is spoken. Therefore, the present study takes an aim to investigate EFL students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on students’ oral performance at Larbi Tebessi University, Tebessa (Algeria), as it seeks to identify the main causes behind students’

speaking anxiety and to provide both students and teachers with the most necessary and effective strategies to reduce speaking anxiety in English language classrooms. The case study targets first-year Licence, Magister, and Doctorat (LMD) students of English and EFL teachers at the Larbi Tebessi University.

2. Statement of the Problem

English language teachers and especially those who are in charge of teaching Oral Expression and Comprehension module at Larbi Tebessi University often complain of low achievements, low score and linguistic inadequacies in oral performance either in their normal daily classroom sessions or during examination sessions. In addition, EFL learners at the same university, especially in their first year classes, keep complaining that oral presentations or examinations are mainly a problematic situation because, besides the fact that they have to think what they are going to say, they have to express it aloud and in front of teachers who judge every utterance they make. Their feelings of fear and inhibition prevent them from freely expressing their thoughts and ideas which leads to poor oral performance. So, the need to study and investigate EFL students' and teachers' attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on students' oral performance arose and the need to provide both EFL students and teachers with the most necessary and effective strategies to reduce speaking anxiety in English language classrooms became a necessity.

3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The current study tries to answer the following research questions:

1. Does FLA affect first-year LMD students' English language learning in general?
2. Does FLA affect first-year LMD students' oral performance?
3. What are the main causes of speaking anxiety for first-year LMD students of English?
4. What are the most necessary and effective strategies to reduce speaking anxiety in English language classrooms?

Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses were put forward:

1. Yes, FLA affects negatively first-year LMD students' English language learning in general.
2. Yes, FLA affects negatively first-year LMD students' oral performance.
3. It is assumed that fear of negative evaluation, and lack of self-confidence and preparation are among the main causes of speaking anxiety for first-year LMD students of English.
4. It is assumed that the teacher plays an important role in reducing students' speaking anxiety as well as exposing the students to a lot of oral presentations will overcome their speaking anxiety too.

4. Aims of the Study

The overall objective of the current study is to investigate EFL students' and teachers' attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on students' oral performance at Larbi Tebessi University. The study, in particular, aims to find whether anxiety has a positive or a negative impact on first-year LMD students' English language learning generally and on their oral performance particularly. It aims also to determine the key factors that are more likely to cause speaking anxiety. Finally, it attempts to identify and suggest the most necessary and effective strategies that may reduce speaking anxiety among EFL students.

5. Research Methodology

The researchers followed the descriptive-analytical method of research due to its relevance to investigate EFL students' and teachers' attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on students' oral performance. The researchers reviewed the related literature and suggested two questionnaires administered to both EFL students and teachers. The target population composed of a random sample of 48 first-year LMD students of English and five EFL

teachers at Larbi Tebessi University during the academic year 2019/2020. This choice was based on the fact that anxiety is mostly experienced by students in their first year classes. Along with the Corona virus spread, the direct contact with the chosen sample seemed to be impossible; therefore, the researchers shared the questionnaires online with the target participants using Google Drive via Facebook and e-mails. Each questionnaire consists of five sections to fit the purpose of the study.

The collected data from the two questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. In view of that, the current study used a mixed method approach which can be a means to eliminate biases that might result from relying exclusively on one data collection method, to test the validity of the findings and construct the major strength of this research design.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized along two chapters beginning with a General Introduction. The first chapter represents the theoretical part of the study and consists of two sections. Section one is concerned with the review of the literature related to anxiety in foreign language classrooms. Section Two provides an overview of the speaking skill in the process of language learning and teaching. The second chapter represents the practical part of the study wherein detailed description of data collection tools, analysis and discussion of the results are presented. It includes three sections; the first section deals with the students' questionnaire, and the second one tackles the teachers' questionnaire, and the third one provides a summary of the results, limitations, implications and recommendations. Finally, the dissertation ends with a General Conclusion which makes an overall account of the research and summarizes the main research findings.

Chapter One: An Overview of Anxiety and the Speaking Skill

Introduction

As it is known, the main goal behind learning a foreign language is to be able to speak it. However, just like any other activity, there are various obstacles which may retard language learning and affect speaking, and anxiety is the most common one. Foreign language students proclaim having such obstacles in achieving a real and perfect oral performance. Accordingly, an overview of anxiety and the speaking skill is presented throughout the current chapter which is divided into two sections.

The first section gives a general view of anxiety. It opens with defining and explaining the phenomenon of anxiety from different points of view, by presenting multiple definitions of anxiety in general, language anxiety (LA) and foreign language anxiety (FLA) in particular. Besides, it provides different types of FLA with sufficient clarifications to each type. As well as, it describes the characteristics of FLA and introduces the most common FLA Measurements. Furthermore, it presents anxiety within the cognitive process of language learning and shows its major causes and effects. Finally, it introduces some strategies used to reduce FLA.

The second section aims at defining first the speaking skill and then presenting its importance, types and aspects. It tends to clarify the factors that affect EFL learners' speaking abilities, as it shows the necessary activities that must be designed by the teacher in classroom in order to enable his learners to produce a meaningful English oral performance as well as to overcome their weaknesses and difficulties.

Section One: Anxiety as an Obstacle in Foreign Language Learning

The current section is concerned with the review of the literature related to anxiety in foreign language classrooms. And, it aims to cover the phenomenon of anxiety from its different angles.

1.1.1 Anxiety

The term anxiety refers to an unpleasant emotion of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry connected with an activation of the autonomic nervous system (Spielberger, 1972, p. 482). Even though anxiety is a common sense, it is hard to be defined. It is interrelated with tension, self-esteem and motivation (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986). According to Csoti (2003) as mentioned in her book entitled *School Phobia, Panic Attacks and Anxiety in Children*, the person who suffers from anxiety worries about everyday things far more than the state or occasion recommends.

Anxiety is when feelings of being anxious and insecure do not go away and can't be controlled easily. Psychologists define anxiety as a situation of stress, unclear fear that is unconsciously related with an object (Scovel, 1991). Darwin (1872) thought of anxiety as an emotional reaction that is aroused when an organism feels physically under threat. Anxiety is a mixture of uncomfortable feelings as shown in Figure 1 (Gozen.com). It can be noticed that feelings are in the hidden part of the iceberg and behavior represented by anxiety is on the top of the iceberg.

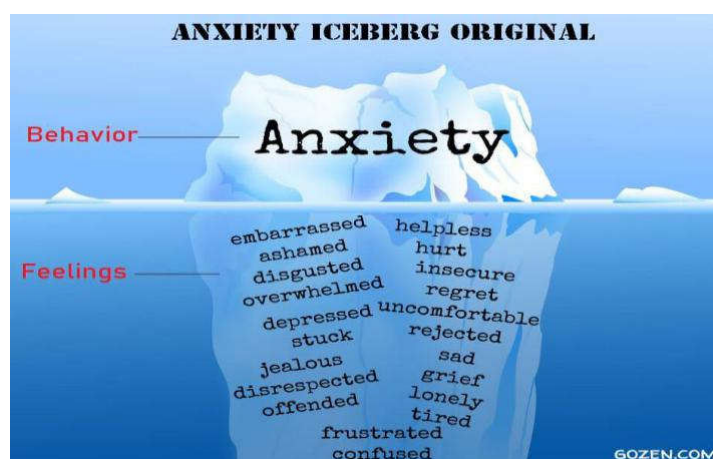


Figure 1. Anxiety iceberg Original shows that feelings are in the hidden part of the iceberg and behavior represented by anxiety is on the top of the iceberg (Gozen.com).

Carlson (1987) defined anxiety disorder in general as “a psychological disorder is characterized by tension, over activity of the autonomic nervous system, expectation of an

impending disaster, and continuous vigilance for danger” (p. 694). Carlson considers anxiety as a psychological disorder related to danger and characterized by feelings stress (Sellam, 2016). Moreover, Carlson (1987) described anxiety reaction as an intense phobia; psychologists usually use the term phobia when anxiety reaction is both specific and intense. Phobia as defined by Carlson is an excessive, unreasonable fear of a particular class or objects or situations (Carlson, 1987).

1.1.2 Language Anxiety

Language Anxiety is closely related to the process of language learning. LA is defined as “a distinct complex construct of self-perception, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986, p.128). According to Xiang (2004, p. 116), LA reduces the learner performance in numerous ways, in an indirect way through feeling such as worry and self-doubt, and in a direct way by reducing classroom involvement and developing total avoidance to the target language. The above results are related to those of Von Worde (2003) and other researchers, who concluded that anxiety can negatively affect the language learning in various ways.

Moreover, Gardner (1991) stated that LA is a convincing and important force and factor in the language learning context. So in any study that seeks to understand and explain the language learning process, the researcher must take into consideration its effects on the process of learning. Based on Orbeta’s findings (2013), LA specifically apprehension affected pronunciation, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary while tension influenced grammar.

1.1.3 Foreign Language Anxiety

In the past two decades, there has been a huge amount of research of FLA but it became the center of research for many scholars in the 1970s. Since the nature of FLA is complex and multiply dimensioned, it is uneasy and hard to define it accurately. In

psychology and education, anxiety is one of the most researched issues. It is defined in many social and learning contexts in simple words as the feeling of unease or fear which its psychological structure usually described as an estate of uneasiness and worry started by the anticipation of a threatening matter. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) defined FLA as “a distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128).

Gardner and Macintyre (1993, p. 125) stated that, anxiety is the experienced fearful expectation when a situation necessitates the application of a second language (L2) when the interlocutor is not fully skilled or proficient. According to Horwitz (1986) and Yong (1991), the various manifestations of anxiety take in all of the miss pronunciation of sounds, panicking up when it’s time to perform, forgetting the new learned vocabulary, being calm and silent and refusing to react or answer facing some obstacles in producing sounds or ordering the structure of the L2 utterances, to the improvement of low grades after an over studying, avoiding eye contact, speaking humorously, responding with short verbal answers, avoiding practice during class activities, arriving to class without a previous preparation, cutting class and sitting at the back of the classroom.

Moreover, Luo (2011) viewed the construct of foreign language anxiety as having four components: speaking anxiety, listening anxiety, reading anxiety and writing anxiety (see Figure 2).

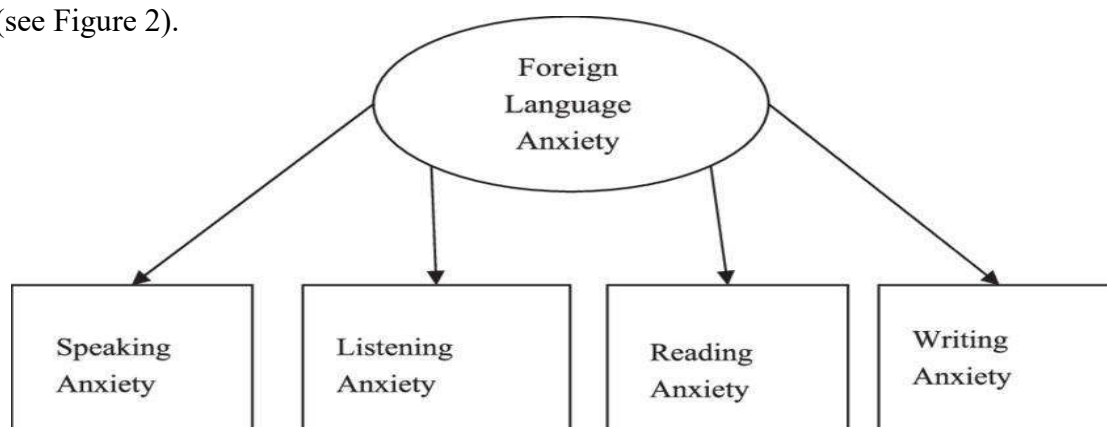


Figure 2. The four components that construct foreign language anxiety (Luo, 2011).

However, foreign language classroom anxiety seems to be most associated to speaking rather than the other learning skills (Horwitz & Young, 1991). Aida (1994) advocated that speaking in classroom in front of classmates and teachers is perhaps the most anxiety-stimulating activity. Young (1986) argued that there were negative correlations between foreign language anxiety and achievement. In addition, several studies on FLA concluded that it has a negative effect upon language speaking (Al-Khotoba et al., 2019).

1.1.4 Types of Foreign Language Anxiety

It was assumed that in educational studies, there are typically three types of anxiety, namely trait anxiety, state anxiety and situational anxiety. In the same area of research, Levitt (1980) differentiated three types of anxiety. The first one is state anxiety which he defined as a non-permanent emotion of tension, encountered for a short period in an abnormal situation and it appears when the person is acquired to present a speech in public. He also mentioned that this feeling may vanish after presentation (Levitt, 1980). The second type is trait anxiety which he stated that it arises more often and in several varied situations. It can be described as a mental block that has a relation within the personality of the individual (Levitt, 1980). The third type is known as situational anxiety which arises frequently within a certain situation (Macintyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 87).

For the first time, Alpert and Haber (1960) have classified FLA into facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety. This means that not all anxieties are negative, and anxiety can have a positive helpful effect of the learner. In Alpert and Haber's theory (1960), it was predicted that facilitative anxiety can enhance performance, while debilitating might hinder learning as well as performance. The actual relationship between anxiety and performance is illustrated in Mavilidi, Hoogerheide and Paas (2014) research, when the level of anxiety is high performance is low but when anxiety is optional performance is high.

Following the same track, Bailey (1983) studied the benefits of facilitative anxiety or, in other words helpful anxiety, in the process of foreign language learning and he came to an end that facilitating anxiety was one of the most important keys to success closely related to competitiveness. Scovel (1978, p. 139) proved that the former encourages the learner to face the new learning tasks; while debilitating anxiety discourages the learner when it comes to the new learning tasks and activities. Moreover, Horwitz (2008, p. 9) explained that students with higher level of FLA are likely to be unsuccessful in their language classes. Smith, Sarson (1984) argued that the task difficulty and simplicity has a considerable impact on the level of anxiety and its negative or positive effects.

MacIntyre & Gardner (1991) identified another type of anxiety called situation-specific anxiety which is similar to trait anxiety; it is related to a certain situation or event such as public speaking. Also, situation-specific anxiety might affect foreign language learning as pointed out in Horwitz's (1986) definition of foreign language classroom anxiety.

1.1.5 Characteristics of Foreign Language Anxiety

FLA can appear as noticeable behavioral transformation, weak acquirement of information or physical syndromes. Students' displeasure after performing, might cause anxiety over the performance and cultivate feelings of failure (Eherman, 1996). When the level of anxiety is higher, students tend to act in a disruptive way, as a result, they rely on a set of unconscious psychological mechanism like excessive joking, so they become less sensitive, to reduce the rise of the unexpected anxiety (Eherman, 1996).

Anxious students are slow in learning the FL more than non-anxious students (Ortega, 2009). FLA may introduce general prevention behaviors (e.g. class dropout), physical attitudes (e.g. making small movements with hands and feet, through nervousness or impatience, or being unable of pronouncing sounds and utterances of FL even after a pronunciation practice), physical disorders (e.g. presser and frustration) and various culturally-imbedded gestures and behaviors (Oxford, 2005).

Anxious students are also likely to minimize their qualification skills in the FL, to avoid taking risk, like speaking or commenting in class or trying to express complex notions (Macintyre & Gardner, 1994). If a student is exposed to this assemble of symptoms, the concerned student may be unready to participate in class and may not acquire knowledge appropriately. Anxiety symptoms could be mistaken for the ignorance or lack of excitement, in addition to demotivation.

1.1.6 Foreign Language Anxiety Measurements

There are several anxiety measurements developed by different scholars to measure the levels of anxiety among FL learners. Clement, Smythe, and Gardner (1976) developed an anxiety measurement to study the learning of English by French-speaking students in Canada. The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery has been developed to fill this need. Horwitz et al. (1986) also developed the most commonly measure of foreign language anxiety known as Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS).

The FLCAS is a self-report questionnaire used as a tool to evaluate the level of foreign language anxiety. It consists of 33 items, which apply 5 point scales, with options ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Horwitz et al. (1986) theorized a three factor structures of FLCAS as well as Liu and Jackson (2008) posited a set of items by university of china which is similar to Horwitz components of anxiety presented in the foreign language anxiety classroom: (1) test anxiety, (2) fear of negative evaluation, (3) communication apprehension.

Mowbray (2012) stated that, a test is an academic evaluation which aims to measure student's level and their comprehension, after or during teaching them the lesson, and their awarded scores will be based on their performance. He further described test anxiety as a state anxiety or feeling of worry, students may experience before or during the test or the examination. Furthermore, he simply named these feelings of ill-feelings or over stress as 'anxiety over test'. According to his view, the students' performance gets affected by the

negative feelings of unease or change in heartbeats, which students will get through during or before evaluation. Test anxiety is expressed by three different concepts, personality trait, emotional state and clinical state. When test anxiety is thought out as personality trait, then it is considered as a recognized threatening (Spielberger, 1980). According to Zeidner (1998), the emotional state is a degree of anxiety immediately faced by students in a particular test situation.

Horwitz et al. (1986) have distinguished between the two components of FLCAS by emphasizing that test anxiety as a construct, is greatly associated with objective evaluation, while the construct of fear of negative evaluation affirms feelings about other's interpretation and expectations. This component has an extensive range in relation with social evaluation, just as in presentations or speaking contests (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Yet, the fear of negative evaluation is not forced to test-taking situations between students (Horwitz et al., 1986). In addition, Students who suffer from negative evaluations, are very sensitive to others' beliefs in the classroom, such as the fluent foreign language speakers, teachers or native speakers (Horwitz et al., 1986). The basis of fear of negative evaluation, affect personally the prediction of other negative evaluations, instead of an immediate physical response to conjoint intuitions like sensation in security. This construct is engaged with the student's beliefs that he will get evaluated badly, according to a doubtful psychological condition, such as tension or nervousness.

The third construct of performance anxiety in classroom is communication apprehension. It is the related interpersonal interaction to the construct of communication apprehension. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), it expresses feelings of shyness provoked by fear of communicating in groups or speaking in public. Communication apprehension is exasperated during public situations, where learners become aware of interacting with others.

Moreover, it is assumed that communication apprehension is probable to increase in the immediate response.

In addition, learners' difficulty during speaking or listening has been attributed to language imperfection. Horwitz et al. (1986) suggested that, learners who has difficulty in singling out sounds and structures in foreign language for instance, an anxious learner who indicated hearing high sounds of his instructors, if he could not hear certain sounds, he suffers from a high level of communication apprehension.

1.1.7 Anxiety within the Cognitive Processes of Language Learning

Language Learning is a cognitive process of adopting new information. The learning process goes through three stages: input, processing and output. It is indicated that anxiety affects both the speed and the accuracy of learning (Macintyre, 1999, p. 35). Most of the students feel anxious and unable to acquire and learn new words or rules, and that's why anxiety is considered as a negative factor in the learning process.

1.1.7.1 Input. It is the first stage in the language learning process. Skehan (1998) quoted that the input leads to the acquisition of the language and advocate its enhancement. According to Krashen (1985), the input should be comprehensible by the students in order to facilitate the learning process. Input is always implanted in kind of communicative act. With the input the role of the learners is on the interpretative part of communication. As stated by Krashen (1985), students who suffers from anxiety face difficulties in interpreting spoken dialogues due to the fact that anxiety obstacles and hinders the information to be processed, conversely, normal students would not face such problems and they would be better in acquiring the new information.

Moreover, Bailey et al. (2000) claimed that "input anxiety may reduce the effectiveness of the input by limiting the anxious students' ability to attend the material presented by the instructor and reducing the student's ability to represent input internally" (p. 475). This is the explanation to what happens with anxious students who are not capable of

assimilating information presented by others because anxiety stops the input from being processed. According to Macintyre and Gardner (1994), input anxiety leads to the feelings of fear and misunderstanding for the information presented by teachers to their student which leads to a non-successful process of interaction and communication (Macintyre & Gardner, 1994).

1.1.7.2 Processing. It is the second stage in the language learning process. The processing stage is initial in arranging and examining the data in the input to be interpreted in a correct way. Skehan (1998) have proposed a number of principles in organizing the input. For instance, the learner processes the meaning before the form. To manage form-meaning and organize it in the mind, the input must be comprehensible to the learner through processing the new information. The processing stage just like any other cognitive process can be influenced by several internal factors such as anxiety.

This type of anxiety is named processing anxiety, it is related to an unpleasant experience for the students when performing cognitive operations on new information (Bailey et al., 2000). At this level it can be noticed that students are stressed and incapable of learning new words and grammar rules.

Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 128) claimed that processing leads learners to get anxious, stressed, and even panic. Anxiety slows down the mental process which leads to the difficulty of recognizing the pronunciation of the word (Chen, 2005, p. 10). This means that it affects the capacity of the mind in analyzing and processing information. Macintyre (1995, p. 93) stated that there is a recursive cyclical relationship between each of, anxiety, cognition, and behavior as shown in Figure 3.

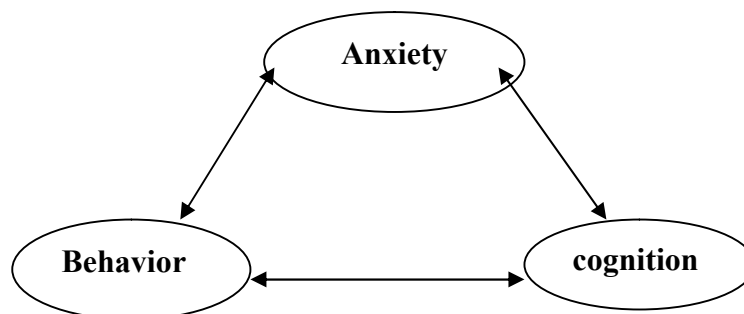


Figure 3. Recursive relations among anxiety, cognition and behavior as described by Macintyre (1995).

This figure represents the relationship between anxiety, cognition and behavior. When the students feel anxious at this stage he will not be able to understand which affects cognition. Cognition in contrast affects behavior for example, anxiety might negatively affect speaking due to the feelings the fear that they face at the processing stage (Tanveer, 2007).

1.1.7.3 Output. Output is the third and the last stage in the language learning process. Swain (1985) suggested that there is a need for an output hypothesis because the learner is obliged to the reproduction of the learned input. According to Macintyre (1999), “Many people had experienced the feeling of ‘freezing up’ on an important test, they know the answer but it will not come to mind” (p. 36). The feelings of anxiety make it impossible for the learner to retrieve the required word even though it is on the tip of the tongue and this would affect communication. The output anxiety affects the learner’s oral performance which leads to miscommunication with others.

1.1.8 Causes of Foreign Language Anxiety

Researchers have identified multiple causes related LA. Young (1991), proposed six possible causes of LA which he mentioned as follow: personal and interpersonal, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures and language tests.

Based on Henríquez’s research (2014), negative evaluation is one of the most important factors that negatively affect the students’ performance due to the fact that the

student is evaluated by his teacher and classmates. These feelings of fear and nervousness make the students more anxious about learning. Conway (2007) indicated that students can reach the highest levels of anxiety, as they believe that if they make mistakes their classmates might make fun of them and embarrass them. This problem discourages the students to speak out loud and participate in activities that require oral interactions.

Another source of anxiety is the assessment part where the students are anxious about taking tests and passing exams (Salman, 2018). Horwitz et al. (1986) noted that “the more information the student has to remember the higher level of anxiety is felt”. She added that the use of unfamiliar types of questions and the teachers’ pressure might lead to a higher level of anxiety.

Moreover, it was found that the teacher can be one of the possible causes of LA. Young (1991) remarked that some teachers still believe that they are the main source of knowledge and they are obliged to correct every error. Arnold (2000) asserted that it is crucial to know that the students should not be put under any sort of pressure while being in FL classroom, because any kind of correction to the students’ errors leads to a higher level of anxiety.

Age and gender are part of the variables that could be considered to have a relation with the levels of FLA. Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) claimed that older students tend to have higher degrees of LA than younger students. FLA grows along with the ages of students (Irzeqat, 2010). Salthouse and Samberg (1982) pointed out that older students focus more on accuracy which leads to higher levels of anxiety unlike younger students. The age differences differ in affecting the levels of anxiety (Tanveer, 2007); sometimes males express higher levels of FLA. In contrast, in other circumstances females tend to show higher levels of FLA. Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) added that self-perception have a transitional position between competence and achievement. Self-perception is also named self-esteem and it is considered

as an important factor in controlling the level of anxiety. As a conclusion, students with low self-esteem fail to communicate in the language learning which increases the levels of FLA.

1.1.9 Effects of Foreign Language Anxiety

Numerous research reports, represented under the range of pedagogical context, have recorded that FLA is not only a common feeling between students (Aida, 1994), but it has manifold negative effects on them (Horwitz, Tallon & Luo, 2011 as cited in Han, 2013). These effects can be academic, cognitive, and personal.

1.1.9.1 Academic effects. Foreign language anxiety has been accounted to be one of the greatest predictors in learning a foreign language successfully (Gardner & Macintyre, 1993). A huge amount of researches have desired to explore the nature of the relationship between learners' performance and foreign language anxiety. Most of these studies have commonly noted a negative relationship between both language anxiety and language achievements (Horwitz, 2001).

Commonly, most researchers applied grades of final course and included proficiency test to evaluate anxious learner's achievements during learning a FL (Macintyre & Gardner, 1994). Aida (1994) and Saito & Samimy (1996) found an equal considerable negative interconnection, between anxiety grades and final scores during learning Japanese in America. As well as, Phillips (1992) has recorded that there is a negative correlation between students' score on FLCAS and scores of an oral French test. Also, Coulombe (2000) reported that the nature of the correlation between the scores of FLCAS and the final grades of French learners of three proficiency levels (beginning, intermediate and advanced). In addition, Liu and Huang (2012) found that, Chinese college EFL student's grades has a negative correlation with FLA.

1.1.9.2 Cognitive effects. Several studies had recommended that anxiety lead to cognitive interference, during the performance of particular tasks (Sarason, 1980). According to Eysenck (1979), anxious people have a tendency to have their attention detached between

both, self-related cognition and test-related cognition, such as encoding words, understanding phrases meanings and messages structure, in addition to arranging what one is about to add next. Self-related cognition is identified by the extreme self-evaluation, fear of over potential failure, and getting conscious over others' opinions. Eysenck (1979) stated that, self-related cognition or anxiety related reflections have to challenge for cognitive income with normal cognitive need the limitation of information process, anxiety-related cognition mostly prevents performance.

Tobias (1983) suggested that, the cognitive anxiety effects settle in its obstruction with the three stages of cognitive processing i.e. input, processing and output. Macintyre and Gardner (1994) hypothesized three scales of anxiety: (1) the input anxiety scale, (2) the processing anxiety scale, (3) the output anxiety scale. Particularly, addressing anxieties associated with three stages of cognitive processing and that anxiety had a powerful impact on both processing and output.

1.1.9.3 Personal effects. Macintyre (1999) stated that, “among the most troublesome effects of anxiety, is the serve anxiety reaction for an individual learner” (p. 39). Further, Horwitz et al. (1986) claimed that FLA learners “experience apprehension, worry, even dread” and “they have difficulty concentrating, become forgetful, sweat and have palpitation” (p. 126). As a result, learning a foreign language is an uncomfortable task among anxious learners or even, a terrifying experience for most of them.

Generally, most of foreign language anxiety literature includes a large number of statements that reflect the distressing feeling of anxious learners. In Price (1991) interview, one of her participants reported that “I'd rather be in a prison camp than speak a foreign language” (p. 104). Other participants worried that their classmates would think they were ‘stupid’, ‘a total dingbat’ or ‘a babbling baby’ because of their weak simple vocabulary and grammatical structure mistakes during their classes.

Horwitz, et al. (1986) recorded many anxious learners' experiences. One student acknowledged, "When I'm in my Spanish class, I just freeze! I can't think of anything when my teacher calls on me. My mind goes blank" (p. 125). Moreover, in Cohen and Norst's (1989, pp. 68-69) study, one of her students characterized learning anxiety as the smashing of a well-developed positive self-concept. According to Young (1991), learning anxiety usually employ learners in self-deprecating cognition, which is demonstrated in the following statements: "I just know that I have some kind of disability" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 125); "when I speak English in class, I am so afraid, I feel like hiding behind my chair" (Horwitz & Young, 1991, p. xiii).

1.1.10 Strategies to Reduce Foreign Language Anxiety

There are different strategies to reduce foreign language anxiety and the most effective ones can be manifested by the role of the teacher and the different classroom activities.

1.1.10.1 The teacher's role. Speaking anxiety could be decreased among EFL students by their teachers. As so, boosting the teachers' awareness to be more careful about their manners during teaching is regarded as an initial move to reduce speaking anxiety. For example, Ansari (2015) pointed that teachers should not compare students to each other, obliging them to speak or disrespecting and embarrassing them. Ansari (2015) added that, teachers should be creative in discovering new techniques to edit and correct their student's mistakes.

Speaking is proving to be a practical way to learn and acquire a foreign language. Unlikely, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) and Yong (1992) explained that, speaking in the FL looks as it increases the level of anxiety among EFL learners. Therefore, teacher's role is to encourage his/ her students to evaluate their target language, by presenting for them a range of interesting EFL tasks and practices that motivate them to speak the language.

However, Phillips (1991) asserted that, students do not always regard speaking the language as an opportunity to acquire the language; they directly view this kind of exercise as a way to raise the level of anxiety. In other words, some students see speaking the language as a destructive situation that evaluate their abilities like presenting in front of the class, certainly, teachers should put in mind that learning a foreign language is an uncomfortable task for some students and frequently, they have fear of negative evaluation from their classmates or their teachers. Kitano (2001) noted that anxious students who have fear of negative evaluation demand some positive reinforcement, just as positive comments.

Ansari (2015) additionally recommended that teachers should make interpositions in the classroom and develop a positive atmosphere to motivate learners. This positive atmosphere will help anxious students to regard it as uncompetitive. Furthermore, Tsiplakidzs and Keramida (2009) claimed that group work further, can be incorporated which promote a comfortable classroom atmosphere and gives opportunities to anxious students to engage in speaking tasks. Moreover, using technology is one of the most preferred learning processes by students nowadays. Further, if teachers use technology and involve it into their teaching as a sort of coping mechanism, as well as motivating EFL learners to lower the level of their anxiety.

1.1.10.2 Classroom activities role. In the field of anxiety, several researches seek to show that suggesting interesting exercises and applying new strategies will motivate EFL learners to communicate, utilizing the target language to improve their speaking skills. Arabai (2014) investigated in his experimental study, the effects of anxiety-reducing strategies used by teachers on EFL on Saudi learners. The study was divided into two parts. In the first part, the researcher investigates the main factors of FLA using FLCAS. In the second part, 465 students were categorized to two groups, experimental and control group. Many teachers (a group of 12 teachers) participated in the study in order to apply some

strategies of reducing anxiety with the experimental group. After 8 weeks, the results showed that the suggested interventions lower the level of FL anxiety in the experimental group. Hence, the results prove that classroom activities could play a significant role in raising the student's motivation and progress.

In addition, Ansari (2015) suggested a set of activities that could be helpful in decreasing the learner's anxiety like role-plays. These activities were effective because, students are given "a new person with pseudo names" (p. 43). Which provide them with opportunities to get a new identity and reflecting someone's image. For that reason, the fear of negative evaluation diminished by creating new and valuable activities in the language class, which at the other hand, upgrade the learners speaking abilities and language profession.

All in all, this section is devoted to explore the phenomenon of FLA and its major developments through the learning process. Hence, it presents multiple aspects related to FLA such as: definitions, types, characteristics, and measurements. Besides, it presents the relation and role of FLA in the cognitive process of language learning, as well as it introduces the main causes of FLA and its effects on the students' academic, cognitive and personal achievements. Finally, it sheds light on the most effective strategies to reduce FLA among EFL students.

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

Speaking among the other language skills (listening, reading and writing) seems intuitively the most important one. Hence, this section displays a general view of the speaking skill in the process of language learning and teaching.

1.2.1 Definition of the Speaking Skill

Speaking as one of the four language skills is a very important concern in learning a second/foreign language, where learners of a certain language are referred to as speakers of

that language (Clifford, 1987). Nunan (1995) claimed that the speaking skill is worth consideration not in the first language acquisition only, yet in the second language acquisition too. He (1995) added that mastering the speaking skill is the first step in learning a second or a foreign language, and success is based on the fact of having the ability to perform a conversation in the language. In addition, Chaney (1998) defined speaking as “the process of making and sharing meaning by using verbal and nonverbal symbols in different context” (p. 13). Moreover, speaking is a give and take process, which makes meaning that involves processing, receiving, producing knowledge (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997).

Bygate (1987) referred to speaking as the production of acoustic indication to produce different verbal replies in listeners. It is viewed as a systematic combination of sounds to construct meaningful utterances. A further definition of the speaking skill is given by Mackey (2001, p. 79) when he considered speaking as the oral linguistic interpretation, which includes the accurate usage of patterns, rhythm, and the accurate order to transfer the intended meaning. While Thornbury (2005) explained that speaking is an interactive process which necessitates the capability to participate in the running of conversation. In addition, Clark and Clark (1997) asserted that, in speaking, the ideas or feelings are expressed by words or utterances, phrases and sentences with a particular structure, that manage the significance units and meanings of sentences.

1.2.2 The Importance of the Speaking Skill

Speaking skill is a fundamental aspect in the process of foreign language acquisition. Among the four learning skills, it is assumed that speaking is substantial in learning a foreign language. According to Brown and Yule (1983), speaking is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real-life situations. Moreover, the modern world suggested strongly for the requirement of conversation skills for both EFL learners and teachers of English, so that

they will develop their performance and act well in everyday life situations. In this vein, Bygate (1987) quoted that:

Speaking is the vehicle par excellence of social solidarity, of social ranking, of professional advancement and of business. It is also the medium through which much language is learnt, and which for many is particularly conducive for learning. Perhaps, then, the teaching of speaking merits more thought. (p. 1)

So, teaching speaking plays a great role for the learner's good oral achievement. According to Ur (1999), "Of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as 'speakers' of that language" (p. 120).

Lately, oral skills are totally ignored, as very less, the first concern is likely to be given to the important language aspects as, phonology, morphology, semantics and syntax; it has become the dominant difficulty in requiring speaking skills among EFL learners. Yet, the whole focus has been given to reading and writing skills. Subsequently, after acknowledging the significance of oral skills, more attention was given to establish EFL learners' speaking skills, to work toward their studies successfully and go beyond in their fields one time before they graduate.

According to Zaremba (2006), speaking appears to be the most essential skill needed for communication and interaction. Practical communication based on effective speaking generally establishes some advantages for both the speakers and business organizations. For instance, success in job training activities, job interviews, debates and various other businesses can be achieved through effective speaking skills. Zaremba (2006) conducted a study showing that communicative skills were commonly put ahead of work experience, academic certification for employment and motivation; speaking can serve as a tool for success. Zhang (2009) pointed out that EFL students have restricted chances to use the

language outside the classroom, as a result this will affect the students proficiency and that is for sure one of the reasons that makes the teacher obliged to create and involve their students in activities and situations, where they will be able to enhance their communicative competence.

What is a more important, speaking skills are further advantageous for EFL learners, when they have to get developed well in their professions. Recently, it has become quite common to test the candidates capacities during their job interviews and most of the selections stand on the interview performance. The job candidates have to perform and prove themselves in debates and discussions, where their oral capacities in mainly evaluated. Otherwise, professionals have to provide the candidates with oral presentations and support them to speak. In addition; a good speaker can impress and attain the complete audience's attention, and keep the same rhythm until the end of the speech. Thus, the audience completely draws in, and put their whole concentration on the speech.

1.2.3 Types of the Speaking Skill

1.2.3.1 Imitative speaking. Brown (2004) defined imitative speaking as the repetition or the 'parrot back' of words and phrases. In other words, Learner's ability to use the learned input can be evaluated by repetition of words and sentences. Whereas, Imitative assessments could be applied in a form of repetition tasks, where learners read or repeat words out loud, in order to acquire and learn primary vocabulary.

1.2.3.2 Intensive speaking. According to Brown (2004), intensive speaking is the produced oral language that presents the grammatical, lexical, phonological relationships. Intensive speaking activities could be adopted in classrooms by presenting a non-ordered phrases and ask students to fix the word groups order.

1.2.3.3 Responsive speaking. Brown (2004) suggested that responsive speaking demands short oral responses such as, common greetings, small talk, comments or requests.

This kind of speaking helps learners to develop their reading abilities and to give them opportunities to react using their own words and style.

1.2.3.4 Interactive speaking. Brown (2004) saw that interactive speaking as a complicated task in which it necessitates using multiple participants. This type of speaking assessment can evaluate multiple learners at the same time. ‘Interviewing’ is a good example of interactive speaking, where one speaker asks questions, and the other gives answers.

1.2.3.5 Extensive speaking. Brown (2004) reported that extensive speaking demands that learner’ reaction should be in a form of speeches, oral presentations or stories. This type of speaking is a great way to evaluate learners speaking abilities. Picture-cued and story-telling are the most known extensive speaking exercises it has an effective role in evaluating learners’ vocabulary, time relatives, sentence connectors, fluency, tenses.

1.2.4 Aspects of the Speaking Skill

1.2.4.1 Pronunciation. Pronunciation is the way in which learners instruct language during the speaking process. Kline (2001) defined pronunciation as the process of constructing and producing words in a clear way during speaking. Yet, Fraser (2006) asserted that pronunciation covers all speech features such as, rhythm, intonation, gestures, body language and eye contact.

1.2.4.2 Grammar. The grammar of a language is the explanation of the process in which, words can take another forms and can join to sentences in that language (Harmer, 2001, p. 12). Thus, grammar functions and its correct meanings are selected standing on the context. Nelson (2001) argued that grammar is the system which is used by learners to arrange the correct sentences forms. As well as grammar refers to the language structures, together with the clarity and the correctness of sentences construction and the appropriateness of the word forms.

1.2.4.3 Vocabulary. Vocabulary is a fundamental aspect in learning a foreign language; it means the suitable choice of words or the most valuable utterances, specifically in the spoken language. Turk (2003) suggested that, in a spoken language, vocabulary is likely to be knowledgeable and utilized in everyday life. Moreover, learners must know and organize words and their meaning in addition to how they are spelt and how they are pronounced.

1.2.4.4 Fluency. According to Oxford dictionary, fluency is “the quality of being able to speak or write language, especially a foreign language” and, “the quality of doing something in a way that is smooth and shows skill”. In addition, fluency generally, symbolizes expressing the language orally without interruption. In simple words, fluency in a language means speaking in an easy, reasonable, quick manner without stopping or pausing the speech.

1.2.4.5 Comprehension. Comprehension is the ability to distinguish and understand discourse, to formulate images for the meaning of sentences. According to Cohen et al. (2005), “Comprehension refers to the fact that, participants fully understand the nature of the research project, even when it is complicated and entail risks” (p. 51).

1.2.4.6 Interactive communication. Thornbury (2005) defined interactive communication as, the ability of learners to communicate with each other, by responding suitably at the recommended speech, to accomplish the activities’ requirements. According to Brown (2004, p. 269), the most problematic situations faced by learners in speaking are, the interactive nature of communication. Thus, learners face problems, especially when they are obliged to express ideas or to say things.

1.2.4.7 Appropriateness. Harmer (2001) claimed that, the term appropriateness is accompanied with a set of variables (p. 24). Those variables are setting, participants, gender,

channel and topic. He asserted that, learners should pay attention to the previous variables in order to achieve a successful communication.

1.2.5 Factors Affecting EFL Learners' Speaking Skills

EFL instructors and teachers of EFL should know the exact factors that inhibit or facilitate speaking. Some of these factors are age or maturation constraints, aural medium and, sociocultural and effective factors.

1.2.5.1 Age or maturation constraints. The behavior of EFL learners is affected by different factors. Age is one of the most common factors that affects second and foreign language learning. Krashen, Long, and Scarcella (1982) assumed that young learners who acquire L2 through natural exposure are better learners than adults. Another study pointed out that adult cannot achieve proficiency in L2 (Oyama, 1976). Adults' language learners generally face the phenomenon of fossilization which occurs at all levels, from phonological layers to pragmatic layers. The aging process itself might influence or limit adult learners' capacities to pronounce the language correctly just like the native speakers (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). 'The critical period' helps young learners to better acquire the language unlike adults, where the acquisition becomes difficult. Furthermore, adult learners apparently do not have the same natural language-specific funding as children in order to acquire fluency and spontaneity in oral communication.

1.2.5.2 Aural medium. There is a sort of collaboration between listening and speaking in the process of language acquisition. According to Shumin (2002, p. 205), listening plays a valuable role in the development of the speaking abilities. Generally, there is a person products speech and the other one receives it; therefore, each one of them performs a double role both listener and speaker. This interaction must be comprehensible in order to facilitate communication, "while listening, learners must comprehend the text by retaining information in memory, and integrate with what follows, and continually adjust their

understanding of what they hear in the light of prior knowledge and of incoming information” (Mendelsohn & Rubin, 1995, p. 35). Misunderstanding between interlocutors may affect the learner’s comprehension and retard the development of their speaking abilities. Moreover, Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1980) explained the importance of the comprehensible input that language learners are exposed to.

1.2.5.3 Sociocultural factors. Sociocultural factors of the first language affect L2 and FL learning. From a pragmatic point of view, language is considered as a form of social actions because the action of communication happens in different social contexts (Shumin, 2002). Being able to know when and how to communicate gives you the ability to correctly manage the language. “Shared values and beliefs create the traditions and social structures that bind a community together and are expressed in their language” (Shumin, 2002, pp. 205-206) and this means that social and cultural beliefs have a huge impact on the language.

Each language has its own rules of usage which makes it hard for the learners to adopt both the social and cultural aspects of the target language and this is what makes it hard for EFL learners to communicate effectively without refereeing to their mother tongue (Shumin, 2002, p. 206). However, the non-verbal communication system sometimes misleads EFL learners during communication due to the fact of the ignorance of the target language traditions. This misunderstanding might lead to culture clash and from that it is prove that sociocultural factors negatively affects oral communication which makes it difficult to achieve fluency.

1.2.5.4 Effective Factors. Without any doubt the effective factors of the learner will influence the progress of his learning. “The effective side of the learner is probably one of the most important influences on language learning success or failure” (Oxford, 1990, p. 140), this means that the effective factors might lead to success in language learning or the

opposite. These factors are classified as follow: emotions, self-esteem, empathy, anxiety, attitude and motivation (Shumin, 2002, p. 206).

Speaking a foreign language makes it difficult for the learner to find the exact wording which makes him feel frustrated and uncomfortable while speaking; as a result, his achievement will be affected. Unlike children, adults pay more attention to the judgments of others which raises the level of anxiety (Shumin, 2002, p. 106). EFL adult learners are always afraid of making mistakes when they speak in public. “The sensitivity of adult learners to making mistakes of, or fear of ‘losing face’ has been the explanation for their inability to speak English without hesitation” (Shumin, 2002, p. 106).

In Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982) as presented in Figure 4, he described the affective factors in L2 learning as a filter. These variables may affect L2 acquisition by preventing information about L2 from reaching the language areas of the human mind. Krashen (1982) indicated that high level of these effective filters will affect the learners input.

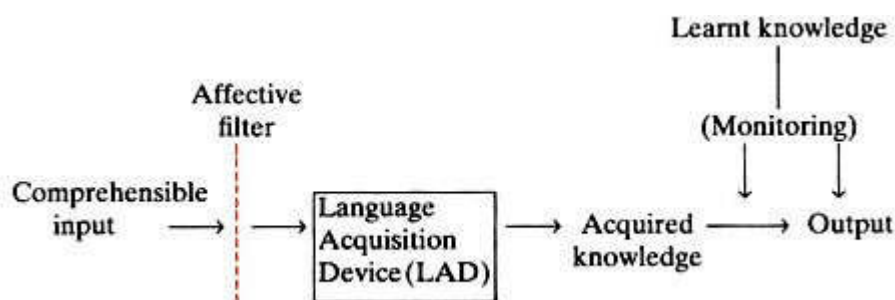


Figure 4: The affective factors in L2 learning are described as a filter in Krashen’s Affective Filter Process (1982).

1.2.6 Classroom Speaking Activities

To deal with speaking a foreign language, it requires a degree of real time exposure; this latter can be realized through a set of classroom activities which have to be developed best in a dynamic interactive learning environment where both teacher and learners

collaborate and cooperate with one another to create a safe , comfortable and relaxed atmosphere for a perfect productive talk in classroom .

A set of speaking classroom activities were designed to achieve this aim. These activities should include the different types and styles of expressions and acquainting students with the different language discourses and situational as well as contextual expressions (English , post office , jargon, ect.). However, each teacher should select and adapt the activity and strategy that suits his learners' level, interests and goals. Based on Harmer (2001) claim, in the oral expression course; the common used speaking activities should: “fall at or near the communicative end of the communication continuum” (p. 271). Also, FL teachers and specifically, oral expression teachers should be wise in choosing the type of speaking activities based on the discussed topic.

Through the following classroom speaking activities, the teacher tries all the time to create interaction by exchanging information and expressing ideas of course with an exclusive care about the correct grammar (accuracy), adequate vocabulary, acceptable fluency as well as a good pronunciation to convey a meaning through speech which sounds like a native speakers' one.

1.2.6.1 Oral presentations. Oral presentation is a short discussion about a given topic, represented to a tutorial or seminar group. It can be defined as the process of delivering an address to a public audience, and it can be referred as public speaking and speech-making (Oral Presentations for Tutorials & Seminars). De Grez (2009) defined it as “the combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to speak in public in order to inform, self-express, to relate and to persuade” (p. 5). Also, it is considered as one the most important tasks in college courses, through oral presentations students tend to develop their learning skills. Wilson and Brooks (2014) found that oral presentation is an activity used by teachers to help

their students and give them the chance to communicate with each other's and use English inside the classroom.

Additionally, Wilson and Brooks (2014) presented the five major benefits of oral presentations in the classroom as follow:

- They are student-centered.
- They require the use of all four language skills.
- They provide students with realistic language tasks.
- They have value outside the language classroom.
- They improve students' motivation.

1.2.6.2 Discussions. Discussion is an activity that gives the students the chance to express their thoughts and ideas and give their opinions. And it is considered as one of the most effective ways to develop speech production. Harmer (2001) stated that "it can provide some of enjoyable and productive speaking in language classroom" (p. 45). Usually discussions can be held after a content-based lesson for numerous reasons, so the teacher must identify the purpose of the discussion activity before the discussion itself (Kayi, 2006). Discussion differs from conversation because it has a specific purpose to achieve.

For example, teachers can involve their students in agree/disagree discussions. In this type of discussions, the teacher groups these students, preferably 4 or 5 in each group, to avoid chaos, and provide controversial sentences like "people learn best when they read vs. people learn best when they travel" (Kayi, 2006). Then each group discusses the topic for a time period, and presents their arguments to the class. After that, it is necessary to give both groups equal chances to speak. At the end, the class decides on the group who won.

Discussion in FL classrooms gives the students the chance to develop their critical thinking and decision making. Also, they will be able to develop their communicative abilities because they have the chance to express their ideas orally.

1.2.6.3 Information gap activities. Informative gap is a type of activity which requires the students to use the language to exchange information and get their meaning across. Throughout this activity, students usually work in A-B pairs. One of the students will have the information that other one does not have and they will share their information. Information gap activities achieve several purposes such as solving a problem or collecting information. Additionally, each partner plays a significant role because the task cannot be completed if the partners do not provide the information the others need (Kayi, 2006). Such activity gives participants the opportunity to talk extensively in the target language.

Richards (2006) stated that information-gap activity is one of the important aspects in actual communication thus suggesting that, “If students go beyond practice of language forms and use their linguistic and communicative recourses in order to obtain information to complete a task, more authentic communication is likely to occur in the classroom” (p. 18).

1.2.6.4 Jigsaw activities. This activity is based on the principle of information gap activity (Richard, 2006). This means that the class is divided into groups and each group has the information needed to complete the activity. In such an activity students should gather the pieces to complete the whole. To achieve that Richard (2006) said that “they must use their language resources to communicate meaning-fully and so take part in meaningful communication practice” (p. 19). He also provided the following example to clarify more:

The teacher takes a narrative and divides it into twenty sections (or as many sections as there are students in the class). Each student gets one section of the story. Students must then move around the class and by listening to each section read aloud, decide

where in the story their section belongs. Eventually the students have to put the entire story together in the correct sequence. (Richard, 2006, p.19)

1.2.6.5 Storytelling. Storytelling is one of the effective techniques that improve EFL learners' communicative skills in real contexts. It is defined as the act of narrating and describing tales, narratives, personal experience or life lessons through memorizing. According to Harmer (2001), teaching speaking skill must be done under the light of real life situation where the language is used in its real context. Thus, during the oral production, storytelling exposes learners to different language contexts, stock of words and tone of voice (Peck, 1998). In fact, storytelling as a method that is rarely used can effectively enhance students' confidence along through exposing them to a motivating and low anxiety context. Besides, it helps EFL learners to improve their speaking skills, pronunciation and intonation; also, it enriches their knowledge, vocabulary and grammar. As well as, it creates an interest in learning narrative structure and exercising description.

1.2.6.6 Practicing dialogues. Practicing dialogues is viewed as one of the essential ways learners should take into consideration to develop their conversation skills. This kind of activities is considered advantageous since it provides the learners with samples in which they can build their own conversations. What is more, it pushes learners to direct their attention to producing the language in a manner that helps them to use and practice the language correctly. Furthermore, dialogues can be used to improve other language skills like listening, where it can be used as grounds for listening and comprehension activities. Dialogues as a common practice in teaching English classrooms have various ways to be integrated into classroom activities, such as: vocabulary exercises, gap fill exercises, dialogues for role playing and acting, dialogue dictations, memorizing dialogues, open-ended dialogues and recreating scenes.

1.2.6.7 The use of videos. Teachers as well as students believe that this technique adds a special sense to language learning, because it has various features. Harmer (2001) stated that “students do not just hear language, they see it too” (p. 282). This technique do not just develop the students oral performance, however, it enhances their visual and auditory senses.

1.2.6.8 Simulations and role plays. These two activities are pretty similar to each other, and they are very helpful because they expose the learners to real life situations. In simulation, students are required to create a realistic environment in the classroom. For example, if a student is acting as a singer, he brings a microphone to sing and so on which make it similar to real life situation (Kayi, 2006). While role playing is taking someone else’s role and this encourage the student to use his imagination and develop his oral performance.

1.2.6.9 Role cards. “Participants are given a situation plus problem or task, as in simulation, but they are allotted individual roles, which may be written out on cards” (Ur, 1999, p. 132). So, role cards as a role play technique gives the opportunity for learners 'performances to be guided through instructions presented in cards for enabling them to act out what may occur.

To sum up, throughout this section, the role the oral communication generally and speaking specifically in the process of learning is presented and some of the theoretical aspects that concern foreign language speaking skill are demonstrated. Also what is meant by a successful oral performance is explained stating that it is the ability and right to speak freely and clearly, unashamed, to fully vocalize, to choose to make contact with a word and to communicate that word successfully. Besides, this oral performance is so complex to realize and the speaking skill is extremely difficult to practice where foreign language learners encounter many constraints. Yet, FL teachers try to overcome these difficulties by adopting a variety of tasks and techniques.

Conclusion

This chapter presents a theoretical background about the two research variables; anxiety and the speaking skill throughout two sections. The first section provides an overview of anxiety as an obstacle in FL learning. The second section is devoted to the speaking skill and its significance in FL classrooms. In addition, this chapter provides a clear cut of the relationship between FLA and the students' oral performance. This is why it is advised that the teacher must have an overall understanding of what speaking is and what are the constraints or difficulties which may meet the learners to develop their speaking performances, and finally how to bring the gap between an analysis of speaking and the actual classroom teaching. Yet, our FL teachers try to overcome these difficulties adopting a variety of tasks and techniques that feat the learners' interest, needs and level in order to develop the students' oral performance.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology, Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

The current chapter presents the practical aspect of the present study. It is concerned with analyzing and interpreting the data gathered from the students' and teachers' questionnaires. It is divided into three sections; the first one is devoted to the students' questionnaire, and similarly the second one is devoted to the teachers' questionnaire. Each section describes the research methodology that is followed including the sample and setting, data gathering tools, and data collection/analysis procedures, and then it provides a detailed analysis and discussion of the results. The chapter ends with a third section in which a summary of the results, limitations, pedagogical implications, and recommendations are introduced.

Section One: The Students' Questionnaire

This section describes the research methodology that is followed to analyze the students' questionnaire as it provides a detailed analysis and discussion of the obtained results.

2.1.1 Research Methodology

2.1.1.1 Sample and setting. The target population composed of a random sample of 48 first-year LMD students of English at Larbi Tebessi University during the academic year 2019/2020. This choice was based on the fact that students at their first-year classes tend to face a new experience where they find themselves obliged to manage heavy loads of coursework in English. In addition to that, they are obliged to participate and be part of oral presentations and also take oral examinations, and this is enough to make them feel anxious and therefore leads to poor oral performance. So, the current study will be beneficial for them because they will have the chance to express the source of their anxiety, as well as to get the most necessary and effective strategies to reduce their speaking anxiety.

A questionnaire was designed and used as a research tool to investigate students' attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on their oral performance. It was distributed online to the whole population due to the emergency situation imposed by COVID-19 global pandemic on the whole people generally and the students particularly and which makes it impossible to get into close contact with the target population. Therefore, only 48 students out of nearly 200 (as a total number of the population) agreed to take part in the study and responded to the questionnaire.

2.1.1.2 Data gathering tools.

2.1.1.2.1 Description of the questionnaire. To achieve the purpose of this research, a questionnaire was used to probe into EFL students' attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on their oral performance. It begins with a set of demographic questions under Section 1 aiming to provide background information regarding the students' age, gender, and whether studying English at the university was their first choice or not. This is followed with total number of 16 randomly-ordered questions of different types including yes/no questions, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire. These questions are grouped under four other sections.

Section 2 contains four questions related to the students' attitudes towards anxiety in the learning process in general. Section 3 incorporates nine questions targeting the students' attitudes towards anxiety and learners' oral performance. Section 4 includes three questions about reducing learners' oral performance anxiety. A qualitative part consisting of two open-ended questions under Section 5 is added at the end of the questionnaire. It tries to gain insights into the students' suggestions to reduce their speaking anxiety. Generally; open-ended questions are great for getting authentic feedback because they give people a chance to describe what they are experiencing in their own voice.

2.1.1.2.2 The pilot study. According to Connelly (2008), a pilot study sample should be 10% of the sample projected for the larger parent study. The first version of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) was piloted by sending it via e-mails to five (5) first-year LMD students of English, for the purpose of identifying the unclear items and developing the adequacy of the research instrument and also modifying the wording of some complicated questions in the questionnaire. Accordingly, the questionnaire was little bit modified and redesigned based on the students' comments and recommendations.

2.1.1.2.3 Administration of the questionnaire. The researchers distributed the final version of the questionnaire (see Appendix B) to the target population online using Google form online questionnaire via Facebook by June 15th, 2020. Thereafter, they started getting responses which lasted about a week before reaching a sample that was quite satisfying. Forty-eight students agreed to take part in the study and responded to the questionnaire and therefore a total number of 48 valid responses were collected and data were then ready for analysis.

2.1.1.3 Data collection/analysis procedures. The study used the descriptive analytical method of research. Brown and Rodgers (2002) defined the descriptive research as "a research that describes group characteristics or behaviors in numerical terms" (p. 117). The researchers conducted this method due to its relevance to investigate EFL students' and teachers' attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on students' oral performance. The data gathered were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The background information in Section 1 of the questionnaire was analyzed through descriptive statistics and the data in Sections 2, 3 and 4 were analyzed quantitatively carrying out the following statistics: frequency and percentage.

For analyzing the data provided by the two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire under Section 5, qualitative techniques were used. Since the students responded

to the open-ended questions were few, it was easy for the researchers to perform the analysis manually by looking at what all respondents suggested to the same question; this enabled them to compare the answers and gather similar ones and consider new ones. For the final form of the data analysis, the researchers collected the results of the questionnaire and that of the open-ended questions. The purpose of this final process is to summarize the results of the whole study.

2.1.2 Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

The study aimed at investigating EFL students' and teachers' attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on students' oral performance. The researchers used both quantitative methods using the following statistics: frequency and percentage, to analyze the collected data results from the students' questionnaire, and qualitative techniques to analyze the collected data results from the open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire. Tables were also used to clarify and present these data.

- **Section 1: Background Information**

It is very important to constitute a wide picture about background of the participants. The personal information were related to the student's age, gender, and whether studying English at the university was their first choice or not. Tables 01, 02 and 03 below highlight the personal information data.

Q1: Age A) 18-20 B) 20-25 C) 25-30

Table 1

Students' Age Distribution

	A	B	C	Total
Participants	27	20	01	48
Percentage %	56,3	41,7	2,1	100

As Table 1 shows, 56, 3% of the Students are teenagers and their ages are ranged between 18 and 20 years old which is the university average age of first-year LMD students, while, 41, 7% of them are young adults who aged from 20 to 25 years old. However, the last age category which includes students who aged from 25 to 30 only takes 2,1% of the total percentage. Therefore, the majority of first-year LMD students of English at Larbi Tebessi University are teenagers and young adults, whereas, the old adults are few.

Q2: Gender

Table 2

Students' Gender Distribution

	Female	Male	Total
Participants	32	16	48
Percentage %	66,7	33,3	100

As Table 2 shows, the majority of the students are females with 66,7%, and the remaining ones are males with 33,3%. This distribution can be explained by the fact that females are more interested in studying English at the university more than males. Thus, the students' population at the department of English is dominated by female students as they are almost two times numerous as male students.

Q3: Was studying English at the university your first choice?

Table 3

Students' Choice of Studying English at the University

	Yes	No	Total
Participants	40	08	48
Percentage %	83,3	16,7	100

The statistical results represented in Table 3 indicate that studying English at the university was the first choice for the majority of the students with 83,3%. In contrast, 16,7% of them stated that it was not their first choice, and this may be due to different reasons.

Section 2: Anxiety in the Learning Process in General

This section aims to answer the first research question “**Does FLA affect first-year LMD students’ English language learning in general?**” from the students’ perspectives.

Q4: Do you face any difficulties in the process of learning English as a foreign language?

Table 4

Facing Difficulties in the Process of Learning English as a Foreign Language

	Yes	No	Total
Participants	20	02	48
Percentage %	41,7	58,3	100

As table 4 shows, most of the students with 58,3% did not actually face any difficulties in the process of learning English as a foreign language, while students who tended to face difficulties are 41,7% of the whole population. This difference indicates that the number of students who did not face any difficulties in learning EFL is more than the number of those who found it difficult.

Q5: Do you consider anxiety as one of the difficulties that you usually face?

Table 5

Students’ Consideration of Anxiety as One of their Difficulties

	Yes	No	Total
Participants	32	15	47
Percentage %	68,1	31,9	100

As it is shown in Table 5, the majority of the students, representing 68,1% of the total sample, reacted with ‘Yes’, while on the contrary, 31,9% of them answered with ‘No’. Consequently, the results above confirm that the majority of the students with 68, 1% are aware of their anxiety, and they can easily identify it whenever they get nervous or afraid to speak. In addition, the results also can prove that anxiety is a common issue which is widely shared between EFL students.

Q6: Do you think that anxiety might affect your English language learning?

Table 6

Anxiety Effect on the Students’ English Language Learning

	Yes	No	Total
Participants	38	09	47
Percentage %	80,9	19,1	100

The statistics above shows that 80,9% of the students stated that anxiety affects their language learning, and only 19,1% of them claimed that anxiety does not really affect their learning. These results prove that the majority of students are affected by anxiety, and this confirms that anxiety is one of the major difficulties faced in the process of EFL learning as mentioned in Q 5 (Table 5).

Q7: If yes, to what extent does anxiety affect your English language learning?

Table 7

The Extent to Which Anxiety Affects the Students’ English Language Learning

	High	Intermediate	Low	Total
Participants	07	19	15	41
Percentage %	17,1	46,3	36,6	100

Table 7 shows that, for 46, 3% of the students, anxiety affects their learning to an intermediate extent. While 36,6% of them thought that it affects their learning to a low extent. Few students with 17,1% considered that it affects their learning to a high extent.

- **Section 3: Anxiety and Learners' Oral Performance**

The first six questions (i.e. Questions from 8 to 13) in this section aim to answer the second research question “**Does FLA affect first-year LMD students' oral performance in particular?**”. While the three remaining questions seek to answer the third research question “**What are the main causes of speaking anxiety for first-year LMD students of English?**”.

Q8: Do you agree with the idea that in order to learn a language you have to speak it?

Table 8

Students' Agreement/Disagreement on the Importance of Speaking in Language Learning

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Participants	47	01	48
Percentage %	97,9	2,1	100

Table 8 above presents students' agreement/disagreement about the importance of speaking in language learning. Nearly all the participants with 97,9% agreed that in order to learn a language they have to speak it. Only one student with 2,10% disagreed with this idea.

Q9: How often do you participate in the oral expression and comprehension class?

Table 9

Frequency of the Students' Participation in the Oral Expression and Comprehension Class

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Participants	28	17	03	00	48
Percentage	58,3	35,4	6,3	00	100

It is noticed from Table 9 that, the highest percentage (58, 3%) is associated with the students who always participate in the oral expression and comprehension class, while 17 students (35,4%) sometimes speak and share their ideas, while only 3 students (6,3%) asserted that they rarely do so and none of them never do so. It looks like; most of the students always participate in the oral expression and comprehension class.

Q10: Do you feel that your teacher of oral expression and comprehension module encourages you to speak in Class?

Table 10

Teacher's Encouragement to their Students to Speak in Class

	Yes	No	Total
Participants	43	05	48
Percentage %	89,6	10,4	100

The statistics obtained above denote that 43 students representing 89,6% felt that their teacher of oral expression and comprehension module encourages them to speak and interact with each other in class. Only 5 students representing 10.4% answered with 'no'.

Q11: Who carries out most of the talking in the oral expression and comprehension class?

Table 11

Students' Responses towards who Carries out Most of the Talking in the Oral Expression and Comprehension Class

	Teacher	Students	Total
Participants	08	40	48
Percentage %	16,7	83,3	100

As Table 11 shows, the majority of the students with 83, 3% indicated that they control most of the talking in the oral expression and comprehension as they have the opportunity to speak and express their ideas. However, it is observable that 16, 7% of the respondents believed that the teachers speak the most in oral classes.

Q12: Do you feel quite sure of yourself when you are speaking in the class?

Table 12

Students' Self Confidence to Speak in Class

	Always	Sometimes	never	Total
Participants	11	37	00	48
Percentage %	22,9	77,1	00	100

As shown in Table 12, 77,1% of the students sometimes feel self-confident while speaking, followed by 22,9% who always feel self-confident while speaking. Whereas, no one never felt quite sure of himself while speaking. These results show that only 22,9% of the students believed in their capacity to perform well in English. However, the majority of the students are not always quite sure of themselves when they speak in class.

Q13: How often do you worry about making mistakes in the class?

Table 13

Frequency of Students' Worry about Making Mistakes in Class

	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
Participants	16	22	09	47
Percentage %	34	46,8	19,1	100

It is noticeable that most of the students representing 46, 8% sometimes worry about making mistakes, and 34% of them are always obsessed with their mistakes, while the rest representing 19,1% believed that, it is okay to make errors from time to time. From these

results, it can be concluded that the majority of the students are, sometimes or always, worried about making mistakes in the class or before they speak in the class.

Q14: Do you tremble when you know that you are going to be called on in the class?

Table 14

Students' Feelings when they are Going to be Called on in the Class

	Yes	No	Total
Participants	29	19	48
Percentage %	60,4	39,6	100

Table 14 clearly shows that the majority of the students (60,4%) get nervous and tremble when they are called on to speak in the class, and the rest of them (39,6%) seem to be comfortable even when they are called on in class. This proves that speaking and participating in class is not an easy task. However, it requires a high self-confidence and previous preparation as well as the courage to take risks. The students who do not tremble when they are called to speak in class seem to have a high level of self-confidence, and this makes it easy for them to participate in class.

Q15: If yes, do you tremble because of: (A) lack of self-confidence, (B) fear of negative evaluation, (C) lack of preparation.

Table 15

Students' Responses towards the Causes behind their Speaking Anxiety

	Lack of self confidence	Fear of negative evaluation	Lack of preparation	Total
Participants	09	17	08	34
Percentage %	26,5	50	23,5	100

Half of the respondents (50%) claimed that, fear of negative evaluation is much related with anxiety more than the other causes, and 26, 5% of the participants reported that fear and trembling are much associated with lack of self-confidence, whereas, 23, 5% of them believed that the main cause behind is the lack of preparation.

It is clearly noticeable that, half of the students considered fear of negative evaluation as the trigger that causes trembling. Therefore, students will expect a negative evaluation from their classmates; as a result, those negative thoughts and that over thinking will lower their self-esteem and make them feel unsecure. However, students may experience trembling due to other triggers, such as lack of self-confidence or lack of preparation.

Q16: Do you feel embarrassed when your teacher/classmates correct your mistakes and errors?

Table 16

Students' Embarrassment of Correcting their Mistakes

	Yes	No	Total
Participants	11	37	48
Percentage %	22,9	77,1	100

Based on the results above, 77,1% of the students do not feel embarrassed when others correct their mistakes, whereas 22,9% of them feel embarrassed when others correct their mistakes. These statistics show that most of the students are ready to learn the language and accept judgments with an open heart. Because they do not feel shy when their teachers, or classmates correct their mistakes.

- **Section 4: Reducing Learners' Speaking Anxiety**

This section aims to answer the fourth research question **“What are the most necessary and effective strategies to reduce speaking anxiety in English language classrooms?”**.

Q17: How do you find the role of oral presentations in overcoming your speaking anxiety?

Table 17

The Role of Oral Presentations in Reducing Students' Speaking Anxiety

	Very helpful	Helpful	Not helpful	Total
Participants	27	20	01	48
Percentage %	56,3	41,7	2,1	100

Table 17 shows that the majority of students (56,3%) considered oral presentations a very helpful task which can decrease their speaking anxiety, and 41,7% of them regarded it as a helpful technique too. Yet, only one student views them as a frightening experience that may increase their nervousness. Hence, it is clearly observable from the previous results that, the students found the role of oral presentations very effective in reducing their speaking anxiety.

Q18: Which technique do you prefer to reduce your speaking anxiety?

Table 18 presents which technique among the provided options; the participants prefer to reduce their speaking anxiety. The options are listed as follows: A) Encourage yourself to take risks and talk, B) Use of relaxation techniques, C) Use of positive self-talk, D) Do more preparation, and E) Stop your fear of negative evaluation.

Table 18

Students' Preferred Techniques Used to Reduce their Speaking Anxiety

	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Participants	24	04	07	07	06	48
Percentage%	50	8,3	14,6	14,6	12,5	100

The statistics above show that 50% of the participants stated that they encourage themselves to take risks, the percentage of the students who do more preparation is equal to those who use positive self-talk to reduce their speaking anxiety with 14,6% for both, and 12,5% of the students chose to stop their fear of negative evaluation, while only 8,3% of them preferred to use relaxation techniques to reduce their speaking anxiety.

From these results, it is clear that half of the students prefer to encourage themselves to take risks and talk, and this is a sign of maturity and willingness to face anxiety and prove that they are brave enough to take risks and talk. The fact that the students are aware of the techniques that they could use to reduce their speaking anxiety makes them more capable of facing and reducing it. Anxiety is a psychological state so it can be faced psychologically by encouraging themselves to face it. Coming in the second rank of the preferred techniques by the students to reduce their speaking anxiety is both the use of positive self-talk and doing more preparation followed by stopping their fear of negative evaluation and finally using relaxation techniques such as: Yoga, imagination and deep breathing.

Q19: How do your teachers help in reducing your speaking anxiety?

In order to answer this question, participants had to choose among the provided options which technique their teachers use more to help in reducing their speaking anxiety: A) Developing teacher-student relationship, B) Group work, C) Creating suitable classroom environment, D) Adopting positive error correction and show understanding, and E) Using varied speaking activities

Table 19

Teachers' Techniques Used to Reduce their Students' Speaking Anxiety

	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Participants	15	11	07	05	09	47
Percentage%	31,9	23,4	14,9	10,6	19,1	100

Table 19 conveys that, students who choose developing teacher-student relationship as a way to reduce their anxiety represented 31,9% of the whole population, while students who assumed that working in groups will diminish their nervousness were with 23,4%; and those who believed that using varied speaking activities as the best technique to hinder speaking anxiety were with 19,1%. Whereas, 14,9% of the respondents claimed that creating a suitable classroom atmosphere is the best solution, and just 5 students (10,6%) viewed that adopting positive error correction and showing understanding would be very helpful for anxious students.

Consequently, it can be concluded that no one can deny the teacher's significance in minimizing students speaking anxiety. Not only that, but also following some effective strategies, students will easily overcome their tension and anxiety. In addition, the majority of the respondents believed that a good relationship between the teacher and the student will create a safe atmosphere that will make anxious students feel comfortable and brave enough to take risks and share their ideas freely.

- **Section 5: Suggestions and Recommendations**

In order to answer the fourth research question, the researchers used qualitative techniques to analyze the two open-ended questions under this section. These questions would definitely result in richer and more in-depth account of the students' suggestions and recommendations for reducing their speaking anxiety in the class. However, not all the students responded to these questions, just 83,33% of them did so.

Q20: What would you suggest and recommend to motivate you to speak and participate in the classroom?

In response to this question, the students have suggested a variety of procedures and strategies that they think can motivate them to speak and participate more in the classroom. Most of the students agreed that teacher's encouragement and positive reinforcement plays

a great role in motivating them to participate more. Other students agreed that challenging activities and debates are more motivative for them. While, others thought that previous preparation can also be a motive. Besides, some respondents said that playing games and watching more videos in the classroom and commenting on them with the teacher is quite enough to motivate them to speak. In addition, some of them believed that group work can be very helpful.

However, other students believed that enhancing their level of English, and building up their self-confidence can motivate them to speak and participate. This means that they motivate themselves by themselves.

Q21: What would you suggest and recommend to reduce your speaking anxiety in the class?

In response to this question, the students have suggested a set of procedures and techniques that they think can reduce their speaking anxiety in the classroom. The proposed procedures and techniques differ in relation to students' level of anxiety.

Half of the students suggested that developing teacher-students relationship and creating positive atmosphere is among the strategies that they followed to reduce their speaking anxiety. In the same vein, other students suggested that group work can reduce their speaking anxiety. Also one of the respondents mentioned that self-confidence is very helpful. Another respondent pointed out that it is essential that they rely more on body language to facilitate communication.

Furthermore, there was a focus on adding more speaking activities in class. Moreover, there was a great emphasis on eliminating the sarcastic comments and punishing those who make fun of others' mistakes. Two of the respondents assumed that focusing more on self-talk and interaction with proficient speakers, in addition to brain storming and using simple language will be beneficial. Unexpectedly, it was suggested that providing the university with

specialized psychologists is a necessity. Finally, two students recommended that following relaxation and breathing techniques is enough to overcome speaking anxiety.

2.1.3 Discussion of the Results Obtained from the Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

Gardner (1991) stated that LA is a convincing and important force and factor in the language learning context. So in any study that seeks to understand and explain the language learning process, the researcher must take into consideration its effects on the process of learning. Similarly, the aim of this research is investigating the students' and teachers' attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on EFL learners' oral performance. To achieve this aim, the researcher first developed a questionnaire for first-year LMD students. The suggested sections of this questionnaire address the following dimensions in light of the research questions: anxiety in the learning process in general, anxiety and learners' oral performance, reducing learners' speaking anxiety, and students' suggestions and recommendations to reduce their speaking anxiety.

The descriptive analysis of Section 1 of the students' questionnaire give a wide picture about the students' background information, and it is obvious that most of first-year LMD students' age range between 18 and 20 years old, and female students are almost two times numerous as male students. Also studying English at Larbi Tebessi University is the first choice for the majority of the students.

The first two research questions aimed to investigate whether or not FLA affects first-year LMD students' English language learning in general and oral performance in particular, from the students' perspectives. To achieve this aim, statistical analyses using frequency and percentage of the questions in Sections 2 and 3 accordingly were required. The results obtained from these analyses give a general view of FLA effects on the process of English language learning and students' oral performance particularly.

The results obtained from the analysis of Section 2 of the questionnaire revealed that most of first-year LMD students of English at Larbi Tebessi University consider anxiety as one the major difficulties that they usually face in the process of learning (Table 5). Also 80.9% of them stated that anxiety really affects their EFL learning which might lead to stress that causes failure; and this means that FLA exists between first-year LMD students of English (Table 6). It is true that its degrees vary from a student to another (Table 7) where most of the students classified their anxiety between intermediate and low extent.

Similarly, the results obtained from the analysis of the third section revealed that nearly all first-year LMD students of English agree that in order to learn a language they have to speak it first (Table 8) as Brown & Yule (1983) stated that speaking is the skill that the student will be judged upon most in real life situations. This result shows the students' awareness about the importance of oral performance in the process of EFL Learning. Even Though, most of the students admitted that their teachers always encourage them to speak and participate in class, also they give them the chance to carry out most of the talking in the oral expression and comprehension class (Tables 10 and 11). The results in Table 12 show that 77.1% of the students are not always quite sure of themselves when they speak in class and they tremble whenever they are called on to participate in class due to the effect of anxiety on their oral performance (Table 14).

The majority of the students felt anxious, and this feeling might prevent them from expressing their thoughts and ideas in an adequate way; because the excessive worry about making mistakes will increase their level of anxiety and sometimes, it may lead to an unexpected panic attacks that affect their oral performance. This supports the claim of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) who have conducted studies and proved that both teachers and students assert that anxiety is related to a situation in which language is spoken.

Up to this point, it can be concluded that FLA negatively affects the students' learning in general and oral performance in particular, and this conclusions answer the first and the second research questions and confirm the first and the second hypotheses of the study.

With regard to the analysis of Q15, it is assumed that fear of negative evaluation, lack of self-confidence and lack of preparation are the main causes of speaking anxiety for first-year LMD students of English. As they consider fear of negative evaluation as the most anxiety provoking trigger, due to the fact that they will be evaluated by others. However; most of the students accept judgments with an open heart and do not feel embarrassed when others correct their mistakes (Table 16). And therefore, these results answer the second research question and prove the second hypothesis of the study.

In the light of the third research question that seeks to identify the most necessary and effective strategies that reduce speaking anxiety in English language classrooms, first-year LMD students of English responses differ depending on their level of anxiety. First of all, the students valued the role of oral presentation in reducing their anxiety and they considered it as a second chance for anxious students who do not participate in class and it gives them the opportunity to speak (Table 17). Second, they try to encourage themselves to take risks and speak and this is a sign of maturity and willingness to face anxiety and prove that they are brave enough to succeed. Also, they are aware of the significant role that the teacher plays in minimizing their speaking anxiety (Table 19).

Additionally, the qualitative analysis of two open-ended questions in Section 5 derived more suggestions and recommendations to reduce students' speaking anxiety a variety of strategies such as developing teacher-student relationship and creating a positive atmosphere, group work, relying on body language to facilitate communication, adding varied speaking activities and previous preparation, following breathing and relaxation

techniques like Yoga, eliminating the sarcastic comments and get help from specialized psychologists in the field...etc.

Section Two: The Teachers' Questionnaire

Similar to the first section, this one describes the research methodology that is followed to analyze the teachers' questionnaire as well as it provides a detailed analysis and discussion of the obtained results.

2.2.1 Research Methodology

2.2.1.1 Sample and setting. The target population of this study includes also EFL teachers who have taught first-year LMD students in the department of English at Larbi Tebessi University during the academic year 2019/ 2020. The sample consists of the teachers of all modules with a focus on those who were in charge of teaching oral expression and comprehension classes. The selection of this specific sample was based on the basis that, speaking anxiety is associated with the situations in which the language is spoken; whether in time of class participation and discussion, oral presentations/examinations.

The direct contact with the chosen sample seemed to be impossible due to COVID-19 global pandemic, and for this reason, an online questionnaire was suggested and distributed to the target population via emails with the help of the supervisor. However, only five teachers accepted to take part in the study and responded to the questionnaire; four of them were teachers of oral expression and comprehension module. It was then a satisfying sample size in such difficult circumstances.

2.2.1.2 Data gathering tools.

2.2.1.2.1 Description of the questionnaire. To achieve the purpose of this research, a second questionnaire was used to probe into EFL teachers' attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on students' oral performance. Similar to the students' questionnaire, the teachers' one begins with a set of demographic questions. This is followed with a total number of 10

randomly-ordered questions of different types including yes/no questions, multiple-choice questions, and two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire. These questions are grouped under five sections with the same labeling as those in the students' questionnaire.

2.2.1.2.2 Administration of the questionnaire. The researchers distributed the questionnaire (see Appendix C) to the target population online via emails using Google form online questionnaire on June 13, 2020. Thereafter, the researchers started getting responses which lasted about a week. However, just five teachers agreed to take part in the study and responded to the questionnaire and therefore data were then ready for analysis.

2.2.1.3 Data collection/analysis procedures. The researchers adopted the same research design used and analyze the data quantitatively and qualitatively following the same statistical calculations used in analyzing the students' questionnaire. For analyzing the data provided by the two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire, qualitative techniques were used.

2.2.2 Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

- **Section 1: Background Information**

The personal information were related to the teachers' gender, degree, years of experience and level for teaching oral expression and comprehension module and whether they like teaching the module or not.

Q1: Gender

Table 20

Teachers' Gender Distribution

	Female	Male	Total
Participants	04	01	05
Percentage%	80	20	100

The results indicate that, the majority of the teacher participants are females with 80% of the whole population whereas, the rest 20% are males. Therefore, the results above prove that, female teachers present the largest proportion, which conveys that women are interested in the teaching profession more than males.

Q2: Teachers' Degree

Table 21

Teachers' Degree

	Licence	Magister	Doctorate	Total
Participants	0	05	0	0
Pourcentage%	0	100	0	100

The results displayed in Table 21 shows that 100% of the teacher participants have Magister degree. None of them have Licence/Doctorate degree.

Q3: How many years have you been teaching the Oral Expression and Comprehension module?

Table 22

Teachers' Years of Experience in Teaching the Oral Expression and Comprehension Module

	1 year	2 years	6 years	Total
Participants	02	02	01	05
Percentage %	40	40	20	100

The results of the gathered data show clearly that, 40% of the teachers have been teaching oral expression and comprehension module for only one year, where the other 40% claimed that, their teaching experience extents for two years. However, 20% of the total percentage reported that they taught the module for more than six years. Consequently, it is noticeable that there is diversity among teachers' experience in teaching the module.

Q4: Which level are you teaching the Oral Expression and Comprehension module?

Table 23

Levels Taught by the Teachers the Oral Expression and Comprehension Module

	First-year Licence	Second-year Licence	Third-year Licence	Total
Participants	03	0	02	05
Percentage %	70	0	30	100

Based on the results shown in Table 23 above, 70% of the teachers have taught the module to first-year Licence students, while 30% of them have taught it to second-year students and none of them have taught it to third-year students. These results indicate that the majority of the teacher participants were in close contact with the target population of this study and this makes their answers more reliable.

Q5: Do you like teaching the Oral Expression and Comprehension module?

Table 24

Teachers' Likes/Dislikes to Teaching Oral Expression and Comprehension Module

	Yes	No	Total
Participants	05	0	05
Percentage %	100	0	100

Table 24 above shows that no one of the teachers disliked teaching the module, where the results proved that 100% of them adored teaching such a module. Through their justification, they liked teaching the oral expression and comprehension module because it is not boring and it adopts varied strategies and activities in listening, speaking, reading and writing, unlike the other theoretical subjects which is stereotyped and hard to approach.

- **Section 2: Anxiety in the Learning Process in General**

This section aims to answer the first research question “**Does FLA affect first-year LMD students’ English language learning in general?**” from the teachers’ perspectives.

Q6: Do you think that anxiety affects the students’ achievements in a negative way?

Table 25

Teachers’ Responses towards Whether or not Anxiety Affects the Students’ Achievements in a Negative Way

	Yes	No	Total
Participants	05	0	05
Percentage%	100	0	100

As Table 25 shows, all the teachers of oral expression and comprehension module with 100% thought that anxiety affects negatively the student’s achievements, whereas 0% of them claimed that anxiety does not have any effect with students’ low scores. From these results it can be concluded that, all the teacher respondents believed that anxiety is one of the main causes of their students’ low grades and poor performance which leads to low academic achievement.

Q7: Do you think that students’ underachievement is the main cause of anxiety?

Table 26

Teachers’ Responses towards Whether or not Students’ Underachievement is the Main Cause of Anxiety

	Yes	No	Total
Participants	01	04	05
Percentage%	20	80	100

According to the reported results in Table 26, 80% of the teacher participants suppose that students' underachievement cause anxiety. At the other hand 20% of them are convinced that students' anxiety is caused and provoked by other factors. Consequently, the majority of teachers consider students' underachievement as the main trigger which provokes anxiety. Therefore, grades decrease is simply categorized as one of the major causes of anxiety at oral expression classrooms.

- **Section 3: Anxiety and Learners' Oral Performance**

The first two questions (i.e. Questions 8 and 9) under this section help to answer the second research question “**Does FLA affect first-year LMD students' oral performance in particular?**”, while the two remaining questions seek to answer the third research question “**What are the main causes of speaking anxiety for first-year LMD students of English?**”.

Q8: How often do you observe that some of your students are afraid to speak?

Table 27

Frequency of Teachers' Observation to their Students who are Afraid to Speak

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Participants	02	03	0	0	05
Percentage%	40	60	0	0	100

From the results shown in the Table 27 above, 60% of the teachers stated that the students are sometimes afraid to speak in classroom discussion, while 40% of them believed that they are always afraid to do so. And none of them assumed that they rarely or never do. Hence, it can be noticed that the majority of the students are afraid to speak and this catches the teachers' attention. The teachers do not just present lessons; however, they pay attention to their students' psychological state in class when they tend to speak.

Q9: Do you think that anxiety is much related to speaking more than listening, writing or reading?

Table 28

Teachers' Responses towards Whether or Not Anxiety is much Related to Speaking more than the other Language Skills

	Yes	No	Total
Participants	05	0	05
Percentage%	100	0	100

Table 28 shows that, all the respondents (100%) believed that anxiety is much related to the speaking skill more than the other language skills. Based on that, speaking activities may provoke students' anxiety more than reading, listening or writing activities, because students find themselves under obligation to speak and respond. As a result, students will worry about making mistakes and get obsessed with answering in a perfect way. Moreover, anxious students feel uncomfortable when it is their turn to speak and as a result, that worry will limit their thinking and hamper them to express their thoughts properly.

Q10: Do you think that anxiety level of your students rises because of: A) Fear of negative evaluation, B) Communication apprehension, C) Lack of motivation

Table 29

Teachers' Responses towards the Causes behind the Students' Speaking Anxiety

	A	B	C	Total
Participants	05	0	0	05
Percentage%	100	0	0	100

According to these results, all the teachers (100%) thought that fear of negative evaluation is the main cause of the students' speaking anxiety; while none of them agreed that communication apprehension or lack of motivation can cause speaking anxiety.

Q11: Do you think that it is better not to inform students that they are going to be evaluated?

According to the teachers' answers, four teachers supported the idea of evaluating students without informing them, claiming that this method will diminish students' stress, especially during tests where some of the students face difficulties to speak under pressure or within a limited period of time; so, not informing them will give an accurate feedback about their performance because, they will be more natural and spontaneous. However, another teacher asserted that this way could be helpful from time to time but, not always. Whereas the other teacher believed that, doing such thing is unethical, and students should be notified whenever they have a test or an exam.

- **Section 4: Reducing Learners' Speaking Anxiety**

This section aims to answer the fourth research question **“What are the most necessary and effective strategies to reduce speaking anxiety in English language classrooms?”** from the teachers' perspectives.

Q12: How often do you give your students the opportunity to discuss with you their learning problems?

Table 30

Frequency of the Teachers' Permission to their Students to Discuss their Learning Problems

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Participants	03	02	0	0	05
Percentage%	60	40	0	0	100

The statistics above show that, 60% of the teachers claimed that they always give their students the opportunity to discuss their learning problems, and the rest of them (40%) assumed that they sometimes do so. While none of the respondents rarely or never do. These results clearly show that the majority of the teachers were open-minded with their students, and they were always ready to listen to their learning problems. This is a clue of the teachers' willingness to support their students.

Q13: How often do you encourage your students to participate and talk in the class?

Table 31

Frequency of the Teachers' Encouragement to their Students to Participate and Talk in class

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Participants	05	0	0	0	05
Percentage%	100	0	0	0	100

The statistics above show that, all the teachers (100%) always encouraged their students to participate in the class. This means that teachers always help their students to overcome their fears and negative thoughts. Indeed, motivating students to talk and share their ideas, is the best strategy to make them feel more comfortable.

Q14: Do you think that exposing your students to different speaking activities will help them feel more comfortable?

Table 32

Teachers' Responses towards Whether or Not Exposing their Students to Different Speaking Activities will Help them Feel Comfortable

	Yes	No	Total
Participants	05	0	05
Percentage%	100	0	100

As presented in Table 32, all the teachers (100%) regarded that exposing their students to different speaking activities will help them feel more comfortable. This means that the teachers had already exposed their students to a varied set of speaking activities and noticed positive reactions.

- **Section 5: Suggestions and Recommendations**

In order to answer the fourth research question qualitatively, the researchers analyzed the two open-ended questions under this section. These questions would definitely result in richer and more in-depth account of the teachers' suggestions and recommendations for reducing their students' speaking anxiety in the class.

Q15: What would you suggest and recommend to motivate your students to speak and participate in the class?

In order to motivate anxious EFL students to speak and participate in class, some teachers suggested that building a positive learning environment where students feel free and comfortable to take a part in classroom discussions. Others then preferred inviting shy students to speak up more in class, by giving them opportunities to communicate their ideas and help them to understand that they are not expected to give perfect answers. In other words, the teacher should emphasize that mistakes are part of the learning process. In relation to that, other teachers suggested avoiding overcorrecting students' mistakes, and never correcting every error because that will affect students' willingness to engage in.

However, other teachers advised using a variety of teaching methods and strategies that will engage all students who learn differently (visually, auditory, reading, writing, etc.). This variety will make learning looks more creative and interesting. Others proposed giving students enough time to think and to organize their answers before they respond to the questions, also, giving them a chance to make a draft before speaking. Besides, one teacher

claimed that listening carefully to students' answers and questions will motivate them to expose their ideas; however, interrupting them will make them confused and hesitant.

Furthermore, two teachers asserted that it is worthy to give extra marks for every active participation; where some others argue that the teachers need to be smiley and energetic to encourage students to take part. Also, all students should be treated fairly regardless of their gender, where they came from, etc. In addition, students should be treated as adults and not teenagers, and they should be provided with a positive feedback first followed with the constructive criticism. Unexpectedly, it was stressed on the idea that, a teacher should choose his words carefully and should not offend any student and students should not offend each other. Finally, one teacher recommended that a teacher should act like a parent, take it easy on students when necessary and be strict when the moment suggests so.

Q 16: What would you suggest and recommend to help an anxious student to overcome their speaking anxiety in class?

In response to this question, the teacher participants proposed a series of suggestions with a view to help anxious students to hinder their speaking anxiety, as can be seen from the following:

- Telling students motivational stories about successful people and how they achieved their goals despite all the difficulties they faced in their careers.
- Reminding students always that they have the right to fall sometimes and what matters the most is to know how to overcome any difficulty they face during the learning journey.
- Encouraging students to help each other during the class and out of session too, by asking them to detect their classmates' mistakes and suggesting solutions.
- Identifying anxious students first and encouraging them to speak about their learning problems.

- Incorporating project work, because it can provide anxious and non-anxious students alike with abundant opportunities to use language in a non-threatening context.
- Using positive praise and avoiding punishment.
- Getting students to face their fears and take risks with providing them with a positive feedback once they participate.
- Asking questions that require every student in the class to take part and give his/her opinion.
- Choosing interesting topics that students can relate to and feel comfortable with.
- Using a constant eye-contact with the students.
- Giving students to present in the way they feel comfortable with; either, seated, standing up, using computers, using notes, etc.
- Working in groups.

2.2.3 Discussion of the Results Obtained from the Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

With the purpose of achieving the overall aim of this study “investigating EFL students’ and teacher’s attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on students oral performance”, the researcher developed a second questionnaire for EFL teachers too. Similar to the students’ questionnaire, the teachers’ questionnaire assemble together a set of questions within the same five sections as those in the students’ questionnaire: anxiety in the learning process in general, anxiety and learners’ oral performance, reducing learners’ speaking anxiety and teachers’ suggestions and recommendations to reduce speaking anxiety.

The descriptive analysis of the first section in the teachers’ questionnaire gave a complete description about the teachers’ personal information. Specifically, the information were related to: (1) the teachers’ gender, where the results revealed that the majority of them are females, (2) their degree, where the data proved that all of them have Magister degree, (3)

years of experience in teaching the oral expression and comprehension module, which range between one to six years (Table 22), (5) level of teaching the oral expression and comprehension module which are both levels, first and third-year Licence (Table 23) , (5) their attitudes towards teaching the module, where all the teachers' reactions are positive as they stated that they like teaching it.

The first and the second research questions were directed to examine whether or not FLA affects first year LMD students' English language learning in general and their oral performance in particular from the teachers' perspectives. In order to reach this objective, Section 2 and 3 were statistically analyzed using frequency and percentage of the questions. The acquired results present an overall view about the impact of FLA on the process of language learning in general and on the students' performance in particular.

The statistical data has shown that a significant number of teachers regard anxiety as a negative factor which affect negatively the students' achievements (Table 25). Importantly, FLA is assumed to be one of the major causes of the students' low grades, where the results in Table 26 can clearly prove the strong relationship between anxiety and students' underachievement. Based on the teachers' attitudes, 80% of them asserted that students' low grades can dramatically influence their learning, more than that, it provokes their anxiety and nervousness inside the classroom. Therefore, anxiety is screened to be one of the most common obstacles a student may experience in learning a foreign language.

Over and above, it is noticeable that the majority of the teachers can clearly observe students who are afraid to speak (Table 27). Moreover, anxious students are recognized especially during the speaking activities. In this sense, answers of Q9 proved that anxiety is strongly related to the speaking skill more than the other language skills (Table 28). This is similar to what had been said by Young (1990), "Speaking in the foreign language is often cited by students as their most anxiety producing experience" (p. 539). It is also in agreement

with Aida's (1994) findings where she concluded that speaking in classroom in front of classmates and teachers is perhaps the most anxiety-stimulating activity.

It appears that FLA has a negative impact on the students' learning in general and on their oral performance in particular. These conclusions clearly answer the first two research questions of the study and prove the first two hypotheses.

Furthermore, it is important to mention that speaking anxiety is triggered by three main causes: fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension and lack of motivation. Furthermore, the results in Table 29 indicate that 100% of the teachers agree that the most common cause that provokes speaking anxiety is fear of negative evaluation. This perfectly supports Conway's (2007) claim that students can reach the highest levels of anxiety, as they believe that if they make mistakes their classmates might make fun of them and embarrass them. This problem discourages the students to speak out loud and participate in activities that requires oral interactions. Hence, this conclusion answers the third research question of the study as it confirms the third hypothesis.

The obtained results from Section 4 in the teachers' questionnaire help to answer the fourth research question of the study and prove the fourth hypothesis, assumed that the teacher plays an important role in reducing students' speaking anxiety as well as exposing the students to a lot of oral presentations will overcome their speaking anxiety too. The results indicate that the majority of the oral expression and comprehension teachers always give their students the opportunity to talk and discuss their learning problems (Table 30). In addition, it is noticeable that 100% of the teachers encourage their students to participate and talk in oral expression classes (Table 31). Furthermore, the data in Table 32 also show that all the teachers (100%) expose their students to a variety of speaking activities and oral presentations, to make them feel more relaxed and comfortable.

Moreover, analysis of the two open-ended questions in Section 5 of the questionnaire using qualitative techniques tries to gain insights into the teachers' suggestions to reduce their speaking anxiety and so to further answering the fourth research question of the study. The results obtained from this analysis lead to gather a list of suggestions and recommendations from the teachers' view, which may motivate the anxious students and hinder their speaking anxiety. In order to motivate students to participate and talk in the class, teachers suggest several ways (as it is shown in Q15), such as: creating a positive learning environment, inviting shy students to speak, using variety of teaching methods, providing students with the positive feedback and enough time to think and answer, treating students as adults... etc.

Additionally, responding to Q16, teachers recommended series of suggestions which they considered as helpful to decrease the anxious students' speaking anxiety. They mentioned the following: motivating students, avoiding punishment, using prizes, choosing interesting topics, working in groups...etc. These strategies were similar to those suggested by Kitano (2001), Ansari (2015) and Tsiplakidzs & Keramida (2009). These data apparently answer the fourth research question of the study and confirm the fourth hypothesis.

Section Three: Summary of the Results, Limitations, Implications, and Recommendations

As a final step in this chapter, the results of the study are summarized and the limitations are presented. The pedagogical implications that need to be acknowledged and addressed are offered and relevant recommendations are proposed.

2.3.1 Summary of the Results

This part presents briefly the conclusions derived from the analysis and interpretation of the results obtained from both the students' and the teachers' questionnaires in light of the research questions and hypotheses, as follows:

- FLA affects negatively first-year LMD students' English language learning in general and oral performance in particular, from both the students' and teachers' perspectives.
- Fear of negative evaluation, lack of self-confidence, lack of motivation and preparation, and communication apprehension are the main causes of speaking anxiety for first-year LMD students of English with a focus on fear of negative evaluation as the most anxiety provoking trigger.
- The teacher plays an important role in reducing the students' speaking anxiety and overcoming their difficulties by adopting a variety of tasks and techniques that feat the learners' interest, needs and level in order to develop their oral performance and exposing the students to a lot of oral presentations is among these techniques.
- Further strategies and techniques are suggested by both the students and teachers to reduce students' speaking anxiety and motivate them to speak in class such as, developing teacher-student relationship, creating a positive atmosphere, reinforcing group work, eliminating the sarcastic comments and get help from specialized psychologists in the field, using positive praise and avoiding punishment, ...etc.

2.3.2 Limitations of the Study

The current study has to be seen in the light of the following limitations:

- Because of the COVID-19 lockdown that affected the natural flow of the courses in all the international educational institutions, an online questionnaire was used instead of an interview to collect data from the teachers.
- It has been very challenging to have limited access to the target participants, where the majority of the students weren't interested in answering the questions and the idea of gathering data using Facebook was time consuming.

- The number of the participants (EFL Teachers) is very small and it may not be representative, likewise, collecting the teachers' emails was difficult and time consuming.
- Access to the theoretical background concerning anxiety was difficult, bearing in mind that psychology books are very expensive and unavailable neither in our country or the university library.
- Anxiety is a complicated psychological issue and it varies from one person to another which makes it difficult to be detected.

2.3.3 Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for EFL teachers as they clearly show the negative impact of anxiety on the students' language learning in general and oral performance in particular, the fact that necessitates from the teachers to be aware of their students' psychological state and seriously resolve their anxiety problems so as not to worsen the language learning/teaching process.

Furthermore, these findings hold implications for EFL students as they provide them with the most effective strategies to enable them first to detect the sources of their anxiety and then to reduce their level of anxiety in class. Also the findings of this study carry some implications on the university administrators to make them think of getting help from specialized psychologists to help students with psychological disorders.

2.3.4 Recommendations

In the light of the results obtained from this study, some recommendations could be of use to help EFL students' and teachers' to recognize the impact of anxiety on the students' achievement, as well as, to identify the most effective strategies to reduce anxiety and enhance their oral performance.

- Students should take into consideration that speaking is one of the most important tasks in the process of learning foreign languages.
- Anxiety is a common feeling in the process of learning foreign languages and it is normal for the students to feel anxious.
- Students should be aware of the effects caused by anxiety.
- Students should respect their anxious peers while performing and not make fun of them.
- Committing mistakes and errors is quite normal and students should not be embarrassed about it.
- Teachers play an important role in oral expression and comprehension classrooms.
- Teachers should motivate and encourage their students to participate and speak without putting them under stress and pressure.
- Teachers as well as students should cooperate to create a suitable classroom atmosphere.
- Teachers are the students' guider in classroom, so they should pay attention to their attitudes and take into considerations their students' psychological state.
- Teachers as well as students should be aware about the techniques and strategies used to reduce anxiety and ameliorate oral performance.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the first section provides a descriptive framework and statistical analysis of the obtained results from the students' questionnaire to investigate their attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on their oral performance. While, the second section is devoted to the descriptive and statistical analysis of the teachers' questionnaire. The results of both questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, interpreted and represented. From these results, the research questions were answered and the research hypotheses were

testified. Accordingly, both EFL students and teachers are aware of the negative impact of anxiety on the students' oral performance. As well as, they are conscious about the strategies that may reduce and overcome speaking anxiety. A third section is devoted to provide a summary of the results, limitations, implications and recommendations.

General Conclusion

Anxiety has always been one of the hidden obstacles that EFL learners tend to face while speaking. The current research aims to investigate the attitudes of EFL students and teachers towards the impact of anxiety on students' oral performance at Larbi Tebessi University (Tebessa). The study, in particular, aims to find whether anxiety has a positive or a negative impact on first-year LMD students' English language learning generally and on their oral performance particularly. It aims also to determine the key factors that are more likely to cause speaking anxiety. Finally, it attempts to identify and suggest the most necessary and effective strategies that students usually follow to reduce this psychological hurdle.

In order to achieve these aims, the researcher reviewed the related literature and suggested two questionnaires to be used as the main research tools administered online to both EFL students and teachers. Each questionnaire is divided into four main sections in light of the research questions of the study. The study sample consisted of a random sample of 48 third-year LMD students and five EFL teachers at Larbi Tebessi University during the academic year 2019/2020. The collected data from the two questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

The current dissertation is organized along two chapters beginning with a General Introduction. The first chapter consisting of two sections provides a theoretical background of the two research variables; anxiety and the speaking skill. It consists of two sections. The second chapter represents the practical part of the study wherein detailed description of data collection tools, analysis and discussion of the results are presented. It includes three sections; the first section deals with the students' questionnaire, the second section tackles the teachers' questionnaire; and the third one provides a summary of the results, limitations, recommendations and implications. Finally, the dissertation ends with a General Conclusion which makes an overall account of the research and summarizes the main research findings.

The results of this study revealed that most of EFL students and teachers at Larbi Tebessi University asserted that anxiety has a negative impact on first-year LMD students' English language learning in general and on their oral performance in particular. Also, the findings point out that fear of negative evaluation is the most anxiety provoking trigger and that the teacher plays an important role in reducing the students' speaking anxiety by adopting a variety of techniques that feat the learners' interest, needs and level, and exposing them to a lot of oral presentations is one of these techniques. Therefore, these findings answered the research questions and confirmed the research hypotheses. Based on these findings, the study proposes recommendations on how to reduce students' anxiety and enhance their oral performance in EFL contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The First Version of the Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

We are conducting a research study entitled “Investigating EFL Students’ and Teachers’ Attitudes Towards the Impact of Anxiety on Students’ Oral Performance”. The study addresses First Year Licence students of English.

The following questionnaire is designed in order to collect data about your attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on students’ oral performance. Therefore, you are kindly requested to answer the questions below, by making a tick (✓) next to the chosen options, and by precisising clearly your answers when it is needed. In addition, you are kindly asked to answer the final open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire to mention your suggestions and recommendations. The collected data will be used only for research purposes as we guarantee that your identity and answers will stay anonymous.

We appreciate your cooperation and participation in this study. We look forward to receiving your replies.

CHEBILI Amani and ZARROUG Khemissa

Master 2 students, Language Sciences, Department of English

Larbi Tebessi University, Tebessa

Date:

Section 1: Personal Information

1. Age

a) 20-25

b) 25-30

c) 30 and more

2. Gender

a) Female

b) Male

Q3. Was studying English at the university your first choice?

a) Yes

b) No

Section 2: Anxiety in the Learning Process in General

Q4. Do you face any difficulties in the process of learning English as a foreign language?

a) Yes

b) No

Q5. Do you consider anxiety as one of the difficulties that you usually face?

a) Yes

b) No

Q6. Do you think that anxiety might affect your language learning?

a) Yes

b) No

Q7. If yes, to what extent does anxiety affect your English language learning?

a) High

b) Intermediate

c) Low

Section 3: Anxiety and Learners' Oral Performance

Q8. Do you agree with the idea that in order to learn a language you have to speak it?

a) Agree

b) Disagree

Q9. How often do you participate in the Oral Expression and Comprehension class?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Q10. Do you feel that your teacher encourages you to speak?

a) Yes

b) No

Q11. Who carries out most of the talking in the Oral Expression and Comprehension class?

a) Teacher

b) Students

Q12. Do you feel quite sure of yourself when you are speaking in the class?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Q13. Do you worry about making mistakes in the class?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Q14. Do you tremble when you know that you are going to be called on in the class?

a) Yes

b) No

Q15. If yes, do you tremble because of:

- a) Lack of self confidence
- b) Fear of negative evaluation
- c) Lack of preparation

Q16. Do you feel shy when your teacher/classmates correct your mistakes and errors?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Section 4: Reducing Learners' Oral Performance Anxiety

Q17. How do you find the role of oral presentation in overcoming your speaking anxiety?

- a) Very helpful
- b) Helpful
- c) Not helpful

Q18. Which technique do you prefer to reduce anxiety?

- a) Encourage yourself to take risks and talk
- b) Use relaxation techniques
- c) Use positive self-talk
- d) Do more preparation

Q19. How can your teacher help in reducing your anxiety?

- a) Developing teacher-student relationship
- b) Group work
- c) Creating suitable classroom atmosphere
- d) Adopting positive error correction and show understanding

Section 5: Suggestions and Recommendations

Q20. What would you suggest and recommend to motivate you to speak and participate in the class?

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.....
.....

Q21.What would you suggest and recommend to reduce your speaking anxiety in the class?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix B: The Final Version of the Students' Questionnaire

- **The Students' Online Questionnaire Link**

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1LJZPFVvzyfD_S8hX0ZZNR_h2N331BjxaZUP9V1HSDY/edit?usp=sharing_eil&ts=5ebdf30f.

- **The Students' Written Questionnaire Form**

Dear student,

We are conducting a research study entitled “Investigating EFL Students’ and Teachers’ Attitudes towards the Impact of Anxiety on Students’ Oral Performance”. The study addresses First-Year LMD students of English.

The following questionnaire is designed in order to collect data about your attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on students’ oral performance. Therefore, you are kindly requested to answer the questions below, by making a tick (✓) next to the chosen options, and by precisising clearly your answers when it is needed. In addition, you are kindly asked to answer the final open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire to mention your suggestions and recommendations. The collected data will be used only for research purposes as we guarantee that your identity and answers will stay anonymous.

We appreciate your cooperation and participation in this study. We look forward to receiving your replies.

Amani CHEBILI and Khemissa ZARROUG

Master 2 students, Language Sciences, Department of English

Larbi Tebessi University, Tebessa

Date:

Section 1: Personal Information

Q1. Age

A) 18-20

B) 20-25

C) 25-30

Q2. Gender

A) Female

B) Male

Q3. Was Studying English at the university your first choice?

A) Yes

B) No

Section 2: Anxiety in the Learning Process in General

Q4. Do you face any difficulties in the process of learning English as a foreign language?

A) Yes

B) No

Q5. Do you consider anxiety as one of the difficulties that you usually face?

A) Yes

B) No

Q6. Do you think that anxiety might affect your English language learning?

A) Yes

B) No

Q7. If yes, to what extent does anxiety affect your English language learning?

A) High

B) Intermediate

C) Low

Section 3: Anxiety and Learners' Oral Performance

Q8. Do you agree with the idea that in order to learn a language you have to speak it?

A) Agree

B) Disagree

Q9. How often do you participate in the oral expression and comprehension class?

A) Always

B) Sometimes

C) Rarely

D) Never

Q10. Do you feel that your teacher of oral expression and comprehension module encourages you to speak in class?

A) Yes

B) No

Q11. Who carries out most of the talking in the oral expression and comprehension class?

A) Teacher

B) Student

Q12. Do you feel quite sure of yourself when you are speaking in the class?

A) Always

B) Sometimes

C) Never

Q13. How often do you worry about making mistakes in the class?

A) Always

B) Sometimes

C) Never

Q14. Do you tremble when you know that you are going to be called on in the class?

A) Yes

B) No

Q15. If yes, do you tremble because of:

A) Lack of self confidence

B) Fear of negative evaluation

C) Lack of preparation

Q16. Do you feel embarrassed when your teacher/ classmates correct your mistakes and errors?

A) Yes

B) No

Section 4: Reducing Learners' Speaking Anxiety

Q17. How do you find the role of oral presentations in overcoming your speaking anxiety?

A) Very helpful

B) Helpful

C) Not helpful

Q18. Which technique do you prefer to reduce your speaking anxiety?

A) Encourage yourself to take risks and talk

B) Use relaxation techniques

C) Use positive self-talk

D) Do more preparation

E) Stop your fear of negative evaluation

Q19. How do your teachers help in reducing your speaking anxiety?

A) Developing teacher-student relationship

B) Group work

C) Creating suitable atmosphere

D) Adopting positive error correction and show understanding

E) Using varied speaking activities

Section 5: Suggestions and Recommendations

Q20. What would you suggest and recommend to motivate you to speak and participate in the classroom?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Q21. What would you suggest and recommend to reduce your speaking anxiety in the classroom?

.....
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Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix C: The Teachers' Questionnaire

- **The Teachers' Online Questionnaire Link**

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1uvaA2RuzgyolF2xzZtgmtqQrayRoGvNLOvy5uTy5qHY/edit?ts=5ec16bd2>

- **The Teachers' Written Questionnaire Form**

Dear teacher,

We are conducting a research study entitled “Investigating EFL Students’ and Teachers’ Attitudes towards the Impact of Anxiety on Students’ Oral Performance”. The study addresses First-Year LMD students of English.

The following questionnaire is designed in order to collect data about your attitudes towards the impact of anxiety on students’ oral performance. Therefore, you are kindly requested to answer the questions below, by making a tick (✓) next to the chosen options, and by precisising clearly your answers when it is needed. In addition, you are kindly asked to answer the final two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire to mention your suggestions and recommendations. The collected data will be used only for research purposes as we guarantee that your identity and answers will stay anonymous.

We appreciate your cooperation and participation in this study. We look forward to receiving your replies.

Amani CHEBILI and Khemissa ZARROUG

Master 2 students, Language Sciences, Department of English

Larbi Tebessi University, Tebessa

Date:

Section 1: Personal Information

Q1. Gender

A) Female

B) Male

Q2. Teachers' Degree

A) Licence

B) Magister

C) Doctorate

Q3. How many years have you been teaching the Oral Expression and Comprehension module?

.....
.....

Q4. Which levels are you teaching Oral Expression and Comprehension module?

A) First Year Licence

B) Second Year Licence

C) Third Year Licence

Q5. Do you like teaching the Oral Expression and Comprehension module?

A) Yes

B) No

Please, justify your answer.

.....
.....
.....

Section 2: Anxiety in the Learning Process in General

Q6. Do you think that anxiety affects the students' achievements in a negative way?

A) Yes

B) No

Please, explain

.....

.....

.....

Q7. Do you think that students' underachievement is the main cause of anxiety?

A) Yes

B) No

Please justify your answers

.....

.....

.....

Section 3: Anxiety and the Learners' Oral Performance

Q8. How often do you observe that some of your students are afraid to speak?

A) Always

B) Sometimes

C) Rarely

D) Never

Q9. Do you think that anxiety is much related to speaking more than listening, writing or reading?

A) Yes

B) No

Please justify your answers.

.....
.....
.....

Q10. Do you think that the anxiety level of your students rises because of:

- A) Fear of negative evaluation
- B) Communication apprehension
- C) Lack of motivation

Q11. Do you think that it is better not to inform students that they are going to be evaluated?

.....
.....
.....

Section 4: Reducing Learners' Speaking Anxiety

Q12. How often do you give your students the opportunity to discuss with you their learning problems?

- A) Always
- B) Sometimes
- C) Rarely
- D) Never

Q13.How often do you encourage your students to participate and talk in the class?

- A) Always
- B) Sometimes
- C) Rarely
- D) Never

How? Please explain.

.....
.....
.....

Q14. Do you think that exposing your students to different speaking activities will help them feel more comfortable?

A) Yes

B) No

Section 5: Suggestions and Recommendations

Q15. What would you suggest and recommend to motivate your students to speak and participate in the class?

.....
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.....

Q16. What would you suggest and recommend to help an anxious student to overcome their speaking anxiety in the class?

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Thank you for your cooperation

Résumé

Le but principal d'apprendre une langue étrangère est devenir capable de la parler. C'est pourquoi, juste comme une autre activité il existe des obstacles disparates qui peuvent retarder l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère et affectent la parole, l'anxiété est l'obstacle le plus commun. Les étudiants des langues étrangères proclament avoir plusieurs barrières pour qu'ils aient de vraies et parfaites performances orales. En conséquence, le but majeur de cette étude est d'investiguer les attitudes des étudiants et des enseignants en EFL envers l'impact de l'anxiété sur les performances orales de l'étudiant. Le cas de cette étude cible des participants qui étaient 48 étudiants en première année LMD spécialisé en Anglais et cinq enseignants en EFL à l'université de Larbi Tébessi (Tebessa), durant l'année universitaire 2019/2020. Pour aboutir à l'objectif de cette étude, nous avons opté pour une méthode descriptive- analytique en utilisant deux questionnaires diffusés en ligne pour les étudiants et pour les enseignants. Les renseignements collectés de ces deux questionnaires ont été analysés quantitativement et qualitativement. Les résultats de cette étude indiquent que l'anxiété a un effet négatif sur les étudiants d'anglais en général et la performance orales en particulier, comme ils ont présenté que la peur des évaluations négatives est la plus provocante du déclenchement. L'étude propose des recommandations et des suggestions sur le fait de réduire l'anxiété chez l'étudiant et améliorer leur performance orale dans les contextes d'EFL.

Mots-clés: anxiété, performance oral, attitude, évaluation négative, présentations orales

المخلص

إن الهدف الرئيسي من تعلم اللغة الأجنبية هو التمكن من نطقها وتكلمها. مع ذلك، فإنها مثل أي نشاط آخر، لها عدة عراقيل يمكن أن تعطل تعلم النطق وتؤثر على الكلام، وبعد القلق أبرزها. يشتكي طلاب اللغات الأجنبية من وجود هذه العراقيل في تحقيق النطق الجيد و المثالي. لذلك فإن الهدف العام لهذه الدراسة هو معرفة موقف كل من طلاب وأساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من حيث مدى تأثير القلق على الأداء الشفهي للطلاب. استهدفت هذه الدراسة مشاركة 48 طالب في السنة الأولى نظام ليسانس، ماستر ودكتوراة تخصص لغة إنجليزية و خمسة أساتذة لغة إنجليزية من السنة الجامعية 2019/2020 . لتحقيق أهداف هذه الدراسة، اعتمدنا طريقة التحليل الوصفي للدراسة من خلال طرح تساؤلين على الطلاب و الأساتذة عبر الانترنت. تم القيام بتحليل كمي ونوعي للمعطيات التي توصلنا إليها من خلال طرح التساؤلات. أشارت النتائج القلق يؤثر سلبا على تعلم الطلبة للغة الإنجليزية بصفة عامة و على أدائهم الشفهي بصفة خاصة، كما أشارت النتائج أيضا أن التقييم السلبي هو أكثر ما يثير القلق. أخيرا لقد تم التوصل إلى أن للأساتذة دورا هاما في التقليل من قلق الطلاب أثناء النطق و التغلب على المخاوف والصعوبات من خلال اعتماد مجموعة من التقنيات التي تتوافق و اهتمام المتعلمين و احتياجاتهم ومستواهم من اجل تطوير أدائهم الشفهي و يعد تقديم الطلاب لعدة عروض شفوية احد هذه التقنيات. بناء على النتائج تقترح الدراسة توصيات من أجل تخفيف القلق و التوتر للطلاب لتحسين أدائهم الشفهي في سياقات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: قلق، أداء شفهي، مواقف، التقييم السلبي، العروض الشفهية