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Foreign language anxiety and gender

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Foreign language anxiety and gender

by

Mary Gretchen Voorhees

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Sometimes I feel so dumb in my German class. I want to sit in the back of the room so maybe I won't get called on to speak. When I know I am going to have to say something, I spend what seems like eternity thinking of how it should be said and when I say it, it still doesn't come out right.

I dread going to Spanish class. My teacher is kind of nice and it can be fun, but I hate it when the teacher calls on me to speak. I freeze up and can't think of what to say or how to say it. And my pronunciation is terrible. Sometimes I think people don't even understand what I am saying.

Sometimes when I speak English in class, I am so afraid I feel like hiding behind my chair (Horwitz and Young, 1991, p. xiii).

These comments, actual quotes from foreign language classroom learners, indicate the intense anxiety and turmoil many students experience when they attempt to learn a foreign language. Language teachers have long been aware of the discomfort and anxiety displayed by many of their students in a classroom environment (Horwitz and Young, 1991). Some researchers actually believe that language learning itself is "a profoundly unsettling psychological proposition" (Guiora, 1983) because it directly threatens an individual's self-concept and worldview.

What are the characteristics of language learners who experience unusually high levels of discomfort and anxiety? Anxious language learners experience apprehension, worry, and dread. They find it difficult to concentrate, and become forgetful. Many times they will exhibit avoidance behavior and miss class or not turn in homework. In testing situations students suffering from this phenomenon "freeze" and
are unable to answer an item they actually know. Physically, they may even sweat and have palpitations (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986). But even though researchers can document the effects of foreign language anxiety (FLA), defining FLA is a problematic, complex, and confusing task. Anxiety in general is defined as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Spielberger, 1983, cited in Horwitz, et al., 1986). Whenever people have a mental block against learning a foreign language, even though they may be strongly motivated and be excellent learners in other pedagogical situations, whenever they seem to be suffering from an anxiety reaction that impedes their ability to perform successfully in a foreign language class and find learning the target language extremely stressful, they can be referred to as suffering from a phenomenon known as "foreign language anxiety." Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) define FLA as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 31).

Another unresolved issue in FLA has been the debate over whether FLA is merely a combination or cluster of various pre-existing anxieties that have already been defined, such as communicative anxiety (a fear of speaking or communicating in public), state anxiety (used to describe a specific situation that arouses anxiety in an individual), or trait anxiety (anxiety that an individual experiences as part of his or her general personal makeup), or whether it can stand
alone as a distinct and autonomous construct in its own right. Scovel (1978) believed FLA to be a conglomerate of multiple intrinsic and extrinsic affective variables. On the other hand, many researchers argue that FLA is a distinct unique entity, whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Horwitz et al., 1986; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1991). The view one adopts regarding FLA is important because these theoretical issues eventually impact and drive pedagogy and curriculum decisions.

Indeed, even quantifying and measuring FLA has been problematic, due to the affective nature of the phenomenon and the difficulty in ascertaining and validating such a construct. Typically, there are three ways to identify and measure FLA: 1) self-report, as in diaries and journals, 2) observational reports, and 3) some type of psychometric test, such as taking measures of heart rate, blood pressure or perspiration (Scovel, 1978). Problems do exist with these techniques; for example, Scovel states, "generally, there is a low correlation between clinically rated anxiety, self-rated anxiety, and psychometric anxiety" (p. 136). Furthermore, despite the seemingly empirical objectivity conveyed by physiological measurement, individual variation reduces the effectiveness of this procedure.

Finally, researchers have been attempting to understand exactly how FLA impacts language learning and performance. Many studies have shown that anxious individuals are less successful at language learning, but since these were largely correlational studies, causality can
not be precisely determined. Does FLA result in poor learning and performance, or is it the other way around?

It appears that further research is needed to understand and clarify these issues, to add to the body of knowledge concerning FLA, and to apply the knowledge gained in practical measures to alleviate FLA suffering and to reduce as much as possible its detrimental effects. Many questions remain. One question that appears still unanswered is the possible differences that might exist between males and females in dealing with FLA. This exploratory study was an attempt to discover more about this specific aspect of FLA within the framework of an intensive, accelerated foreign language environment.

There were two stages in this study. Initially students in three different language classes were given a questionnaire to determine whether there were differences in FLA between males and females. Secondly, students registering the highest amounts of FLA were interviewed during the semester, with one follow-up interview after the course was completed.

Data from the interview were examined for gender-related commonalities and/or differences. It is hoped that information gleaned from this study will assist administrators, curriculum directors and instructors in understanding more about FLA, and the impact of gender on this issue.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature about foreign language classroom anxiety has been confusing and contradictory. This chronological literature review will begin with Scovel (1978), who is generally credited with integrating and synthesizing the then available literature on anxiety in general and for recognizing its state of disarray. Next Bailey’s (1983a, 1983b) findings on FLA and competitiveness among adult language learners will be discussed. Then findings which led Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) to propose a definition of FLA will be discussed, followed by Young's (1986) study that focused on FLA and communication apprehension.

Next, Gardner and MacIntyre's studies (1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c) that examined FLA and attempted to explain past confusion and contradictory results in the field will be discussed, followed by Mejias et al. (1991) who examined communication apprehension among Mexican American students. Price's (1991) interviews with anxious foreign language students will then be discussed. Koch and Terrell's (1991) study in which FLA was examined in classrooms using an instructional strategy designed to reduce FLA will be examined, followed by Granschow, Sparks, Anderson, Javorsky, Skinner and Patton's (1994) study in which FLA was examined in relation to native oral and written language and to foreign language aptitude.

Scovel began his search into the literature on anxiety by pointing out that "anxiety itself is neither a simple nor well-understood psychological construct and that it is perhaps premature to attempt to
relate it to the global and comprehensive task of language acquisition" (1978, p. 132). Scovel believed that anxiety was simply one variable among many distinct constructs and behaviors swept under the term "affect."

At any rate, Scovel found a myriad of discrepancies regarding language anxiety in the literature. Some correlational studies yielded inconclusive results regarding anxiety and measures of language proficiency (e.g., Swain and Burnaby, 1977, cited in Scovel, 1978). Backman (1976, cited in Scovel, 1978) found that the two worst English-learning Spanish speakers in her study scored the highest and the lowest on the anxiety measure she utilized. Chastain (1975) found a negative correlation between test scores and anxiety when the audio-lingual method was used in a French class, but conversely, discovered a positive correlation between anxiety and the scores of German and Spanish students using traditional methods.

Scovel noted that Chastain (1975) had concluded that mild amounts of anxiety could be beneficial while too much anxiety could be harmful. Scovel suggested that the mild amount anxiety which produced beneficial results could be thought of as facilitative anxiety, while overly high levels of anxiety which produced harmful results could be thought of as debilitating anxiety. Scovel stated "facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to 'fight' the new learning task; it gears the learner emotionally for approach behavior. Debilitating anxiety, in contrast, motivates the learner to 'flee' the new learning task; it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behavior" (p.
Scovel felt that the notion of facilitating versus debilitating anxiety may be important in resolving apparent discrepancies regarding FLA.

Scovel believed intervening and confounding variables such as a student's intelligence, the difficulty of the learning skill under investigation, and the degree of familiarity the learner has with the learning task further obscured research findings. For example, Scovel reported that higher states of anxiety facilitate learning at upper levels of intelligence, whereas they are associated with poorer performance at lower IQ levels.

To reconcile these intertwining but confounding variables, Scovel proposed that anxiety be construed as "not a simple unitary construct, but as a cluster of affective states, influenced by factors which are intrinsic and extrinsic to the foreign language learner" (p. 134). Thus, Scovel argued that language anxiety was not a unique construct but a conglomeration of many affective variables; since Scovel believed anxiety was not a simple, unitary construct, he felt it could be comfortably quantified into either "high" or "low" amounts. Despite the tremendous obstacles, Scovel ended this landmark article by stating that "the overwhelming intricacy of these intertwining [variables] . . . should not deter us from the task of trying to discover natural patterns and continuities" (p. 140) within a foreign language learning environment.

Bailey (1983a) examined the role of competitiveness in an adult foreign language situation and documented how competitiveness
impacted FLA within this context. Her comments and notes from ten other diarists (seven women and three men) who recorded instances of FLA were compared. Seven characteristics of the anxious competitive learner were shown to exist: overt self-comparison, a desire to out-do other language learners, emotive responses, emphasis or concern with tests and grades, a desire to gain the teacher's approval, anxiety experienced during the actual language lesson and withdrawal from the language-learning experience (p. 94).

While Bailey (1983b) believed that diary studies can contribute to our knowledge of second language learning, she did not argue that first-person diary studies should be favored over empirical research in studying FLA. Bailey acknowledged the problems of measuring and quantifying an affective variable such as anxiety and suggested that one response to this problem is "the use of intensive journals to provide a data base for studying personal and affective variables" (p. 71). In this research methodology the diarist assumes the role of participant and/or observer research questions are not predicted, and open-ended note-taking is the typical data collection technique. She concluded that "these two approaches to knowing [empirical and qualitative] can provide us with very different types of information, and each methodology can inform the other" (p. 94).

While Scovel argued that foreign language anxiety was composed of various other types of anxiety, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) concluded from their research that FLA was a type of anxiety unique to second language learning, not just a combination of other anxieties.
They pointed out that teachers and students generally felt strongly that anxiety was a major obstacle to be overcome in learning to speak another language; they concurred with Scovel in their belief that second language research had "neither adequately defined foreign language anxiety nor described its specific effects" (p. 28).

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) believed that FLA is a conceptually distinct variable in foreign language learning, and that the inconclusive and contradictory results of FLA research were the result of using anxiety measures that were not specific to foreign language learning. They stated that although research has not clearly demonstrated the effect of anxiety on foreign language learning, practitioners have had ample experience with anxious learners. In their opinion, the trend to emphasize achievement studies and correlational studies which overlooked the subtle effects of anxiety on foreign language learning was detrimental to the field.

The authors briefly described some of the symptoms of FLA as identified and described by practitioners at the Learning Skills Center at the University of Texas. Symptoms (as reported by anxious students in foreign language classes) included apprehension, worry, dread, difficulty in concentrating, forgetfulness, sweat, palpitations, difficulty in speaking in class, "freezing" in class, and overstudying (Horwitz et al., 1986).

The authors felt that these symptoms represent serious impediments to the development of second language fluency and performance. They stated:
Although communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation provide useful conceptual building blocks for a description of foreign language anxiety, we propose that foreign language anxiety is not simply the combination of these fears transferred to foreign language learning. Rather, we conceive foreign language anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process (p. 31).

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope argued for a distinct FLA because adults, while typically perceiving themselves to be intelligent, socially adept beings when communicating in their native language, found themselves unable to communicate in the target language with the same degree of sophistication, leading to challenged self-concept, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic. The authors concluded:

In sum, the language learner's self-esteem is vulnerable. The importance of the disparity between the "true" self and the more limited self would seem to distinguish foreign language anxiety from other academic anxieties such as those associated with mathematics or science. Probably no other field of study implicates self-concept and self-expression to the degree that language study does (p. 31).

Young (1986) noted Horwitz et al.'s observation that "speaking in the target language seems to be the most threatening aspect of foreign language learning" (p. 23). Consequently, Young's study focused on the relationship between anxiety and "communication apprehension," which is defined as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated oral communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1978, cited in Young), and investigated the relationship between anxiety and foreign language oral performance.
Sixty university-level foreign language majors volunteered to take the Oral Proficiency Interview, which was an instrument derived from the Foreign Service Institute interview, designed to assess oral performance in a foreign language on the basis of a face-to-face structured conversation. In addition, a dictation test was used to assess global language proficiency, a self-appraisal of speaking proficiency was administered to measure volunteers’ self-perceptions, and four different anxiety scales were administered.

Initially there appeared to be a significant negative relationship between the Oral Proficiency Interview scores and the scores on the anxiety scales; however, when the effect of ability (as indicated by the dictation task) was accounted for, no significant correlations were found. Thus, "once the effect of an individual's language proficiency was accounted for, oral performance would no longer be expected to decrease as anxiety increased" (Young, 1986, p. 63). It would therefore appear that language proficiency, rather than anxiety, is the crucial factor affecting Oral Proficiency Interview scores. Young did point out that the interviews were conducted informally and unofficially. It could have been possible that the subjects were not terribly anxious, since there was little to no risk involved. In an official administration, "the seriousness of the results could induce anxiety . . . since anxiety increases under an evaluative situation perceived as difficult and threatening [and] . . . since important decisions about individual careers and available personnel may well be based on results" (p. 63).
Gardner and MacIntyre (1989) confirmed the ambiguities of anxiety research pointed out by Scovel and Horwitz et al., and suggested that some of the ambiguity and conflicting results "may be traced to the instruments chosen to measure anxiety in some of the studies" (p. 254). In an attempt to clarify which components, if any, comprise FLA, Gardner and MacIntyre conducted a study in which 52 male and 52 female subjects (all of whom spoke English as their native language) were taught the French equivalents of 38 English words, and then given a vocabulary production task. Nine scales involving various types of anxieties were then administered to all participants.

To determine the commonalities underlying the various measures of anxiety the various components of all of the anxiety measures were subjected to a factor analysis. Two factors, communicative anxiety and a specific factor measuring (in this case French) foreign language anxiety, correlated negatively and significantly with achievement on the vocabulary test. Other types of anxieties--classroom anxiety, trait anxiety, computer anxiety, test anxiety, audience sensitivity, and state anxiety--did not correlate significantly with performance on the research task. The authors concluded:

The inconsistencies of past work in the area of foreign-language anxiety are likely attributable to an inappropriate level of instrument specificity. This study has shown that a clear relationship exists between foreign-language anxiety and foreign-language proficiency. The orthogonal factors generated in the analysis of the anxiety scales indicate that foreign-language anxiety is separable from general anxiety, which possibly accounts for the poor relationship of general anxiety and second-language proficiency (p. 273).
Thus Gardner and MacIntyre provided a logical explanation for the conflicting results and confusion in the field of foreign language research.

Gardner and MacIntyre (1991a) reviewed the language anxiety research again since they believed the past few years had made advances which had enabled more accurate research into FLA. Gardner and MacIntyre found the question of causality pivotal in the study of FLA. They asked, "Does anxiety interfere with pre-existing ability and therefore impair performance? Or does poor performance, based solely on ability, lead to anxiety as merely an effect?" (p. 109). They suggested that a unidirectional model may be too simple to account for this process and proposed instead a model of "reciprocal causality" (p. 109). In this model, during the first few experiences in the foreign language, FLA anxiety plays a negligible role because, even if anxiety is present, it is in the form of other types of anxieties (communication, test, or novelty anxiety) rather than specifically FLA. But after several experiences with the second language context, the student forms attitudes that are specific to the new language learning situation. Continued negative experiences result in worry, anxiety, and emotionality, resulting in the cognitive interference which in turn impairs performance and achievement. This highly specific type of anxiety is FLA. They concluded by noting that research in the area of FLA was "promising with the development of a theoretical base for generating testable hypotheses and sound instruments to measure the constructs" (p. 112).
Gardner and MacIntyre (1991b) tested the reciprocal causality model by attempting to manipulate FLA. Since in their model FLA is relatively undifferentiated with new foreign language students, Gardner and MacIntyre approached the problem of reducing the negative effects of anxiety by first determining whether it was even possible to influence or shape students' self-images. To test whether this was possible the researchers asked beginning language learners to think about and report either exclusively positive or exclusively negative events from their own experience of learning a foreign language by writing half-page "focused essays" documenting these experiences. The researchers believed that these "focused essays" would make students' reactions to foreign language learning salient to the students themselves, thus causing their self-perceptions to become biased in the direction (positive or negative) of the essays.

Content analysis of the essays revealed that anxious essays were almost exclusively descriptive of speaking events; confident essays reflected both speaking and comprehension skills. The essays did appear to influence self-ratings of proficiency that the students were asked to complete; those writing relaxed essays had significantly higher self-rated speaking abilities. However, more objective measures of proficiency did not coincide with the results of the self-ratings. Further, Gardner and MacIntyre found that the essays did not seem to influence the level of anxiety experienced by subjects when they were later tested.
Finally, Gardner and MacIntyre (1991c) conducted a study with 95 first-year university psychology students who were also studying a foreign language. In this study the researchers attempted to identify what the relationship of FLA was to other types of anxieties. Subjects were given a questionnaire containing anxiety scales for negative social evaluation, trait anxiety, state anxiety, novel anxiety, anxiety in interpersonal situations, and situations involving social evaluation; subjects were then given tasks to complete in the target language. Factor analysis was performed to determine underlying factors and relationships between various types of anxieties and task performance. Gardner and MacIntyre concluded that "language anxiety can be discriminated reliably from other types of anxiety ... language anxiety has been considered as an important problem according to anecdotal reports, and now evidence is accumulating to describe the specific processes that underlie this effect" (p. 530).

Mejias, Applbaum, Applbaum, and Trotter (1991) examined oral communication apprehension among Mexican American students. The authors speculated that since most Mexican American students used two languages (English and Spanish) with varying levels of proficiency and competence in educational situations, they may experience communication apprehension (CA) or use their bilingualism to avoid educational situations that may challenge their linguistic skills in the less dominant language. They stated that "if a student is apprehensive about communicating in a particular language he or she will have
negative affective feelings toward oral communication and will likely avoid it" (p. 88).

Mejias et al. (1991) generated data on the CA of Mexican Americans at both the high school and college levels. Their sample population consisted of 429 undergraduate students enrolled at Pan American University, and 284 secondary level students from a large south Texas public high school. These data were then compared with previous CA research data drawn from high school and college-level students from other non-native bilingual populations. The CA of college students was measured by the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension scale, which focuses on apprehension concerning oral communication.

Results indicated that the mean CA scores in Spanish (the less dominant language) were higher than mean CA scores in English; moreover, female students showed higher mean CA scores than the males for both languages. The study supported the notion that CA varies depending upon whether an individual is using his or her native or dominant language, or his or her second or less dominant language. Bilinguals experience less CA in their native or dominant language than in their second language, and the CA scores increase as the communicative context shifted from more informal personal contexts (such as dyads or small groups) to more formal, less personal contexts.

Interestingly, the females in this study registered high CA in Spanish (not their dominant language) as well as extremely high levels of CA in the public communication context. This was in contrast to
earlier studies which reported that Latin American women were less apprehensive than their male counterparts (Allen, 1984, cited in Mejias et al., 1991), or that CA was not a function of gender (Fayer, McCroskey and Richmond, 1984, cited in Mejias et al., 1991).

Price (1991) interviewed anxious foreign language university students and described their learning experiences. The introduction to this descriptive research recounts her awareness of her own students' reluctance to speak French in her classroom, and their self-denigrating remarks. She began to discuss their affective reaction to foreign language learning and eventually became interested in recording and describing FLA from the point of view of the student.

In her interviews with anxious foreign language students she attempted to obtain a detailed description of what it is like to be an anxious student in a foreign language class, and to use student insights as a source of information for foreign language educators. Through an informal questionnaire administered to students in several lower-level language classes asking about students' reactions to foreign language classes, Price eventually obtained a pool of ten subjects. Of these ten subjects, eight were female and two were male.

Each of the subjects was interviewed for approximately one hour. The first part of the interview was open-ended and discussed the subject's present and past language courses. The second half of the interview focused specifically on anxiety. Students were asked to describe their feelings during their language class, relate what bothered them, pinpoint the reasons for their anxiety and what role the
instructor played in their stress, and finally, provide suggestions for reducing the stress.

In describing the interviews Price related that even thinking about their foreign language class seemed to evoke a great deal of emotion for the subjects; she stated, "As they spoke, they sighed, fidgeted, laughed nervously, and told the interviewer repeatedly how 'horrible' it had been, how 'awful' they had felt, how much they had 'hated' this or that class" (p. 103).

To the question of what bothered them the most about their foreign language classes, the subjects were surprisingly consistent. They cited their greatest source of anxiety as having to speak the target language in front of their peers. They were concerned also about pronunciation errors, and their lack of communicative ability in the target language. Finally, the level of difficulty of the course posed an additional source of anxiety.

Price mentioned several possibilities for the causes of FLA. Some subjects mentioned that despite the time and effort they had committed to the course they were performing poorly. Price suggested that "foreign language courses may be more demanding and more difficult than other courses, thus eliciting higher anxiety than other courses" (p. 106).

Price believed that "speaker's belief" may also have played a role in FLA. Many of the subjects felt that their language skills were weaker than those of their peers, and that everyone else was looking down on them. They believed that learning a language required a special
aptitude that they didn't possess. However Price also observed that "paradoxically, several also believed that they could have done much better than they did, if they had only worked a little harder" (p. 106).

It appeared from the interviews that instructors played a significant role in the FLA in foreign language classrooms. Subjects had vivid memories of past teachers. In some cases teachers facilitated the reduction of stress; others increased students' anxiety by making the classroom a place of performance rather than learning.

Interestingly, many of the subjects had immediate answers to the question, "Do you have any ideas as to how language classes might be made less stressful?" Some responded to this question by expressing the desire to live in the country of the target language; still others thought they should have started to learn the language earlier, and still others thought they should have waited until they were older and more mature. However, some concrete suggestions were given. Many subjects felt a smaller class would have helped a great deal. Other subjects mentioned that getting to know the other students made them feel more relaxed by "reducing the fear of being ridiculed and taking away the feeling that the others are all smarter and more confident" (p. 107).

Subjects also felt that instructors should give more positive reinforcement, encourage students to understand that mistakes are part of the foreign language acquisition process, and help students develop realistic expectations of themselves. Price stated that the most frequent observation made by these subjects was they would have felt more
comfortable if the instructor "were more like a friend helping them to learn and less like an authority figure making them perform" (p. 107).

Price concluded by emphasizing the reality of FLA, and the fact that there are students "for whom language classes are a source of fear, shame, and humiliation" (p. 108). She believed the students themselves can provide valuable information about what it is like to suffer from FLA, and what measures can be taken to alleviate that anxiety.

Koch and Terrell (1991) found that FLA can still exist even when language instruction has been specifically designed to reduce stress. Their study looked at the responses of students to an affectively oriented instructional method known as the Natural Approach (NA). Developed in the 70's, the NA is "a communicative approach that attempts to provide comprehensible input in the target language . . . by using [it] in meaningful classroom activities" (p. 109). As such, the NA emphasizes the acquisition of the target language in stages. At first, students simply attend carefully to oral input, then they produce words or short phrases, and finally, in the third stage, speech emergence, they begin to put words together to form sentences and longer utterances.

The authors noted that the NA is designed to promote affectively positive attitudes, but that this premise had never been tested empirically. The study attempted to examine this claim by focusing on one specific affective variable, namely anxiety. In their study, 119 students (76 females and 43 males) enrolled in their first two years of NA Spanish classes at the University of California, Irvine, were given a questionnaire midway through the course. The questionnaire dealt with
the NA and asked students to rate various activities and instructional techniques with regard to the level of FLA produced.

Activities that student reported as producing anxiety included oral presentations, skits and role playing, and defining a word in the target language. In contrast, activities that appeared to produce "comfort" included interviews in pairs and activities that allowed students to express their own ideas. Students also reported certain instructional techniques employed in NA as anxiety-provoking, such as (not surprisingly) oral quizzes and nonvolunteered responses. The data also indicated that being paired or being placed in a small group did not create anxiety for most students, but being put in a large group did. Interestingly, NA's de-emphasis on grammar made about one-fourth of the students uncomfortable. Apparently, some students prefer a grammatical format and the absence of this instruction produced anxiety. Instructional techniques that produced comfort for many students included using pictures to present vocabulary, classroom topical discussions, and not calling on students to answer questions individually.

One interesting finding of the Koch and Terrell study was that when students compared their anxiety in their NA classes to that in previous language classes, various responses were obtained. About one-third claimed they felt less nervous than in other approaches, another one-third stated that the NA made them more nervous, and the remaining third reported no difference in their anxiety levels. These responses were found even among the small "nervous" group. Hence, it
appeared that the NA "is not successful in reaching low levels of anxiety for all students" (p. 112). Koch and Terrell concluded that students vary greatly in their individual reactions to NA activities and commented that "an activity that produced anxiety for one may provide comfort for another and vice versa" (p. 114), due perhaps to individual learning styles. Finally, Koch and Terrell advised:

activities and instructional techniques should not be thought of as intrinsically "good" or "bad" but rather "useful" or "not recommended" for certain students at particular levels of language acquisition. Thus there would seem to be no simple remedy for student anxiety. Instructors cannot choose activities, techniques, or even a language-teaching method or approach without taking into consideration the students' individual learning styles, interests, and affective reactions (p. 124).

Finally, Ganschow et al. (1994) also noted that foreign language teachers have been perplexed by findings that some students are able to learn a FL with ease while others experience great difficulties in their attempts, and postulated a relationship between problems in oral and written performance in native language and problems with learning a foreign language. The researchers systematically explored FLA in relation to native oral and written language and to FL aptitude. A total of 36 college students (ten males and 26 females) enrolled in an introductory Spanish course were given the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and then grouped into high, average, or low FLA groups. The students were then given a battery of instruments measuring native oral and written language skills and FL aptitude. The authors hypothesized that students in the high anxiety group would
perform more poorly on native oral and written tasks than the groups with average or low anxiety. They also predicted that there would be significant differences between high and low anxiety students on FL aptitude.

Findings supported the authors' overall hypothesis that "there would be differences in native oral and written language and FL aptitude performance among students with different levels of FL anxiety" (p. 49). They particularly noted significant differences between students in the high anxiety group and in the low anxiety group with regard to oral language, thus lending support to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) finding that oral language performance is one of the most threatening activities for students with FLA. The authors concluded their study by recommending that students who express anxiety about FL learning be referred for "a psychoeducational evaluation, which should include tests of oral and written native language and FL aptitude" (p. 51). They then suggested that students with high FLA but "intact" language skills should be referred to an anxiety support group, but that students with high anxiety and language skill difficulties should be considered as candidates for compensatory approaches, such as those offered to students with learning disabilities.

In summary, research to date appears to validate Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) premise that FLA is a unique autonomous construct rather than a conglomeration of other types of anxieties as Scovel (1978) proposed. Bailey (1983a) examined diary studies in which adult
foreign language learners recorded how competitiveness impacted anxiety, and documented characteristics of the anxious competitive learner. Bailey (1983b) further explored how empirical research can dovetail with qualitative research to provide greater insight into FLA. Young (1986) studied the relationship of FLA and communication apprehension and found that once an individual's language proficiency was accounted for, oral performance would no longer be expected to decrease as anxiety increased. Gardner and MacIntyre (1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c), after further exploring FLA and its relationship to other types of anxieties, proposed a "reciprocal causality" model to explain how FLA develops in foreign language learners. Mejias et al. (1991) examined oral communication apprehension using a Mexican American student population; they found that bilinguals experienced less CA in their native or dominant language than in their second language.

Price (1991) was interested in learning about FLA from the students' perspective and conducted interviews with ten students suffering from FLA. She found that students consistently identified speaking the target language in front of their peers as their greatest source of anxiety. Price further observed that instructors played a crucial role in either increasing or decreasing FLA in their students. Koch and Terrell (1991) found that FLA can still exist, even when language instruction has been specifically designed to reduce stress. Finally, Ganschow et al. (1994) found a relationship between FLA, native oral and written language skills, and FL aptitude.
As one peruses the available literature on FLA, there seems to be little attention given to gender issues. However, an analysis of the studies that included gender breakdown suggests that larger numbers of anxious females were involved in the studies. For example, Price's (1991) selection and interviews of highly anxious students involved ten students, eight of whom were females. Kathleen Bailey's diary analysis involved a total of eleven anxious subjects, eight of whom were female. Hugo Mejias et al.'s (1991) study concluded that more Mexican American females appeared to suffer from communication anxiety than did their male counterparts.

While this scant evidence in no way makes a case for concluding that women suffer from FLA more than men, it does raise the possibility that this might be the case. Stated more specifically one might ask what gender commonalities and/or differences can be observed in a foreign language learning context. Discovering what implications gender differences/commonalities hold for the L2 learning process could be beneficial in mediating classroom variables to facilitate an environment conducive to less FLA which would result in greater learning for both men and women.

It was felt that an intensive accelerated foreign language course (such as those offered at many universities during the summer academic session) would provide an ideal environment in which to examine FLA. Intensive accelerated foreign language courses are rigorous and fast-paced, oftentimes covering two entire semesters of a foreign language in eight weeks or less. In such an environment FLA
would be more likely to occur, providing the researcher with an excellent opportunity to observe FLA, and to gather data regarding this phenomenon.

Therefore, the research question addressed in this study is twofold. First, do women suffer from language anxiety more than men in an intensive accelerated foreign language course? Secondly, in an exploratory vein, what commonalities and/or differences can we observe between males and females in an accelerated foreign language learning situation?
CHAPTER 3: MATERIALS AND METHODS

Overview

To answer this two-part research question, an eight-week study spanning an entire summer session at Iowa State University, with students in three different foreign language classes, was conducted. A brief synopsis of the study will be given here with in-depth discussion following.

1) The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, 1983) was administered to students in the French, German, and Spanish foreign language classes at the beginning of the 1993 summer session at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. (See Appendix A for a copy of the FLCAS).

2) A t-test was then applied, in which the average FLCAS scores for males was statistically compared with the average FLCAS scores for females to determine whether there was a significant difference between male and female levels of FLA.

3) The male and female student from each class who registered the highest level of FLA as reported in the FLCAS was then selected for interviews. Thus there were two students from each of the three classes who were interviewed, for a total of six students.

4) Three interviews were conducted with each of the anxious students at regular intervals during the semester. One follow-up interview was conducted after the semester was over to attempt to further explore the issue of FLA and gender, and to obtain richer data that might provide further insight into possible gender commonalities and/or differences.
In addition to the interviews, all six subjects were given small spiral notebooks in which to record anxiety-provoking experiences and how they attempted to cope with them.

5) Final grades for all students in all three foreign language classes were obtained at the end of the summer session.

6) At the end of the semester the data were analyzed to determine what gender commonalities and/or differences appeared to exist, and what common threads or patterns could be detected with regard to this issue.

Materials

The initial part of the study focused on administering the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale to students in three accelerated foreign language classes. The scale was developed by Horwitz in 1983, who very much supported the notion that FLA is a unique entity unto itself, and not simply a conglomerate of other types of anxieties. As indicated in the literature review, research in FLA had been somewhat hindered by the absence of an instrument that would specifically measure the construct of FLA. Gardner and Maclntyre (1989) believed that the ambiguity and discrepancies in FLA research could be traced to the instruments chosen to measure anxiety and favored using scales more directly concerned with FLA, rather than general anxiety scales. Horwitz also felt the contradictory and discrepant findings could be accounted for in part by the inadequacy of then existing instruments (Horwitz, 1986). The FLCAS was developed to fill this void. Young
(1986) reports that the FLCAS is, "designed to tap anxiety specific to foreign language learning and production" (Young, p. 59).

The instrument "assesses . . . anxiety, as evidenced by negative performance expectancies and social comparisons, psychophysiological symptoms, and avoidance behaviors" (Horwitz, 1986, p. 37). FLCAS items were developed from student self-reports, clinical experience, and a review of related instruments. There are 33 items in the scale, which are scored on a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Horwitz reported that the FLCAS had been administered to approximately 300 students in introductory undergraduate foreign language classes at the University of Austin and had demonstrated, "satisfactory reliability with this population" (Horwitz, p. 38). Internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .93, and test-retest reliability was .83. The correlation between the FLCAS scores and students' final grades was significant at -.53, suggesting that the FLA "can be reliably and validly measured and that it plays an important role in language learning" (Horwitz, p. 39). Since Horwitz's study involved the learning of a foreign language in a classroom context, and the reliability and validity of the instrument have been fairly well established for a population group similar to that used here, the FLCAS seemed the most appropriate instrument to use,

The second component of the research involved the interview process, in which the six highly anxious students were consulted as to the probable cause of their anxiety, what triggered FLA, and how they coped with their FLA. This phase of the research was decided upon
because it was felt that interviews afforded the opportunity to obtain personal information and insights directly from the students that would allow the researcher to understand the students' cognitive processes as they experienced FLA and to understand this phenomenon from a student perspective rather than a researcher/instructor perspective.

Although the interview questions were essentially unchanged for every interview, as interview data were collected and analyzed, some modifications of the questions did result. Questions for the first interview session were:

1) What bothers you about your FL class?
2) How does that make you feel?
3) Why do you think that bothers you?
4) What do you think is the main source of your anxiety?
5) What coping strategies are you using?
6) Are they effective?

The second interview consisted of essentially the same questions, except that question 3 was changed to "What do you think is the underlying cause of your anxiety?" The questions, "Who is to blame for the FLA you're experiencing?" and "How can FLA be reduced?" were added to the interview questions and retained in the third interview.

The questions, "Do you have anxiety in other classes" and, if appropriate, "Why does this foreign language class have more anxiety?" were added to the third interview. Changes in the interview questions were made in order to elicit further details regarding root causes for FLA; it was also felt that paraphrasing some of the questions could
possibly help the interviewee to view his or her FLA from a different perspective, thus yielding new information to add to the data.

Finally, a follow-up interview was conducted after the course had been completed. This interview consisted of reading back a brief summary of the interviewee's responses to previous interview questions to ensure mutual understanding and agreement of the interview data. Then the following questions were asked:

1) How are you feeling now that the course has been completed?
2) Again, what do you think is the underlying cause/who was to blame for your FLA?
3) If you had to do it over again, would you change anything?
4) Is there anything further you wish to add?

Methodology

Initially, after the research question was defined, the research proposal was submitted to the Human Subjects Committee at Iowa State University. After approval for the research project was obtained, arrangements were made with the chairman of the Foreign Languages Department to administer the FLCAS during ISU's summer session language courses, with the understanding that further personal out-of-class interviews would be conducted with highly anxious students as identified by the FLCAS.

Three foreign language classes were selected for FLCAS testing. The actual classrooms were all on the second floor of Pearson Hall on the Iowa State University campus. The approximate size of the classrooms was 15' wide by 12' long. Each of the classrooms had
windows on the east side, and contained about 25 desks which could be moved around into various classroom layouts.

The foreign language courses selected for the study were French 110 with 13 students; German 110 with 11 students; and Spanish 110 with 10 students. All of the language classes were held Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The summer session was from June 14, to August 6, 1993. Instructors were switched midway through the summer session for all three courses, so that each course had two different instructors.

Each of the foreign language courses encompassed two entire semesters of language instruction in just eight weeks. Although no previous knowledge of the foreign language was required to take the course, the content of the course was, out of necessity, presented in an extremely rapid manner. Although each individual instructor had his or her own unique style of teaching, all classes employed total immersion as the overarching instructional strategy.

The emphasis of the foreign language courses was on the systematic acquisition of the target language. As such, grammatical, syntactical, and phonological concepts were presented in a deductive, straightforward manner; new vocabulary words were presented to the students daily and students practiced their oral pronunciation in class with drills and public speaking. Students were also required to listen to tapes outside of class to improve their oral pronunciation.

It was decided that waiting a week to administer the FLCAS would be advisable since the first week of any class typically entails
administrative fluctuations of some sort or another, and students are adding or dropping the course. On June 18, 1993, after approximately one week of classes, the researcher gave a short presentation informing students about the research project. Following the presentation, a demographic form was given to each student, asking for socioeconomic information concerning where the student was from, parents' educational levels, income levels, and the student's own experience in foreign language learning. (See Appendix B). In addition, students were given a consent form allowing their results to be part of the data, and the FLCAS. (See Appendix C for consent form). They were asked to complete the demographic sheet, sign the consent form and to take the FLCAS. One student in the French class declined to participate in the study, bringing the total number of participants in the first phase of the research to 33.

Each student was assigned a code number so that all results would be kept confidential. The code consisted of two letters and a number. The first letter was F, G or S depending on which foreign language class the student was enrolled in; the second letter was either F or M, depending on the student's gender. The numbers were randomly assigned to students as scores were being computed.

Individual FLCAS scores were computed by totaling each student's responses for each of the 33 items on the instrument. Higher scores indicated higher FLA and vice versa. A t-test was applied to determine if there was a significant difference between male FLCAS scores and female FLCAS scores. Results are reported in chapter 4.
Next, the male and female student from each class who registered the highest amounts of FLA according to the FLCAS were selected for out-of-class interviews in order to obtain further information about FLA from the students themselves. Each of the anxious students was contacted by phone. All were informed as to the nature of the interviews and asked to participate. All six of the students (one male and one female student from each class) who were contacted agreed to participate, and specific interview times were agreed upon.

All interviews were conducted in the foreign language classroom itself, immediately after the class. The researcher met privately with the interviewee. All interviews were taped by a high quality tape-recorder obtained from the media center in Pearson Hall. Each interview lasted approximately 5-7 minutes. All questions for each interview were given in a uniform way and in the same order to each of the interviewees; however, since the interviews were open-ended and designed to elicit information from the student's perspective, some individual variation did exist in probing and exploring comments.

The first interview began by explaining the interview process, and obtaining subjects' written consent to participate. After this task had been accomplished, the first set of interview questions was asked; students were encouraged to elaborate on any of their responses. Each subsequent interview began by recapping responses given during the previous interview and making sure the student concurred with information and responses as perceived and recorded by the interviewer. Three interviews were conducted approximately every
two weeks during the semester. Actual interview dates were July 6th and 7th for the first interview, July 19th and 20th for the second interview, and August 2nd and 3rd for the third interview. The final follow-up interview was conducted by phone (and recorded with students' knowledge) between August 12th and August 15th.

Following each interview, data from the audio tape were transcribed. Additionally, highlights, main comments, and what was determined to be the crux of the interview was entered into a visual display or matrix that allowed the interviewer to obtain an overview of all six interviewees' responses for each interview. Data from each interview were analyzed for gender commonalities and/or differences, and common patterns and trends were used to slightly modify questions for each succeeding interview.

In addition to taped interviews, the subjects were given small spiral notebooks in which they were asked to record anxiety-provoking experiences and jot down how they attempted to cope with those experiences. It was felt that the notebooks would be useful in allowing the subjects to reflect more deeply on their experiences with FLA and to provide data which would supplement and validate the interviews. The notebooks were collected at the end of the course and data from the notebooks were added to the matrix.

After all of the eight interviews were completed, data were once again examined in an attempt to discover gender commonalities and/or differences and to detect general trends and recurring patterns and
themes that emerged from the interviews. The results will be reported in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Results of the FLCAS

The FLCAS was administered to an accelerated (summer session) French, German, and Spanish foreign language class at Iowa State University on June 18, 1993. In all, 33 students participated in this phase of the study, 15 females and 18 males. The data gathered by the demographic sheet indicated a fairly homogenous group. In terms of educational level, most of the students' parents had at least a bachelor's degree. The majority of the students also indicated that they had spent most of their life in Iowa or the midwest, and that they had never lived in a non-English speaking country. All of the students were white.

The lowest score recorded (indicating the least amount of FLA) was 67, and was obtained by two female subjects, one in the French class and one in the German class. The highest score (indicating the greatest amount of FLA) was 142, also obtained by a female in the French class. The next highest score, 133, was obtained by a male in the German class. Students from all classes were divided into two groups upon the basis of gender. Scores for all students are shown in Table 1.

A t-test was applied to the two groups, to determine whether there was a significant difference between the average of the male scores and the average of the female scores. The results of the t-test are shown in Table 2.
Table 1. FLCAS Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEMALES</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>MALES</th>
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<th>Score</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>French</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>German</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FF04</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
<td>FM01</td>
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<td>108</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FF12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>FM03</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FM05</td>
<td>79</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FM06</td>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FM07</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>FM08</td>
<td>94</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>FM09</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>FM10</td>
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<tr>
<td>GF01</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>GM12</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>SM04</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
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<td>SF10</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>18</td>
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Table 2. T-test Results

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<th>MALES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number:</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean:</td>
<td>99.33</td>
<td></td>
<td>99.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std Dev:</td>
<td>25.50</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t =</td>
<td>-0.02728</td>
<td>p = .95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, no significant difference existed between the average of the male scores and the average of the female scores. Based upon data supplied by the FLCAS, the answer to the first research question, "Do women suffer from FLA more than men?" quite simply appears to be negative. The second research question, "Do there appear to be any gender-related commonalities or differences in dealing with FLA?" will be addressed next.

Results of Interviews

Although interview questions were prepared ahead of time and were the same for each interviewee, because of the fluid nature and interaction of interviews, it was felt that data from the interviews is best presented anecdotally. A summary of each student's interviews will first be presented, followed by discussion of the findings.

French Female (FF12), here called "Fifi"

Language background: 1 year of Spanish in high school
Interview 1 (July 6, 1993):

Fifi indicated that oral pronunciation and the fact that the instructor spoke so quickly and employed a total immersion instructional strategy were anxiety-provoking. She spoke of feeling frustrated, and disliked not knowing exactly what was going on. This made her angry, and she sometimes wanted to avoid class or quit altogether. She also would tell herself, "Oh, you're stupid, you knew you couldn't do it."

Fifi's main source of anxiety was not understanding what was going on. To alleviate this anxiety, she would talk with other students. She said the other students would help her and not make her feel stupid. She also tried to relax and exercise by running, but while she did so she would think about the frustrations of her foreign language class and get angry. She stated that her coping strategies weren't working very well. Fifi described herself as a perfectionist with very high expectations; she also mentioned that she is competing with a smart older sister. She felt pressure in her language class, noting that she could do the required work in classes where English was spoken, but she just couldn't understand the foreign language.

Interview 2 (July 19, 1993):

Fifi mentioned new sources of stress. First she had a new teacher for the second half of the term who seemed less willing to help students, and wouldn't allow any English questions whatsoever. She stated that her grade situation was another factor: she had to get a D or better to pass the course. She felt that she was doing everything she
could to improve her situation: she was employing a tutor, and had visited with the instructor. She stated that she felt like dropping out, and wished she had never started school. She was constantly telling herself, "You're just kidding yourself."

Fifi was still having trouble understanding French; she said when she finally figured out what was going on, something new was transpiring. She also mentioned that even though she was continuing to run, she was coping less and ready to give up. She was angry that the institution required a foreign language to graduate. When she knew she had to take a foreign language it made her nervous, even before she had registered for this particular class.

Fifi felt that FLA could be reduced by alternating between English and the target language. She felt that learning a language was progressive, and that if you didn't understand earlier material, you wouldn't understand new material. Consequently, she felt an instructor should take more time before proceeding with new concepts.

*Interview 3 (August 2, 1993)*

Fifi stated that she felt better about the tests, and had been doing better, but that she was still very anxious. She mentioned being physically sick, and attributed it to drinking a lot of coffee and staying up to study. She said that even though her instructor said that she was not supposed to understand everything, it bothered her that she wasn't getting everything.

Fifi felt that the course was still going too fast, and that, "it's all oral." The instructor would repeat the answer but Fifi needed the
question repeated as well. She felt that even though total immersion might work for others it wasn't for her. She would have preferred a more balanced approach, where English and French were used interchangeably.

Fifi was still running, and she stated that jogging helped her relax. She mentioned eating more, and then feeling guilty because eating took time away from her studies. She felt that FLA could be reduced by using both languages and bringing more examples of new vocabulary words. She also suggested, "Make the teachers be really nice to the students."

Follow-up Interview (August 12, 1993):

When asked how she was feeling now, Fifi stated that she was glad it was all over. She still felt that the course was much too fast and that she thought it could have been done better. She suggested keeping the same instructor and not using total immersion. She also said that if she had to do it over she would try to relax more and talk to the teacher to "get things squared away."

German Female (GF09), here called "Gretchen"

Language background: one year of French in junior high; three semesters of Latin, and one semester of French in high school

Interview 1 (July 6, 1993):

Gretchen stated that the course was going very fast, that she tensed up when speaking, that she didn't understand everything, and
that she found the German grammar difficult. She said, "I study and study but it doesn't seem to help." She felt frustrated, stupid, and helpless, and had a fear of doing something wrong. The fact that she couldn't understand bothered her. She mentioned that in a history class you need to know the content, but that a language class is different because it involves grammar and vocabulary. She was experiencing difficulty in getting the gender and the various different cases correct. She attributed this to being older and not remembering English grammar. She was experiencing added stress because, like the French female student, she had to keep her grades up.

Gretchen tried to cope with her stress by doing breathing exercises, trying to stay calm, and trying to use humor to relax. She said the coping strategies were moderately successful, and that she could tell the difference if she stopped.

*Interview 2 (July 20, 1993):*

Gretchen mentioned that now she was having trouble keeping up with vocabulary, and that she felt very far behind in the course; she stated that they had a new instructor for the second half of the course, and that he expected 6 hours of homework a night. She felt that the workload was "getting phenomenal." Trying to absorb these new tasks on top of everything else was overwhelming. She stated that one day she was in tears, and that she almost started crying three times in class.

She now felt not only frustrated but hopeless; she considered dropping but couldn't. The awareness of grades was also adding to her stress. When asked about her coping strategies, the breathing and
attempting to remain calm, she stated, "I'm beyond that." The strategies had been effective for awhile but weren't any more. She was not sleeping well, worrying about her grade. She mentioned missing a class due to the flood; when she came to the class the next day she had a different instructor who she felt was stricter. Again, she mentioned that she thought she was going to have to leave the room and cry.

Gretchen thought FLA could be reduced by informing students of changes in the course, e.g., the change in instructors.

Interview 3 (August 3, 1993):

Gretchen was still feeling extremely stressed and not sleeping. When she did sleep, her dreams were about her German class. She said, "I feel that I'm twisting myself in knots, I can't stop myself -- by the same token I've pretty much given up, but I'm still worried, it's contradictory." She still felt that the grades added a lot of stress to the class. Additionally, she indicated being frustrated with herself, because she could understand bits and pieces, but was unable to gain a holistic understanding of the target language.

One reason Gretchen felt that this class was more anxiety-provoking was that she didn't think the class was fun, and she wasn't interested in it and didn't want to be there. She stated that this class was different than a math class, for example, because in a language class if you missed one little thing, you would have hours of backup work to do. She mentioned staying on task and keeping up with assignments as strategies that would help reduce FLA. She tried to cope by spending her weekends going to movies and just "totally turning off
my brain." She said that helped a little although it made it harder on Mondays.

Follow-up Interview (August 14, 1993):

Gretchen expressed relief that the course was over. She felt that she had allowed herself to get tied up in knots, and that while her coping strategies helped a little, she still had to cope with a lot of stress. She mentioned that she would have liked to know that the class was going to switch instructors.

Spanish Female (SF09), here called "Susanna"
Language background: 2 years of Spanish in high school; 1 year of French in college

Interview 1 (July 6, 1993):

Susanna indicated that she tensed up when speaking publicly. She stated that the target language was spoken so fast and that the total immersion was difficult for her to deal with. She felt frustrated, stupid, and helpless, and had a constant fear of doing wrong. Since she was an anthropology major, she felt that she was under greater pressure to learn the language because it was applicable for her career. That and the pressure of grades were stressful to her.

Susanna listened to classical music while she studied and tried to use humor in an attempt to cope with her stress. She felt the strategies were somewhat effective.
Interview 2 (July 19, 1993):

Susanna mentioned having a new instructor with "a different approach" as adding additional stress. She disliked being "put on the spot," and noted that the unfamiliarity of the new instructor's teaching style was hard to deal with. Additionally, the first half the students were given departmental multiple choice tests, but this half they were given the instructor's own tests. She wasn't sure which part of the chapters he was going to emphasize on the test. She felt that he assumed that the students knew more than they did. The course was still going very fast but also becoming more complex with different tenses and case endings. She felt more stressed and "flusterated" now than she had during the first interview.

The fact that Susanna wanted an A for her own self-esteem made her more nervous. Her coping strategies (listening to classical music and using humor) were effective when she used them, but she said she had been slacking off, and not staying on task or concentrating. Nevertheless, by studying every day and keeping on task, she felt FLA could be reduced.

Interview 3 (August 2, 1993):

The speed of the course was still provoking anxiety, to the point where Susanna felt like she was losing grasp. She felt that she didn't know the material as thoroughly as she did in the first half; a full year to cover the material more slowly would have been preferable in her view. She mentioned the fact that everyone was growing tired of the class; ideally, she would have the endurance to go home and do the
tapes but that "it's just really tiring." She felt that she also put pressure on herself because she wanted to excel in this course. But the fact that the course was divided between two teachers also added stress.

Susanna felt that FLA could be reduced by having consistency between the two instructors. Although she hadn't studied as much as she should have she tried to compensate in other ways, by writing grocery lists in Spanish and trying to name things in the target language.

Follow-up Interview (August 13, 1993):

Susanna mentioned the fact that, "everyone wanted to get out of there, including the teacher." If she had to do it over again she would have kept up with assignments, especially the audio tapes.

French Male (FM10), here called "Francois"
Language background: no previous foreign language in high school; previously dropped French 101 at midterm

Interview 1 (July 6, 1993):

Francois felt that he wasn't fluent in the target language and couldn't understand the questions. Oral pronunciation created FLA as well. The complexity of the target language and the speed of the course made him feel nervous. He felt he was already falling behind. The exams added additional anxiety, especially since he felt he experienced difficulty in comprehension. He tried to relax before exams, "to close my eyes, try to avoid stress," and to study more and be more
knowledgeable. When he was behind in the course these coping strategies didn't help him. He ended this first interview by reiterating that he just didn't understand the language, and he felt his lack of English grammar and sentence structure might explain that.

Interview 2 (July 19, 1993):

Francois mentioned that the class had a new teacher for the second half and that, "she is dumping on us with new vocabulary." He stated her teaching style was quite different and that it created anxiety. He felt that the new instructor went "super fast," adding more requirements, and that he was increasingly falling behind. He also expressed frustration about ambiguity that existed in the course, e.g., the instructor would give quizzes and worksheets to complete but would give the answers orally and not write them out. He stated, "I'm goofed up, taking caffeine trying to learn all this -- I'm lost, I don't understand." He felt the course was not as exciting, less interesting, and frustrating.

Francois was no longer relaxing, and closing his eyes. He said that he had been in the building at 5:45 a.m. writing conjugations on the board for the upcoming test. He felt that FLA could be reduced by not relying so much on an oral mode, and showing the students the words they were studying.

Interview 3 (August 2, 1993):

Francois mentioned that at this point he had "settled in some to [the new instructor's] teaching style." He had been talking with her and
meeting before exams to go over exam material. He felt he was catching up a little, but was still worried about his grade point average, and was now experiencing anxiety about the final. The speed of the course was still anxiety-provoking, and he mentioned that the language class was different from other classes, because, "even if you don't know you can always read up on it a lot easier than you can with this."

Francois now tried to reduce anxiety by listening to music, using music to block out external noises. He also mentioned staying on top of things as being one way to reduce FLA. Additionally, he stated, "it would be a lot wiser to not switch teachers at half, that was a stumbling block for me."

**Follow-up Interview (August 14, 1993):**

Francois expressed relief that the course was over, and stated that his whole complaint all along was that he didn't understand what was being taught. He thought the pace of the course was really intense.

**German Male (GM11), here called "Gerhard"**

Language background: had never taken a foreign language class

**Interview 1 (July 7, 1993):**

Gerhard was an older student who had never taken a foreign language class. He found the syntax and vocabulary very difficult and felt lost. He stated that he kept studying but it didn't seem to do any good, that he wanted to speak and read, but that he couldn't seem to
put it together. He perceived that everyone else was doing OK, and that made him feel frustrated and dumb.

Gerhard used relaxing exercises and deep breathing exercises that he had learned in a psychology class, and tried to employ good study habits and test-taking strategies, e.g., using flashcards, in an attempt to reduce his FLA. He stated that these strategies did seem "to take the heavy stress off."

_Interview 2 (July 20, 1993):_

During this interview Gerhard mentioned that he had a hearing problem and that he had trouble picking up certain sounds even though he concentrated intensely. He mentioned having a new instructor but felt that his teaching style was better for him because the instructor talked more slowly and made the students pronounce the target language correctly. Gerhard still felt frustrated, and mentioned taking a test in which, "his vocabulary just disappeared." He felt a lot of his frustration stemmed from the fact that it had been 38 years since he had diagrammed sentences. His lack of English grammar, the difficulty and complexity of the target language, and the speed of the course all contributed to FLA.

Gerhard still used flash cards and breathing exercises and said it did help him with test anxiety. He felt that his FLA would have been lower if he had been younger; he also suggested having some recent knowledge of a foreign language before taking such an intense language course would have been beneficial.
Interview 3 (August 3, 1993):

Gerhard was very upset about his grades in the class. He wanted to do better but was not succeeding. He stated that his wife felt he was preoccupied with the course. He felt that for the hours he was putting in he was not getting anything back as far as being able to do better in the language. He expressed the desire to actually learn the language, and was experiencing frustration since he seemed unable to obtain this goal.

The German grammar still presented problems for Gerhard; he felt rushed because, by the time he had figured out one thing in class, the time was all used up. He felt his FLA could have been reduced by not taking such an intense eight week course, and having some previous knowledge of a foreign language. He stated that he felt exhausted. As soon as he got home from class he studied; then he got up at 3 a.m. and studied, yet he still would not get a good grade on the test.

Follow-up Interview (August 12, 1993):

Gerhard expressed relief that the course was over and stated it took him three days just to recuperate from the exhausting schedule he had had. He said that he had wanted to excel and learn the language and that he just, "wasn't very good at it." He was considering retaking the course so that he could actually learn the language.

Spanish Male (SM07), here called "Santiago"

Language background: had never had a foreign language course
Interview 1 (July 8, 1993):

Santiago expressed his lack of English grammar, and stated this impeded him from understanding and learning Spanish grammar. Unlike the other anxious students, he didn't mind oral pronunciation in class. He felt that the fact that he had never had a foreign language made him feel behind the rest of the students and that the course was so rushed.

To cope with his FLA, Santiago tried "not to let it bother" him. He said that he was feeling better about the course all the time, since "the more you do it [work with the foreign language] the more comfortable you get with it."

Interview 2 (July 20, 1993):

Santiago felt rushed during tests which caused him to make mistakes, although he stated that he had been doing well in the class. He said that some of his anxiety was because he was achievement-oriented and he put pressure on himself. He also expressed a fear of failure, and noted that anxiety about oral pronunciation had increased.

Santiago attempted to cope with this anxiety by increasing his practice with the target language and by going for walks. He felt that the strategies were effective. He felt FLA could be reduced by having someone to talk about the class with, and by experiencing a little success on tests to "get that edge" and be a successful learner.
Interview 3 (August 3, 1993):

Santiago stated that a lot of his anxiety had vanished, and that his confidence had been built up, although he still experienced some test anxiety. He also stated that switching instructors was frustrating, because he got corrected a lot the first couple days. He stated that learning a language is not a concrete subject like "econ" or math, and that, "the language you already speak interferes with the learning."

Santiago felt that FLA could be reduced by practicing the language and doing all the homework that's assigned. He also expressed the notion that an instructor had a lot to do with a student's anxiety level, and that their help and support are crucial to decreasing FLA.

Follow-up Interview (August 13, 1993):

Like many of the other students, Santiago expressed relief that the course was over. He said he put pressure on himself because he wanted to succeed and keep his grade average up.

In order to discover whether there were gender differences in the types of stressors reported by these students, all stressors mentioned in the interviews are tabulated in Table 3. All of the female interviews are summarized first, followed by the male interviews. Final grades are also shown. Responses are ranked according to their frequency with an "x" placed in the appropriate interview column.

As the second research question in this study, "What commonalities and/or differences between men and women can be observed in a foreign language learning situation?" is addressed, it
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stressors</th>
<th>FF12</th>
<th>GF09</th>
<th>SF09</th>
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<th>GM11</th>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>G+</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
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would appear from the interviews themselves that, while many commonalities regarding FLA in both males and females did emerge, no gender differences could be observed from the interview data.

However, many interesting commonalities regarding FLA did emerge that hopefully have relevance and application for educators and administrators alike, as they design and execute accelerated foreign language classes. They were: 1) switching instructors midway through the course; 2) speed of the accelerated course; 3) total immersion as an instructional strategy; 4) oral pronunciation in class; 5) lack of explicit native language grammar; 6) uniqueness of foreign language learning; 7) academic pressure; 8) fear of failure. They will be discussed in the next and final chapter.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Limitations

Limitations of this study should be kept in mind when reviewing the data. Due to the small numbers of students in each class, it was necessary to pool results from three classes to obtain a large enough N to work with. Consequently, it was not possible for all variables in the study to be held constant. Not only were three different languages being taught, but each class changed instructors midway through the course. This meant that six different instructional styles were involved throughout the study. Also, because this foreign language class was an accelerated, intensive course, it was very likely that some students experiencing high levels of FLA may have dropped the course before the FLCAS was ever administered.

Conclusions

The student interviews yielded surprisingly cohesive data with regard to FLA. As can be seen from Table 3, none of the eight most frequently mentioned stressors emerged as the "exclusive property" of either men or women. There were no observable gender-related differences in students' responses to interview questions regarding FLA. In a sense, the fact that only gender commonalities were found essentially reduces gender to an insignificant and irrelevant variable, and makes the title of the study "Foreign Language Anxiety and Gender" somewhat of a misnomer. No gender-related differences were found in this study.
As stated previously, eight specific commonalities emerged as factors that produced FLA. They were: 1) switching instructors midway through the course; 2) speed of the accelerated course; 3) total immersion as an instructional strategy; 4) oral pronunciation in class; 5) lack of explicit native language grammar; 6) uniqueness of foreign language learning; 7) academic pressure; 8) fear of failure. Each factor will be addressed and discussed in descending order, i.e., the most salient findings, the factors that emerged most often and most intensely, will be addressed first, followed by less salient findings.

1. **Switching instructors midway in the course**

   This factor clearly emerged as the most dominant theme throughout all of the student interviews. Every single interviewee listed this as a stressor in the foreign language class. They apparently had just gotten in tempo with the course and instructional style of their first instructors and suddenly changing instructors seemed to unnerve them. The female interviewee from the German class added that her lack of prior knowledge of the change in instructors exacerbated her stress even more.

2. **Speed of the accelerated course**

   The students were overwhelmed by the fast pace of the course, mentioning how consuming the course was, and that it was nearly impossible to complete all of the assignments and worksheets. They expressed regret that they didn't have the time to really get a handle on the material and achieve the level of proficiency they would have liked.
3. **Total immersion as an instructional strategy**

The factor next most frequently mentioned was using total immersion in the target language, without alternating back and forth in English and the target language. Many interviewees expressed intense frustration that they were not allowed to ask questions in English, and that the instructor would not use English to explain target language concepts and words. Some of the interviewees felt that their time in class was wasted since "they didn't have a clue as to what was going on."

4. **Oral pronunciation in class**

That this particular factor was mentioned as a stressor was not surprising, since much literature in FLA (Campbell & Ortiz, 1988; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1989; Horwitz & Cope, 1991; Price, 1991) documents this as an intimidating, frightening experience to many students suffering from FLA. Even students who felt a bond and a rapport with other students in the classroom mentioned some degree of anxiety when attempting to speak the target language in the classroom.

5. **Lack of native language grammar**

Several of the interviewees expressed frustration and noted that their FLA increased in classes due to their lack of native language grammatical concepts. As their language courses progressed, and more complex concepts were presented, this became a more salient factor. Interviewees complained that they couldn't identify direct or indirect
objects in English, let alone recognize them and produce the correct case ending in the target language.

6. *Uniqueness of foreign language learning*

This theme emerged often, as students observed that this foreign language course was different than "regular" courses. As one male interviewee stated, "If you can read it [material from other content courses presented in the native language] you can understand it. In German, it's a group of words with letters you're used to seeing but in such an order you know nothing about." One student mentioned that if you get behind in another course you can always go back and cover the material, but in his language course, that simply wouldn't be possible.

This finding supports the notion that Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) present, namely, that foreign language learning is a unique and qualitatively different learning situation. Accompanying and supporting this idea were the comments made about studying arduously seemingly to no avail. Students mentioned that this was not the case in their other academic courses, and that greater efforts were rewarded with higher grades and a grasp of the material.

7. *Academic pressure*

Several of the students expressed serious concerns about how their grade in the course would impact their overall grade point average. Four of the six students were taking a foreign language strictly as a requirement for their degree programs, and consequently their prime motivation in staying on task during the course was to maintain a
certain grade point average. Consequences for falling below minimum grade point average requirements can be severe, even to the point of preventing students from graduating, and thus this factor emerged as a recurrent anxiety-producing factor on the part of the students.

8. Fear of failure

This factor emerged as students expressed their desire to do well in the language course, and their desire to get an A in the course. Some of them had this goal "to feel good about themselves." One student wanted to prove to her parents that she could be as successful as another highly intelligent sister. Still others genuinely wanted to learn the language for their future careers. Ironically, it seemed this fear of failure actually added to their stress, and made them even more frustrated when they failed to achieve their goals and expectations. It should be noted that this factor, while well-documented in the research profile of students suffering from FLA, was the least dominant theme of all of the eight factors that emerged.

Coping Strategies

Although coping strategies varied among all of the six interviewees, the most frequently reported response was attempting to stay on task. This was followed by coping strategies that involved relaxing and breathing excercises. These responses were given by both male and female subjects. Other strategies involved exercising drinking coffee, listening to music, using humor, using the target language, and concentration. Although exercising and humor were responses reported
exclusively by women, the parsity of data precludes attaching any particular significance to this finding.

How effective the various coping strategies were also varied with each interviewee. The one similarity observed was that all of the coping strategies appeared to be effective at the beginning of the course, but became increasingly less effective as the course increased in both speed and complexity. At that point students indicated that their stress levels were so high that they felt out of control and unable to manage stress and that their coping strategies did not help them.

Final Grades

Final grades were obtained from all students in the three language courses. Fifi's final grade for French 110 was a B+, a grade which placed her fifth in a class of 13; Francois final grade was a B- which placed him 10 in a class of 13. Gretchen's grade for German 110 was a C+, which placed her fifth in a class of eleven; Gerhard's grade was a D which placed him ninth in a class of eleven. Susanna and Santiago both made an A for Spanish 110, which placed them among the top seven students that also made A's.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) suggestion that there is a relationship between FLA and achievement is not borne out by the final grades of these classes. In the French class, Fifi and Francois were in the upper middle to lower middle group. In the German class, Gretchen and Gerhard's grades were in the lower end of the spectrum. And in the Spanish class, Susanna and Santiago both excelled and were in the top group.
Clearly, no pattern could be observed, other than that final grades for the male and female for each class were somewhat similar. Perhaps the concept of facilitating versus debilitating anxiety is a significant factor in the final grades, explaining why some of the subjects employed FLA in a positive way to excel (facilitating anxiety) while other subjects were actually impaired by FLA (debilitating anxiety). Other variables, such as instructional style, difficulty of the language itself, and student dynamics might have affected the final outcome as well.

Implications

Much of the data that emerged in this study supports and strengthens previous findings in FLA research, and can be potentially beneficial to administrators, curriculum directors and coordinators, and educators alike.

From an administrator's and curriculum director's point of view, perhaps the most striking implication to emerge from this study is the importance of designing, implementing, and evaluating accelerated intensive foreign language courses from a student perspective. Nowhere does this appear more striking than in the finding that changing instructors midway through the course proved to be an intense stressor for the students already experiencing FLA, and something that seemed to increase their anxiety dramatically.

Granted, given the hardships that exist in higher education today, administrators are often faced with tough choices. It is quite understandable, that, given summer session budgets and time constraints, administrators have no other option available to them than
requiring more than one instructor to teach intensive courses such as these. In such a scenario, just being aware that such a decision, necessary though it is, will have a negative impact on students who experience FLA, is helpful for an administrator. In such a case, he or she might then understand the importance of making students aware that they will have two instructors, and make sure that the first instructors explains this to students along with the rationale for such a decision. Just having previous knowledge that the course would have two instructors would have been highly beneficial for one female interviewee in this study.

Another factor that produced anxiety was the instructional strategy of total immersion. While there may be very real theoretical underpinnings to the decision to implement total immersion, and while many students may thrive in such a context, the reactions of students susceptible to FLA or suffering from FLA should also be carefully considered. If an administrator or curriculum director understands the potentially negative impact such a strategy may have on some students, he or she may allow flexibility in this aspect of the course; at any rate, simply understanding how students suffering from FLA are impacted by instructional strategies potentially allows for a greater interaction between students and course planners, and highlights components of a language course that should be carefully considered. If the student perspective on such an issue is never brought to the attention of instructors and administrators then the very real possibility exists that such decisions will be repeated semester after semester, to the
detriment of students who suffer from FLA. The awareness of needs and concerns of each group should be on the table before planning even begins.

The essential point of this discussion is the need for administrators and curriculum directors to be knowledgeable, flexible and open to student feedback. Implementing everything students suggest is not always possible, practical, or even in the student's best interest. But merely having access to how students are reacting, how comfortable they are with given aspects of a program, and whether it would be feasible to redesign the program provide more data and information with which to make an enlightened decision that will best meet the needs of all the players in the academic community, be they instructors, administrators or students.

Aside from implications for administrators and other individuals involved in planning and executing accelerated foreign language classes, findings in this study afford educators and classroom instructors a rich source of data to understand how anxious students react in an intensive, accelerated foreign language environment. Consequently, they can take preventive measures to alleviate or eliminate FLA as much as possible and to provide a learner-centered, low-anxiety classroom environment.

It would appear that a crucial factor in reducing FLA is the instructional strategy of the teacher. Young states:

Instructors who believe their role is to correct students constantly when they make any error, who feel that they cannot have students working in pairs because the class may get out of control, who believe that the teacher should be doing most of the talking and teaching, and who think their role is more like a drill
sergeant's than a facilitator's may be contributing to learner language anxiety. The social context that the instructor sets up in the classroom can have tremendous ramifications for the learner (1991, p. 426).

The issue for the students is not necessarily error correction, but the manner of error correction – when, how often, and most importantly, how errors are corrected (Young, 1991).

To deal with FLA, Foss and Reitzel (1988) have developed a variety of instructional techniques, and believe a foreign language instructor should help students recognize their irrational beliefs and fears. They suggest that foreign language instructors have their students verbalize their FLA fears or even write them on the board to allow students to see that they are not alone in their anxieties; they also suggest journal writing so students can, "learn to recognize feelings of inadequacy so they may arrive at more realistic expectations" (p. 405).

Crookall and Oxford (1991) offer several practical suggestions to reduce FLA in the classroom, one of which is the "agony column." Students write to an imaginary aunt in which they express any anxieties they have over language learning. Other students read and discuss the letter and give the students advice. Finally, a debriefing session is conducted, where the students and the instructor discuss their findings and take steps to reduce FLA. These types of activities help the students get in touch with their anxieties, an important step in working them out.

Another crucial factor that language instructors should consider is that there is often disparity in student vs. teacher perceptions of the classroom. Horwitz (1989) states, "Classroom realities are often
perceived differently by students and teachers. Because language students are not sophisticated language learners, they are likely to view class activities in ways their teachers do not; for this reason many classroom requirements make them feel nervous" (p. 63). She noted that a group of students in one of her studies complained that the teacher talked so fast that it was impossible to translate every word. In fact, the teacher was unaware that they trying to translate every word, and thought they were merely getting the gist of what she was saying. "Thus, in their expectation that the teacher shared their assumption about the necessity of translation, the students turned casual listening experiences into anxiety-provoking speak-listening tests" (p. 64).

All of this illustrates the overriding need for foreign language instructors to know their students and to be responsive to their needs; an instructor should be aware of learning styles, and demonstrate flexibility in tailoring different aspects of the course to meet the needs of his/her students. This can include arranging more pair work or small group work, since the research indicates that FLA seems to be alleviated when students work in small dyads or groups rather than in a large class (Koch and Terrell, 1991; Price, 1991). This is beneficial because group work not only addresses the affective concerns of the students, but also increases the amount of student oral communication in a non-threatening context.

Other options an instructor should consider are playing more games, arranging for peer tutoring, discussing the importance of errors in the language learning process, bringing in native speakers of the
target language to create a bond and familiarity with the target language, and otherwise, "tailoring their activities to the affective needs of the learner" (Koch and Terrell, 1991).

Of course it is obvious that not all students suffer from FLA, and all considerations and decisions should be made with what will benefit the most students without increasing FLA in at-risk students. There may never be a perfect solution; what one student may thrive on may be a nightmare to another student. The key is for an educator to know his or her students, to develop rapport and to somehow convey the impression that he or she is there to facilitate, and to support and assist foreign language learning in a positive way, not as a judge evaluating "performance."

**Future Questions**

Future research could replicate this study in a semester-long foreign language course with one instructor, instead of the highly intensive accelerated summer course that incorporated two instructors. Perhaps different patterns and trends would emerge in a different language learning context.

Future research might also involve a study that simultaneously interviews students who have registered very low FLA and very high FLA, and then compare findings between the two groups, or possibly even compare intra- and inter- findings for each group. This could be repeated in an intensive accelerated foreign language context to see what commonalities and/or differences existed, and to examine whether
the factors the high FLA group found stressful, i.e., changing instructors and total immersion, had a similar impact on the low FLA group.

Future research could also explore correlations between anxiety levels and foreign language course grades, to see if a consistent pattern emerges regarding high recorded levels of FLA and final grades, and whether gender-specific patterns emerge.

Much work remains to be done in the field of FLA, and further research is essential to gaining more insight into this type of anxiety. FLA is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. Because it manifests itself differently depending on such things as prior language experience, student personality, aptitude, intelligence, instructional strategies and classroom circumstances, it is difficult to assess, in some ways accounting for the confusion and discrepancy that is often been seen in a review of the literature. But simply being aware of the classroom from the student's point of view opens dialogue and interaction between all persons involved in pedagogical contexts and opens the door to further exploration of this topic. It is hoped that this study in some way has contributed toward our knowledge and understanding of FLA and how it affects men and women.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A. SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

For each item, please circle the choice that best describes how you feel. SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; N = neither agree nor disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree.

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.
   SD   D   N   A   SA

2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.
   SD   D   N   A   SA

3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.
   SD   D   N   A   SA

4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.
   SD   D   N   A   SA

5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.
   SD   D   N   A   SA

6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
   SD   D   N   A   SA

7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.
   SD   D   N   A   SA

8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.
   SD   D   N   A   SA

9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.
   SD   D   N   A   SA

10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.
    SD   D   N   A   SA

11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.
    SD   D   N   A   SA

12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
    SD   D   N   A   SA

13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.
    SD   D   N   A   SA
14. I would **not** be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.

15. I get upset when I don't understand the teacher's corrections of my mistakes.

16. Even if I am well prepared, I feel anxious about going to my language class.

17. I often feel like **not** going to my language class.

18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.

19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.

20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.

21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.

22. I **don't** feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.

23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.

24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.

25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.

26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.

27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.

28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.

29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.

30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak a foreign language.
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.

SD  D  N  A  SA

32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.

SD  D  N  A  SA

33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions for which I haven't prepared in advance.

SD  D  N  A  SA
APPENDIX B. DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Code No.________________
Foreign Language Anxiety Scale
Demographic Information

1. Name__________________________ 2. Sex________

3. ISU Address____________________________

4. ISU Phone______________ Home Phone______________

5. Foreign Lang Course/No.________ 6. Instructor________

7. Classification (fresh., soph., jr., or sr.) ____________

8. Major________________________

9. Mother's educational level (high school, college, master's degree, Ph.D.)________________________

10. Mother's occupation ________________________________

11. Father's educational level (high school, college, master's degree, Ph.D.)________________________

12. Father's occupation________________________

13. City and state (or city and country if outside the U.S.) where you have spent most of your life. ________________________________

14. Have you ever lived in a non-English speaking country?_______ If so, did you learn the language spoken there?_______

15. Have you had any foreign language classes prior to this class?_______ Please state where, when, and how long you were enrolled?

16. Please list your cumulative GPA______________

    Thank you very much
APPENDIX C. STUDENT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Foreign Language Anxiety Research Study

Student Information Form

You are one of eight foreign language students invited to participate in a research project that will help us understand more about foreign language anxiety, and about possible differences in anxiety that exist between men and women. You have been selected to participate in this study because your scores on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale indicate that you have high levels of foreign language anxiety.

If you decide to participate further in this research project you will be asked to:

• be interviewed four times throughout the semester. The first interview will be the longest, and will probably take anywhere from 15 to 25 minutes. Each subsequent interview will be much shorter, and will probably only take about 10 minutes. All interviews will be audio taped. The interviews will be conducted in a classroom in either Ross Hall or Pearson Hall.

• keep a small spiral notebook (which we will provide) to jot down any experiences, incidents or events that you find anxiety-producing, how you attempted to cope with the anxiety, and how effective you feel that your coping efforts were. You will also be asked to record positive foreign language class experiences and why you felt good about them.

I believe your participation in this study will be greatly beneficial in contributing toward our understanding of foreign language anxiety and gender differences. If you have any questions about this research study and/or your participation in it, I will be happy to discuss them with you. You may contact me at (515) 292-9322 (home) or 294-2936 (office).
Please be assured that you are participating on a completely voluntary basis; non participation will not affect your evaluation or your grade in this course in any way. Furthermore, if for any reason you decide to discontinue your participation in this study, you are free to leave without any fear of prejudice or recrimination.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout (and after) the entire study by matching your name with the code number that appeared on the demographic sheet of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale that you took earlier in the semester. The spiral notebook that you keep will not have your name on it, but your code number only. All audio tapes of the interviews will identify speakers via code numbers only. Only the principal investigator will have access to the names that correspond with the code numbers. Any reports or articles about this research will not use your name. Identifiers will be removed from the surveys after two years.

I truly hope that you will be able to participate! The total amount of time that you will spend on this study will probably be about five hours. If you decide to participate I wish to thank you ahead of time for your cooperation; I believe the time you spend will help us to further our understanding and knowledge about foreign language anxiety.

Sincerely,

Mary Voorhees
206 Ross
292-9322 or 2942936
Student Consent Form

I agree to participate in the research study described above. I realize that all data collected will be used for research purposes only and that my name will never be used in any published reports or articles about this research. I also understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time without any prejudice after signing this form.

________________________  _______________________
Printed Name                Date

________________________
Signature