ANXIETY AND L2 SELF-IMAGES: THE ANXIOUS SELF

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Abstract

This thesis brings together three studies, beginning with a preliminary qualitative study to survey the scene, and expanding by means of corroboration by an actual survey with a questionnaire, in order to investigate the mechanisms of foreign language anxiety (FLA). Surveying the scene by collecting exploratory qualitative and quantitative data from anxious learners, for gaining new insights from these individuals' perspectives, provided first the insight and then the necessary evidence that reframing anxiety as the "anxious self" – anxious about what to do in L2 classes or L2 spoken environments, about how others will respond and about the likelihood of taking successful action in L2 when necessary – might offer a useful approach to link anxiety research to other areas of second language acquisition (SLA), where the importance of the self-concept has been recognised, as well as to clinical psychology, which has long employed relaxation, guided-imagery and systematic de-sensitization in shaping the self-concept of the individual. A five-week intervention programme, based on this new approach, was designed with the purpose of reducing learners' anxiety levels. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures, the impact of the programme on Turkish learners of English was documented, and results indicated that participants showed significantly lower levels of language anxiety, neuroticism, L2 (second language) stage fright, safety-seeking behaviours and quitting tendencies at the end of the programme. The findings also confirmed that visualisation training helped learners to improve their anxious self images, which resulted in increased levels of self-confidence and resilience to anxiety. The employment of relaxation techniques was shown to effectively relieve the somatic

symptoms of language anxiety. The use of systematic de-sensitization activities showed positive results over the course of the study, supporting participants' ability to remain relaxed in anxiety-provoking situations. Co-operation and rapport in the classroom had also improved by the end of the programme and findings confirmed that conceptualising anxiety as a dimension of self could be a productive and effective approach, offering rich pedagogical implications.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

This thesis presents the results of a research programme focusing on the issue of foreign language anxiety, culminating in an intervention study to reduce anxiety by means of a newly developed approach. This approach is based on the conceptualisation of anxiety in terms of an anxious self which has obvious links to the recent emphasis in SLA on the learner's self-concept (Csizér & Magid, 2014) and the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009), and it can also be combined with an influential recent theory of personality, the New Big Five model (McAdams, 2006; McAdams & Pals, 2006; see Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

My motivation to embark on this complex and demanding project was manifold. To begin with, I have always been a good observer and I have always enjoyed monitoring how people act under different circumstances and especially how they survive or manoeuvre in negative or stress-creating situations. Before and during my first university years, I tended to be an emotionally stable person overall. Although I experienced many anxiety provoking situations, I was able to get through these without realizing the methods I had unknowingly developed. The very first and the only time I suffered from anxiety was when playing the guitar with my band on the stage before hundreds of people. The moment when we started playing the first song I felt I was not able to control my fingers. All I could see was a guitar keyboard flashing before my eyes. After the first song, I started to feel better and better as I heard the crowd cheering but the experience was sufficient to allow me to experience how detrimental anxiety could be.

Still I was not aware of the role of anxiety in the classroom, especially in a language learning setting, until I became a language teacher. At that time, I was responsible for teaching English to more than five groups at a private language school. The students were all from different backgrounds, such as young beginner-level learners, adult pre-intermediate-level learners, university students with intermediate-level proficiency and adult learners at an advanced level. There were many students who were successful in other areas, such as science or Mathematics, but not in foreign languages. There were socially active learners but they did not take the initiatives in language learning tasks. Many suffered from anxiety in oral or written examinations while many others suffered in individual speaking tasks with a few showing physical symptoms such as trembling, forgetting parts of speech, blushing or extreme perspiration. In my capacity as a young teacher I would regularly ask students why they experienced these situations; however, something was not right because there were multiple answers and these answers never gave a meaningful hint regarding a common solution: “I do not like to talk”, “Next time”, “I don’t know why”, “I am worried”, “It is typical of me”, “I am trying”, “I simply can’t even if I do my best”, “Others are better than I”. This puzzle led to my enduring interest in the domain of language anxiety and, all in all, it was basically my main interest in people’s reactions, the stage fright and the questions aroused in my mind during these experiences as a language teacher that ultimately led me to exploring the anxiety literature.

Since the beginning of my Master’s Degree studies, I have tried to find effective strategies to help language teachers minimize language anxiety. In my MA thesis, I used a situated approach (Boekaerts, 1986; Julkunen, 1989; 2001) to evaluate students’ levels of anxiety mainly focussing on the effects of error

correction, native teacher instruction, the use of a video camera and various activity types employed in teaching a foreign language. This initial systematic search resulted in 11 insights into language classroom anxiety and stimulated my interest in the topic even further, leading me to design and conduct the current study.

1.2 Guiding principles

Anxiety is a complex phenomenon, known for inhibiting people in various activities, and the fact that there is no generally accepted definition of the construct makes it one of the most elusive concepts amongst individual difference characteristics. Since the genesis of language anxiety research in the 1970s, there has been a consensus in the SLA community that language anxiety is an *emotional experience* evoked by certain L2 learning situations and many advances in anxiety research have resulted from studies concentrating on a single aspect of the process mainly by categorizing it as a trait or state.

In this thesis, as a primary aim, I would like to draw a broader picture of language anxiety by reframing it as a self-based perspective of the "Anxious Self" – anxious about what to do in L2 classes or L2 spoken environments, about how others will respond and about the likelihood of taking successful action in L2 when necessary – , and thereby also relating it to future motivational self-guides such as the ideal self. This notion has directly emerged from this empirical data and, in that way, it has been possible not only to contribute to the momentum of language anxiety research but also to employ imagery-based strategies in shaping the anxious self alongside some well-known traditional strategies in psychology such as applied relaxation and systematic de-sensitization techniques. Inspired by an influential recent theory of individual differences by Dan McAdams, the New Big Five model (e.g. McAdams, 2006a, 2006b; McAdams & Pals, 2006), my guiding assumption has

been that conceiving anxiety in terms of a dynamic combination of three relatively distinct facets – that is *dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations and integrative life narratives* – offers a more nuanced understanding of how anxiety affects the learners' performance across various communication situations, language tasks, content areas and contextual conditions than the traditional dichotomy of trait and state anxiety.

Another prominent aim of this thesis is to suggest step-by-step practical guidance for students to deal with language anxiety by combining theories and methods in both traditional and personality psychology as well as some of the well-known concepts in language classroom anxiety in order to relate the new framework to real-world context as practically as possible. After all, "a good researcher also has a sense of social responsibility, that is, accountability to the field and more broadly, to the world. Research is not done for its sake, but to generate knowledge and to further our understanding" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 17-18). In sum, in this thesis, my responsibilities are twofold: firstly, to contribute to the understanding of the topic of language anxiety by following a self-based approach that is consistent with recent theoretical developments in the field of personality psychology, and secondly, to present the findings in a way that could easily be implemented in language classroom contexts.

1.3 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis consists of four main parts covering the theoretical background (Part I), the research foundation (Part II), surveying the scene (Part III) and the intervention (Part IV), with each part further broken down to separate chapters. Such a multi-layered organisation paves the way for a step-by-step illustration of how the preliminary results gave the inspiration to design and conduct a multi-phased

intervention study and how the findings obtained in the intervention study complimented the previous findings.

Part I contains a literature review that addresses three main areas. Although the thesis is concerned with a specific kind of anxiety, language anxiety, I will first discuss the scope of the notion of anxiety in general by providing definitions, related concepts and main symptoms of the phenomenon. The second area focuses on the domain of language anxiety research by examining its development with a particular emphasis on the dynamic view. The final area of the theoretical background considers social, physiological, clinical and pedagogical efforts to overcome anxiety.

In Part II, I will discuss and explain my research context, the rationale behind the overall research design, the data handling and finally the ethical considerations. This part will thus address the major considerations affecting my general approach and the principles to mix quantitative and qualitative methods.

Part III is concerned with a presentation of two individual studies: (a) an initial qualitative investigation carried out in Turkey aimed at defining the underlying mechanism of language anxiety and (b) a quantitative survey involving the development of a scale to evaluate the findings obtained in the preliminary study. I will specifically discuss how the preliminary data shaped the general research direction and how it led to a new approach to conceptualizing anxiety through the individual L2 learner's self-image: *the Anxious Self*.

Part IV will be devoted to the description of the intervention programme designed and implemented to reduce Turkish learners' language anxiety by means of guided-imagery, systematic de-sensitisation, relaxation, confidence building and content-based activities. This part starts with a Methods chapter, which introduces the participants and then specifies the instruments used in the study. The focus of the

subsequent chapter will be the overall characterisation of the programme, and it will also address the learners' pre-intervention states. The findings will be presented in three phases, with each phase described in a separate chapter. In the Introductory Stage chapter, I discuss the use of applied relaxation techniques to overcome the somatic symptoms of anxiety, students' views on visualisation activities and effects of role modelling. The Anxiety Processing Stage chapter sheds light on how the learners identified and accommodated anxiety as well as on developing strategies to reduce or eliminate it. This chapter also discusses the effects of de-sensitizing anxiety through guided imagery. Finally, the Reduced Anxiety Stage chapter illustrates the students' use of processing strategies to cope with their anxious self images. In an additional chapter, I will examine how learners managed to override or eradicate their stage fright.

In the final chapter of my thesis, I will provide a brief summary of the main findings and discuss the limitations and my recommendations for future research. Last but not least, as the research is motivated by practical concerns, I will sum up the recommended strategies to overcome anxiety in a separate Implications section.

Part I: Theoretical Background

This part sets the scene with a broad description of the notion of anxiety – in Chapter 2 – addressing its main symptoms and explaining the reasons for the confusion about its nature. Following this, Chapter 3 provides an overview of language anxiety research by examining its development, with a particular emphasis on recent dynamic approaches. Finally, this part concludes, in Chapter 4, with a discussion of social, physiological, clinical and pedagogical efforts to overcome general anxiety and language anxiety.

2 Understanding anxiety

2.1 Introduction

Anxiety is an elusive and complex phenomenon which is known for deteriorating individuals' lives. Since the 1960s anxiety research has gained a perceptible momentum and many scholars, philosophers, psychologists, social and medical scientists have been trying to elucidate the nature of anxiety. As Strongman (1987) asserted 30 years ago, anxiety had "more written about it than any other emotion" (p. 202) and it is still among the most widely researched topics today (MacIntyre, 2017). Let us start our exploration by offering a definition of the notion of anxiety and by identifying its main types.

2.2 Definition of anxiety

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines anxiety as "the state of feeling nervous or worried that something bad is going to happen", and according to American Psychological Association, "anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood

pressure". It has also been defined as "an unpleasant emotional state or condition which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, and worry, and by activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Spielberger, 1972, p. 482). Probably the most interesting definition is by Freud (1969) who asserts that "anxiety (or dread) itself needs no description; everyone has personally experienced this sensation, or to speak more correctly this affective condition, at some time or other" (p. 341).

There is no generally acknowledged meaning of the term "anxiety". The key problem with these definitions is low inter-writer reliability and ambiguity in the conceptualization of the concept (Dörnyei, 2005; Sarason, 1986). As Eysenck (1992) points out, one reason for the divergence stems from the different goals of researchers in the clinical and personality sub-fields of psychology. Clinical researchers initially focused on cognitive components in the aetiology of clinical anxiety while personality psychologists tended to concentrate on cognition in normal groups in an attempt to try to understand how anxiety affects performance. The traditional discrimination between trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety has also been argued to be another source of confusing findings on anxiety in the language classroom (MacIntyre, 2007). Finally, the term also has multiple meanings in the common language, as illustrated by the following examples:

> I am an anxious person.
>
> I am anxious when at the dentist.
>
> I feel anxious.
>
> I avoided the party because I was anxious about meeting people.
>
> (Edelmann, 1992, p. 1)

The first example denotes a strong, personality-related characteristic of anxiety that one would define as a trait, but the second example demonstrates that anxiety can also emerge in specific situations. The third statement foregrounds the affective dimension of anxiety and the last example concerns anxiety as an antecedent of behaviour. Thus, as Lader (1975) asserts, anxiety might be a mood, a feeling, an emotional reaction, a symptom, a disorder, or an ailment, and many more. These variations have led scholars to view anxiety from many different perspectives.

2.2.1 Confusion about the very nature of anxiety

Anxiety is a highly elusive concept (Eysenck, 1979; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 1995; Scovel, 1978; Spielmann & Radnofsky, 2001; Young, 1991) with some scholars viewing it as part of personality (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Simpson, 1980), some others as a primary emotion (Dewaele, 2010; Gray, 1982; Spielberger, 1972) and it has also been mentioned as a key motivational component (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Let us consider each understanding separately.

Affective facet

Emotions are one of the central and decisive parts of our lives. The conversations and interactions that we have on a daily basis are rooted in our emotional experiences, and it has been suggested by Fussell (2002) that the mental well-being of an individual, as well as the quality of the interpersonal communications that are experienced, are determined by how easily and freely these emotions are transmitted. In other words, the more freely we speak and listen to others, the healthier our lives and relationships are.

Gray notes that “whatever else anxiety is, it is undoubtedly an emotion; sometimes, reading the work of psychologists, one is tempted to think that it is the only emotion” (1982, p. 5). Exaggeration or not, Gray’s statement confirms that

anxiety, beyond doubt, is considered primarily an emotional or affective state. In second language acquisition research Jean-Marc Dewaele's studies in particular have shed light on the role of language anxiety on multi-linguals' emotional states. In one study, Dewaele (2005) analysed Flemish high-school students' attitudes towards French and English, and he revealed a number of links between personality, gender, politicocultural identity, communicative behaviour and foreign language attitudes in general. Significantly, it was observed that students' positive attitudes towards French significantly lowered their levels of anxiety. However, it was highly questionable whether this was a cause or an effect.

In addition to a general positive disposition being related to lower anxiety, emotional intelligence levels have also been shown to have an effect on anxiety. In a large scale web-based study examining the effects of trait emotional intelligence and several socio-biographical variables on anxiety in five different situations, it was shown that multi-linguals who had high levels of Trait Emotional Intelligence suffered less from anxiety. Furthermore, it was indicated that stronger socialisation in the L2, the knowledge of more languages, and higher levels of self-perceived proficiency are negatively correlated with language anxiety (Dewaele et al., 2008). Another study by Dewaele (2013) investigated the extent to which individual linguistic history, language use, socio-biographical and psychological variables had an effect on language perception, openness, self-perceived proficiency, anger, expletive usage and language anxiety. It was found that linguistic history and language usage determines the choice of the foreign language, as well as the extent to which anxiety is experienced in the target language.

Cognitive facet

After the introduction of a cognitive view on anxiety in Beck's (1976) studies on depression, Salkovskis' (1985) analyses of obsessive-compulsive disorder and Clark's (1986) cognitive theory on panic, the dominant approach to anxiety research has become almost entirely cognitive, portraying the concept as a complex phenomenon which involves the interaction of attention, perception, memory, vigilance and reasoning (Rachman, 2013). After all, it has been widely agreed that "cognitive activity is a necessary precondition of emotion because to experience an emotion, people must comprehend" (Lazarus, 1984, p. 124).

As a case in point, triggering events uncover preoccupying mental states of anxious people (such as fear of negative outcomes) and give cause for uncertainty about outcomes, as well as some other potential threats. These people constantly have an eye on situations for potential threat indicators and while doing that they might not give careful consideration to their tasks (Sarason, 1986). Similarly, anxiety could be expected to considerably affect language learners as language learning is a cognitively intense set of actions.

When students are anxious in any setting, they start developing negative self-cognition. This cognitive consequences could be in different forms (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a; Sarason, 1986), such as failure (e.g. I will never be able to be successful), avoidance (e.g. I wish the teacher did not call on me) and self-depreciation (e.g. I am stupid). Such thoughts hinder cognitive processing, and high levels of negative self-cognitions interfere with the perception of events which can also create further negative cognitions. In a way, this case illustrates a way of how negative self-cognition could cause limitations in both short-term and long-term memory (MacIntyre, 1995).

Tobias (1979, 1986) presents a model of the cognitive domain of anxiety and its effects on learning from instruction, and MacIntyre (1999) illustrates a variation on this construct (see Figure 1). According to the model, learning is divided into three stages: input, processing and output.

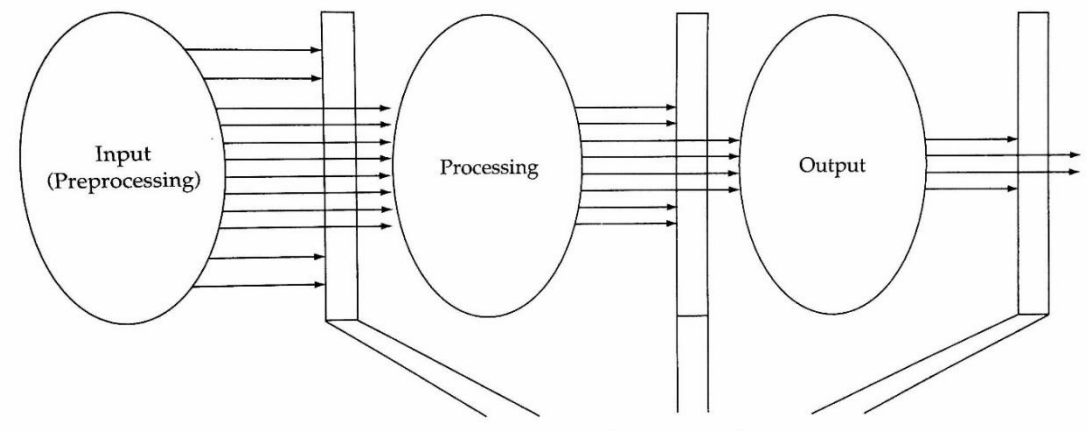


Figure 1 - Model of the effects of anxiety on learning from instruction (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 35)

- The input component acts like Krashen's well-known "affective filter" which keeps some information from being transferred to the processing stage. It represents students' first exposure to the presentation of instruction. Anxiety arousal at this stage may cause distraction to their attention as well as poor initial processing. For instance, anxious individuals may not take in the linguistic input in language classes during an activity in which students are asked to comprehend a complex text or a spoken language. As a result, these individuals tend to ask for more repetition, or it might take longer for them to do the task, than other relaxed students for whom anxiety does not interfere with their skills. If the missing input is not compensated for, negative effects can also be observed in later stages.
- The processing stage refers to cognitive operations involving encoding, organising, and storing the input. Second language (L2) learning could be

impaired during anxiety arousal at this stage since anxiety may influence both fluency and accuracy (MacIntyre, 1999).

- Lastly, the output stage involves either oral or written production of previously learned L2 material. There are a number of symptoms indicating that anxiety can affect this stage, such as poor retrieval of vocabulary, erroneous use of grammar rules or lack of responding at all (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a). Moreover, MacIntyre (1999) highlights the not uncommon situation when people "freeze up" during an important test, that is, they know the correct answer but are unable to recall or express the particular piece of information due to anxiety arousal while trying to retrieve the information.

We should note that these three stages are interdependent, which means that if anxiety interferes with the cognitive task at one of the stages, the whole process will be blocked because the information cannot be transferred to the next stage. The effects of language anxiety on all these three stages are associated with poor academic performance. This situation could be explained by the presence of anxiety-related cognition, which weakens the individual's information processing capacity. One common response by affected students is to study more than usual in order to compensate for the unfavourable effects of anxiety (Eysenck, 1979; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a).

Personality facet

Personality factors have played a key role in our understanding of discrepancies in individuals' performances, and personality traits have also been registered as some of the main contributors to anxiety (Beatty & McCroskey, 2009; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; MacIntyre, 1999; Young, 1991). According to Furnham and Heaven (1998), the most important predictors of performance are

extraversion/introversion and the levels of anxiety. They further state that "the impact of factors such as these also depends on the type of task being completed, the presence of distracting factors, and the complexity of the task" (p. 82). Extroverts and introverts are quite different in a number of ways in terms of their memory skills, learning styles and arousal levels. Extraverts tend to perform better under high levels of arousal, while low levels of arousal lead to a better performance for introverts. Task complexity is shown to be a further discriminating factor between the two types, with extraverts being better at accomplishing more demanding tasks (Eysenck, 1967).

Dewaele (2002) analysed the effect of personality traits on foreign language acquisition in the oral production of Flemish multi-lingual students. The results indicated that anxiety was not a solid personality trait and it was affected by many individual and contextual effects. Students scoring high on psychoticism and extraversion were shown to suffer less from anxiety, and lower levels of anxiety were also linked to low scores on neuroticism. One of the main findings of Dewaele (2002) was that anxiety levels were quite different for second and third language speech production. The same links between introversion and anxiety were also found by MacIntyre and Charos (1996). Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999), investigating the anxiety levels of university students, claimed that low self-worth and low self-perceptions towards learning abilities are two further influential factors impacting on anxiety, and indeed, Clément (1980) proposed that self-confidence with a foreign language could be the antithesis of language anxiety.

In one of the best-known studies on FLA, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) found certain similarities between FLA and perfectionist characteristics after analysing reactions of students' actual and audiotaped oral performances. Anxious

and non-anxious learners were reported to differ in terms of their perfectionist tendencies as anxious ones tried to avoid making mistakes while the others maintained their talking regardless of the mistakes during the interviews. Competitiveness was also suggested as a significant contributory characteristics (Bailey, 1983). In her diary study of language learners, Bailey found that an important source of anxiety was learners' negative self-comparisons with their classmates. These studies thus suggest that anxiety decreases if learners perceive themselves as proficient as or better than their peers.

Motivational facet

As pointed out in the introduction to this section, anxiety has also been documented as a motivational component. In general, negative correlations have been found between anxiety measures and various other motivational components (Bernaus et al., 2007; Clément et al.,1994; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). An example of the relationship between motivation levels and anxiety was illustrated in the study carried out by Bernaus, Moore and Cordeiro Azevedo (2007) in which the researchers investigated the language anxiety and the motivation levels of students of Catalan in Barcelona; they found that the motivation decreased and higher levels of anxiety were reported as the year level increased.

In an article focussing on affective variables in SLA, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) suggest that a reciprocal relationship exist between motivation and FLA. Intuitively, it seems reasonable that motivation, language anxiety and even language achievement are strongly related to each other, because anxious learners are often reported to find anxiety quite unpleasant. However, Horwitz (1996) argues that highly motivated learners may also experience high levels of anxiety. As a reason

she states that “there must be a desire to communicate well in order to worry about how your communicative efforts are perceived” (p. 367).

2.2.2 Trait and state anxiety

Personality scholars have been trying to identify the most crucial personality factors underlying the structure of personality for a long time. There has been an emerging agreement for the past three decades that there are five key personality factors (extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience), often referred to as the Big Five (Costa & McCrae, 1994). It is in turn widely accepted that one of the Big Five factors, neuroticism, is meant to describe negative affectivity or what we know as trait anxiety (Eysenck, 1997). In other words, a general tendency to experience anxiety in various situations is also one of the primary traits of personality. Goldberg (1993) suggests that people with high levels of trait anxiety often experience nervousness or general emotional impairment.

Trait anxiety is defined as “relatively stable individual difference in anxiety proneness” (Spielberger et al., 1970, p. 3). State anxiety is, on the other hand, defined as “an immediate, transitory, emotional experience with immediate cognitive effects” (MacIntyre, 1995, p. 93). It varies in intensity and duration and fluctuates over time as a function of “the amount of stress that impinges upon an individual and that individual’s interpretation of the stressful situation as personally dangerous or threatening” (Spielberger, 1976, p. 5).

In other words, state is a transitory condition which changes over time (e.g. “how do you feel at a specific moment in time”), while trait is more stable (e.g. “how do you usually feel”). Therefore state anxiety is associated with kinetic energy as it is an empirical process taking place at a given time and level, whereas trait anxiety, like potential energy, is a latent disposition which occurs if triggered by relevant

stimuli (Spielberger, 1966). MacIntyre (2007) points out that at the state level "the concern is for experiences rooted in a specific moment in time without much concern for how frequently those experiences occurred in the past or whether they might occur again in the future" (p. 565). He further asserts that in Applied Linguistics there are not many studies on state anxiety due to the complication caused by learners' efforts to compensate for the negative effects of anxiety.

In his state-trait model of anxiety (see Figure 2), Spielberger (1966) posits the two types of anxiety and demonstrates the links between these constructs. He argues that a cognitively perceived stimulus indicating a threat evokes state anxiety, which in turn either triggers a behaviour to avoid the threat or evokes defensive actions in order to alter the cognitive appraisal. Individual differences in trait anxiety determine the specific stimuli which is appraised as dangerous.

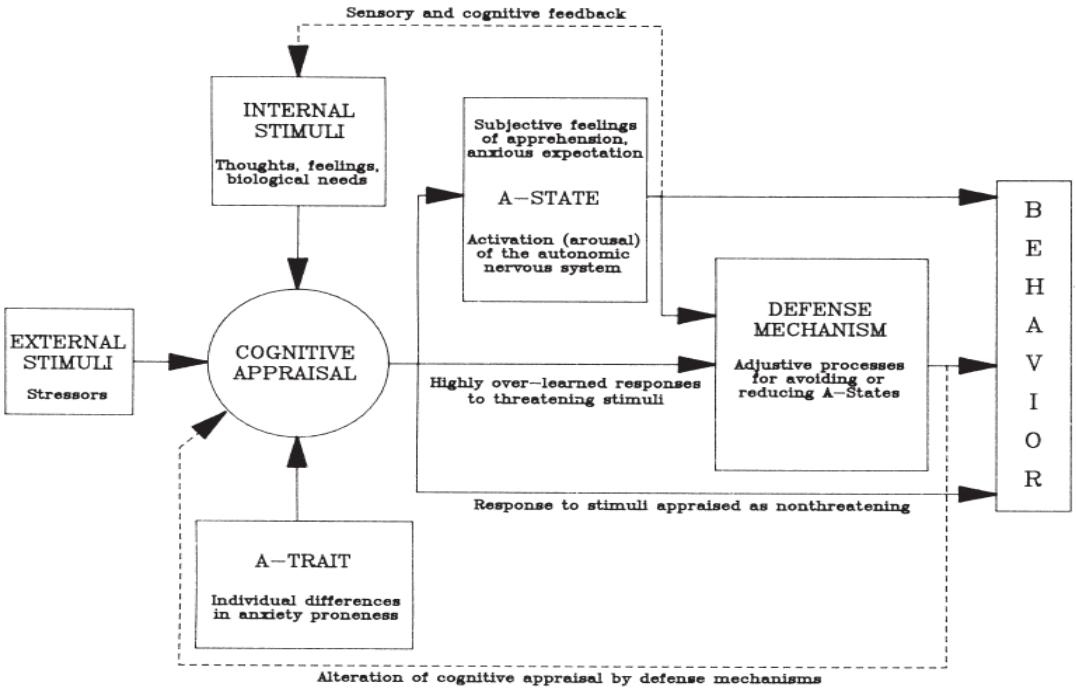


Figure 2 - A trait – state conception of anxiety (Spielberger, 1966, p. 17)

Based on Spielberger's work, Scovel (1978) has also argued the difference between trait and state anxiety and noted that various forms of anxiety could also be divided with regard to their pervasiveness.

Language learning could be a challenging activity for learners at the beginning of their studies, because they will inevitably have difficulties in one or more language-related skills such as grammar, pronunciation or comprehension, and will make mistakes during some tasks. If students do not feel comfortable with these mistakes then this situation will trigger state anxiety, and if this process is repeated on an ongoing basis, students are likely to associate this kind of anxiety with the foreign language itself (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). However, Horwitz (2017) argues that language learning is a specific anxiety and "specific anxieties have characteristics of both trait and state anxiety" (p.33).

2.2.3 Debilitating and facilitating anxiety

Anxiety is a general heightened arousal that manifests itself in different ways in different people. It can arise for a lot of reasons and it may reach a debilitating degree of intensity for some people. In Applied Linguistics anxiety has been considered as the "bogeyman" in the classroom and the common understanding is that anxiety is always bad. However, there is also evidence that anxiety may not always have a negative effect. Alpert and Haber (1960), followed by Kleinmann (1977) and Scovel (1978), proposed two types of anxiety: facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety. Most of the studies involving facilitative-debilitative discrimination in anxiety research refer back to 1908 when the Yerks-Dodson Law (the inverted U) was introduced (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 shows that anxiety, to an optimal level, could be helpful in terms of increasing the performance, but as Hancock and Ganey (2003), amongst others,

argue, when this optimal level is passed, there is likely to be a sharp fall in the performance. Eysenck (1979) suggests that anxious people respond to the higher cognitive demands by extra effort and that "the extent to which anxiety either facilitates or impairs performance is determined by the extent to which high-anxiety subjects compensate for reduced processing effectiveness by enhanced effort" (p. 365). Hence, anxiety arousal might contribute to performance and effort, but what really could have a positive impact on performance is likely to be the cognitive component rather than the emotional one.

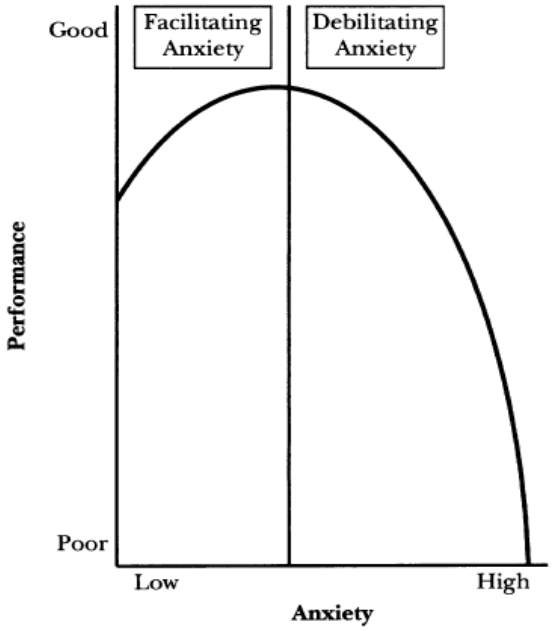


Figure 3 - The relationship between anxiety and performance (MacIntyre, 1995, p. 92)

Allwright and Bailey (1991) suggest that learners' concerns regarding their achievement can actually help them perform better; that is, the students' perception that success is not guaranteed can be facilitative. In his study introducing the facilitating-debilitating framework, Kleinmann (1977) finds that learners with more facilitative anxiety perform less avoidance, and indeed, according to Oxford (1999),

facilitative anxiety increases students' level of motivation and performance. She further asserts that anxious students listen to the instructions more carefully than their non-anxious peers during the activities. In a similar vein, in an interview study with seven teachers, Ohata (2005) finds that some teachers believe that anxiety can be helpful depending on the student.

Despite these findings, Horwitz (2010; 2017) and MacIntyre (2017) express forcefully that a search for facilitative anxiety could be a step backwards or even a dangerous trend: the results stemming from the facilitative anxiety research could easily be misinterpreted as one might conclude that teachers should make learners a little anxious in the classroom in order to promote better performance.

2.3 Related concepts

2.3.1 Fear

In his seminal volume on anxiety, Barlow (2002) defines fear as "a primitive alarm in response to present danger, characterized by strong arousal" (p. 104) in contrast to anxiety, which is "a future-oriented emotion, characterized by perceptions of uncontrollability and unpredictability over potentially aversive events and a rapid shift in attention to the focus of potentially dangerous events or one's own affective response to these events" (ibid). Fear and anxiety have often been misinterpreted and used interchangeably in the past as many regarded them as the same basic emotion (Eysenck, 1997). In order to distinguish the two concepts, Rachman offers a detailed list of contrasting features (see Table 1).

As a major aspect of our nature, fear happens as a sound versatile reaction to an apparent danger or risk to one's physical well-being and security. It warns people of an up and coming risk and the requirement for defensive measures (Craske, 2003). According to Lang et al. (1983), fear involves three components: the subjective

experience of dread, behavioural attempts to escape from the threatening situation and associated physiological changes. However, these three components are not always consistent. Fear can also be maladaptive when it happens under a non-threatening circumstance which can be misconstrued as indicating a potential threat (Clark & Beck, 2010).

Fear	Anxiety
Specific focus of threat	Source of threat is elusive
Understandable connection between threat and fear	Uncertain connection between anxiety and threat
Usually episodic	Pervasive uneasiness
Persistent	Can be objectless
Circumscribed tension	Cues for anxiety can be elusive
Identifiable threat	Persistent
Provoked by threat cues	Uncertain offset
Declines with removal of threat	Without clear borders
Offset is clear	Threat seldom imminent
Circumscribed focus of threat	Tension, but no sense of emergency
Imminent threat	Bodily sensations of vigilance
Quality of an emergency	Puzzling qualities
Bodily sensations of an emergency	
Rational quality	

Table 1 - Differences between fear and anxiety (Rachman, 2013, p. 5)

As a major aspect of our nature, fear happens as a sound versatile reaction to an apparent danger or risk to one's physical well-being and security. It warns people of an up and coming risk and the requirement for defensive measures (Craske, 2003). According to Lang et al. (1983), fear involves three components: the subjective experience of dread, behavioural attempts to escape from the threatening situation and associated physiological changes. However, these three components are not always consistent. Fear can also be maladaptive when it happens under a non-threatening circumstance which can be misconstrued as indicating a potential threat (Clark & Beck, 2010).

The relationship between fear and languages might be older than one would imagine. Jean-Jacques Rousseau believes that human language originated as a result of fear expressions – Bruns (1980, p. 131) cites Rousseau's words from the Essay on the Origin of Languages:

> A primitive man, on meeting other men, will first have experienced fright. His fear will make him see these men as larger as and stronger than himself; he will give them the name giants. After many experiences, he will discover that the supposed giants are neither larger nor stronger than himself, and that their stature did not correspond to the word giant. He will then invent another name that he has in common with them.

As far as the classroom is concerned, the discomfort caused by fears could be characterized a definite affect but, even for the students themselves, it is often difficult to determine whether this affect is facilitating or debilitating, educative or not, without investigating it in a larger context. It is important for teachers to take students' feelings into account and characterize them in order to be aware of the points where growth is required. Otherwise this discomfort might lead to students' contraction, resistance and withdrawal. Therefore, most modern educators would agree with English (2010, p. 523) that "creating classrooms and schools as safe spaces, safe not only from extrinsic sources of fear such as bullying, but also from intrinsic sources such as a learner's social insecurity" could help teachers minimize the potential classroom-related fears.

2.3.2 Communication apprehension

The term communication apprehension (CA) refers to "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 78) and it is viewed as "a broadly based anxiety related to oral communication" (McCroskey, 1984, p. 13). Until the 1930s a reluctance to speak was often associated with stage fright, and virtually all communication studies were conducted in public speaking context. As a result, CA was one of the least investigated and understood issues in the communication literature (Daly, 1991; McCroskey et al., 2009). Daly (1991) represents the development of CA by highlighting five perspectives in order to suggest a good way of making apprehension more comprehensible. These are genetic predisposition, an individual's history of communication related reinforcements and punishments, inadequate communication skills acquired earlier in life, the role of appropriate models in communication, and lastly, learned helplessness which is caused by random and unpredictable patterns of rewards, punishments and nonresponses in verbal activities.

According to McCroskey (1984) communication apprehension is divided into four types:

1) Traitlike CA: An invariable characteristic of a person, which is resistant to change.
2) Generalized-Context CA: an enduring inclination toward communication in general occasions (e.g. fear of public speaking).
3) Person-Group CA: General reactions of a person while communicating with a specific person or a group (e.g. a teacher can communicate with one of his or

her students without hesitance but may not perform the same behaviour with her or his head teacher).

4) Situational CA: Transitory reactions of a person while communicating with a specific person or a group. (e.g. a student can feel relaxed while talking to her or his teacher about climate change but not while talking about her or his misbehaviour).

Daly (1991) also associates communication apprehension with four areas: work and occupations, social, personality characteristics and classroom. This also links the question of CA in the language classroom, particularly in communicative language classes where students are continuously encouraged to speak. It has indeed been found that students are prone to anxiety in social situations which they do not attend voluntarily and which are compulsory by someone in charge (McCroskey & Richmond, 1980). Insufficient control over communication in such contexts can cause high levels of anxiety, withdrawal, less effort towards learning a second language and poor academic performance (Krashen, 1981). Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) also support this view by saying that "people who typically have trouble speaking in groups are likely to experience even greater difficulty speaking in a foreign language class where they have little control of the communicative situation and their performance is constantly monitored" (p. 127). Language students tend to avoid participating in learning situations due to their pessimistic feelings toward oral communication. This is even true of certain native speakers who are highly apprehensive as they exhibit passive classroom behaviour (Mejías et al., 1991).

In search of ways of reducing CA, two primary approaches have been proposed (Daly, 1991). The first involves skill development. This approach suggests that CA stems from an individual's limited ability to communicate and therefore

enhanced communication skills and an increased amount of experience in actual talking can alleviate the apprehension. The second approach involves more clinically-oriented solutions such as systematic desensitization and cognitive restructuring.

To conclude, even though there are several other constructs related to the discomfort associated with communication such as writing apprehension, touch avoidance, receiver apprehension, and singing apprehension (Daly, 1991), communication apprehension is the most directly related one to language anxiety and it has a major impact on various areas in language learning and on an individual's long-term behaviours.

2.3.3 Willingness to communicate

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is defined as "the intention to initiate communication, given a choice" (MacIntyre et al., 2001, p. 369). From the first day of schooling, willingness to communicate becomes a crucial issue in determining how well individuals perform and how accurately they are perceived; for example, some early studies have revealed that teachers build positive bias toward talkative students in their classes (McCroskey & Daly, 1976).

Whether an individual is willing to communicate with someone else or not will be influenced by situational constraints. McCroskey, Richmond and McCroskey (2009, p. 99) suggest that many different situations such as "how the person feels that day, what communication the person has had with others recently, who the other person is, what that person looks like, what might be gained or lost through communicating, and what other demands on the person's time are present" could be some of the reasons why a person exhibits WTC. The currently accepted WTC construct has developed from Burgoon's (1976) earlier description of an

unwillingness to communicate as a chronic predisposition to avoid oral communication drawing the view on the areas of alienation, self-esteem, anomie, communication apprehension, and introversion. Mortensen et al.'s (1977) study of predisposition toward verbal behaviour was another construct falling within this area. Reviewing the past two decades of research on the subject, the researchers argued the case for the existence of a set of universal features of speech. They were, however, also aware that situational variance would have an effect on the extent of openness to communication.

WTC in L2 communication is not likely to be as straightforward as WTC in the first language. First of all, there is a great deal of individual difference between the language competence levels amongst speakers. Additionally, L2 communication involves a number of intergroup issues, social and political implications that are usually not as salient in L1 use (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 546). Therefore, MacIntyre et al. (1998) have expanded the definition of WTC proposing a complex, pyramid-shaped model (see Figure 4), which accounts for individual differences in initiating communication in L2.

This heuristic model introduces eleven factors preceding one another to potentially facilitate or hinder language learners' intentions to speak (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2013). At the bottom of the pyramid, there are two main interacting elements: intergroup climate and personality. Although learners do not have much control over their existence, MacIntyre (2012) argues that they can choose how to take an action with respect to two. The next two layers represent motivational forces and "the tension between a desire to approach the target language group and a sense of hesitation or fear of the implications of doing so" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 567). Moving from these basic influences, the third layer shows two undulant situated

occasions. In addition to state communicative self-confidence, the individual seeks for a specific person who "brings unique attributes, including the role that they play (e.g., teacher vs. fellow student), attractiveness as a communication partner, and possibly a shared history" (MacIntyre et al., 2011, p. 83). Finally, if all these factors run their course, individuals will feel the intention to initiate the discourse in the target language.

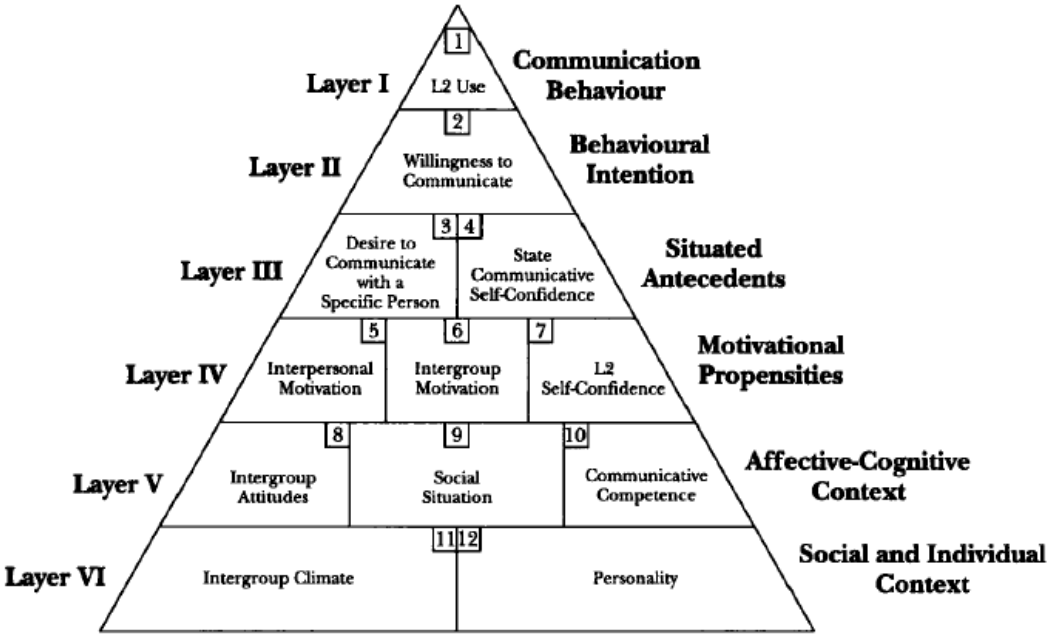


Figure 4 - Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547)

One aim of foreign language learning is to provide better communication and understanding between different people. Thus, generating a WTC becomes one of the most important components of modern language teaching. By doing so, language learning can accomplish its goal of bridging people and concentrate on its social aspect.

2.4 Main symptoms and areas of anxiety

2.4.1 General symptoms

Analyses of a number of large-scale studies in the United States over the past decades prompted the conclusion that "anxiety disorders represent the single largest mental health problem in the country" (Barlow, 2004, p. 22). In 2007, there was a notable increase in the psychotherapy services for people having anxiety disorders in England (Rachman, 2013). Anxiety could manifest itself in multiple ways; anxious learners may experience specific physical symptoms not unlike actors who have stage fright; however, they can also experience physiological, emotional, cognitive symptoms as well as some safety behaviours. Let us look at these categories more closely before examining stage fright and test anxiety separately.

Physiological aspect

Anxious students can be "complaining about a headache, experiencing tight muscles, feeling unexplained pain or tension in any part of the body" (Oxford, 1999, p. 66). The most common physiological symptoms are blushing, trembling, squirming, a dry mouth, fidgeting, sweating, stuttering, stammering, and heart palpitations (Blackmore et al., 2009; Oxford, 1999). Studies also show that of all the individuals suffering from anxiety, at least a third of them present with physical symptoms that lack clear medical explanations (Kroenke, 2003).

Emotional aspect

Anxiety can also have emotional manifestations. As one example, Phillips (1992) indicates that anxious students consider the oral examination as an unpleasant activity. Other documented manifestations include the following: fear of not understanding the teacher, nervous laughter, insecurity about speaking,

embarrassment in volunteering responses, procrastination, concern over errors, incompetence in self-comparisons with peers, worrying over failure, worrying over opinion of others, worrying about feeling left behind, panic at being unprepared, fear of teacher correction, confusion while studying and self-consciousness while speaking (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2013; Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1991).

Cognitive aspect

Young (1991) points out that the symptoms of foreign language anxiety could appear in the form of dissolution of sounds, inability to produce the intonation of the language, freezing up while performing, forgetting words or phrases. Investigating students' oral exam performances with accuracy and comprehensibility, Phillips (1992) has found that anxious students receive lower grades compared to the other students. Experiencing difficulty while speaking in the classroom and the tendency to freeze are two of the most mentioned symptoms. Additionally, anxious students have difficulty concentrating and they become forgetful (Horwitz et al., 1986)

Social aspect

Anxious learners may have reduced linguistic self-confidence, which results in not communicating as often as more relaxed learners (MacIntyre, 2017). Anxious learners also tend to use "social image protection strategies" to balance the anxiety provoking athmosphere (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2013, p. 8). Learners with high levels of anxiety often refuse to speak or remain silent (Horwitz et al., 1986; Tsui, 1996; White & Lightbown, 1984; Yashima et al., 2004; Young, 1991). They also use shorter sentences (Phillips,1992), they are not as willing to communicate as their classmates and some of them may respond with traumatic reactions (MacIntyre, 1999). King (2014, p. 241) observes that one of the most common safety-seeking

strategies that socially anxious learners use is changing their seating position, as explained one of his interviewees:

> …usually sit at the back. Nobody goes to the front, they sit at the back instead. I don't have any other plan, I just sit at the back to avoid being asked a question in English, like translate something into Japanese.

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), it is common for these students to avoid activities in the class, sit at the back of the classroom, attending the class unprepared or even skip the class. Finally, arriving late and showing carelessness, a lack of eye contact and masking behaviours (e.g. nodding, joking, smiling) are some other symptoms of safety behaviours (Oxford, 1999).

2.4.2 Stage fright

Certain people in certain situations experience a debilitating fear-like emotion which not only reduces their productivity and the efficiency of their performance but also causes a great deal of uneasiness. They themselves do not fully understand why this happens, and they do not always experience it. This is specifically salient in foreign language use; however, there are also some very well-known areas where this kind of debilitating feeling is documented such as stage fright and test anxiety.

Stage fright is "the fear or anxiety a person experiences when one communicates orally in a situation where other individuals are in a position to observe and evaluate the communication attempt" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 79). MacIntyre (1998, p. 360) views it as a "dynamic event that revolves around fluctuations in individuals' perceptions of their own competency in public speaking

settings". Public speaking, singing or acting before an audience are some of the most common situations that make many people encounter stage fright.

It has been suggested that performers who experience stage fright attribute it to the feeling that they cannot perform as well as the audience would expect (Ayres, 1986). In addition to this audience-related perception, in a recent study, Bippus and Daly (2009) introduced a nine-factor model of stage fright, involving "humiliation, preparation, physical appearance, rigid rules, personality traits, audience interest, unfamiliar role, mistakes, and negative results" (p. 68). These factors are closely related to previous studies (Daly, 1991; Daly et al. 1989).

Individuals' inner speech is also claimed to play a key role in stage fright (Steptoe, 1982). Performers report that they are worried about distractions, technical problems and other's opinions. It is also argued that individuals with stage fright tend to perceive themselves as incapable, not as skilled as their friends and unworthy (ibid.). In one study (Daly et al., 1989), it was clearly shown that excessive self-attention is another reason causing the public speaking anxiety. Anxious speakers focus their attention excessively on themselves when speaking, reducing their attention toward audience and setting, and the consequence is a poor performance. Likewise, one of the tendencies of people experiencing stage fright is to have fixed assumptions regarding how a performance or a presentation should look like (Daly, 1991). Steptoe et al. (1995) carried out a survey with 178 participants and the data indicated some interesting results. Women were found to suffer from stage fright more than men did; however, stage fright was not age- or experience-related. Negative correlations between stage fright and extraversion were reported.

There are several negative symptoms of stage fright. Simmonds and Southcott (2012) assert that individuals with stage fright can experience rapid

breathing, temporary cognitive impairment, chest tightness, muscle tremors and dry mouth. Individuals facing stage fright tend to experience "the butterflies in their stomachs, the sweating palms, the racing heartbeat, the shaking hands" (Daly, 1991, p. 12). Cox (1993) reveals that one reason why individuals cannot perform up to their abilities is because these physiological symptoms occur before or during the performance.

Fehm and Schmidt (2006) lists a few techniques that have been proposed to cope with stage fright: hypnosis, massages, yoga, positive self-instruction, relaxation techniques, and special practicing techniques. Interestingly, researchers have found that when performers used relaxation and meditation techniques prior to their performances these techniques had no impact on the levels of stage fright (Steptoe et al., 1995). Instead, the most common strategy in dealing with the problem has been using drugs, particularly beta blockers (Fehm and Schmidt, 2006; Neftel et. al, 1982).

Stage fright in music and FLA share a few similar characteristics. When performing in solo situations, musicians experience higher levels of anxiety (Cox, 1993), whereas it is a common view in SLA that cooperative learning – that is, a learning context where no individual performance is required, has several benefits due to the fact that it increases participation and interaction, promotes peer feedback and reduces anxiety (Crandall, 1999). Cox (1993) also reports that musicians with more years of formal training are exposed to lower levels of anxiety. There is evidence that FLA levels off as the proficiency level increases (Deweale et al., 2008).

2.4.3 Test anxiety

Test anxiety has become a pervasive issue with the growing impact of examination in modern society. The competitive nature of the current age leads individuals to come

across test situations more often than ever in some aspects of daily life such as job applications or applying for educational programs. Test anxiety has been viewed in most existing research from two different perspectives: cognitive and behavioural.

From the cognitive perspective, test anxiety is interpreted as an undesirable variable that hinders the information processing capacity alongside various psychological and affective influences (Holroyd et al., 1978; Sarason & Sarason, 1990). According to some research, the characteristics of test anxiety share similarities with certain cognitive forms of anxiety (self-focused attention and cognitive preoccupation with failure, lack of confidence and feelings of inadequacy in test situations, negative performance expectations, ruminations over potential future consequences of failure, etc.) (Deffenbacher, 1980; Sarason, 1984; Sarason & Sarason, 1990). Eysenck (1979) states that test anxiety leads individuals to be surrounded by unrelated thoughts which occupy working memory channels, and therefore test-related knowledge might not be retrieved due to lack of capacity.

The behavioural domain of test anxiety is illustrated through examples of test-taking deficits and procrastination. Academic procrastination is the state of avoidance behaviour that takes place at the preparation level, resulting in individuals' tendency to postpone academic tasks. It is also claimed that that a test-anxious person shows various escape behaviours during the exam process. (Rothblum et al., 1986).

Examining the physiological aspect of test anxiety, Calvo and Alamo (1987) analysed participants` various body movements during test performance. In this study, finger and arm movements were analysed. The researchers found that individuals tend to have high levels of anxiety during high effort requiring tasks and that finger movements were observed to be impaired. Furthermore, dwelling on

Eysenck's view (1985), Calvo and Alamo (1987) assert that a relatively lower level of anxiety can facilitate performance.

Looking from a general perspective, test anxiety has been associated with several potential sources as triggering factors (Horwitz, 2001; Madsen, 1981; Neely and Shaughnessy, 1984; Rotenberg, 2002, Putwain, 2007). The sources can be divided into five categories:

1) Cultural background: examiner and language bias, inappropriate content, inequitable social consequences, inappropriate standardization samples, and differential predictive validity.
2) Test construct and test taking competence: Test validity, time limit, test length, testing environment and clarity of the test instructions, test techniques.
3) Language competence: Low proficiency levels, language learning history.
4) Environmental variables: The physical construction of the actual examination place.
5) Socio-demographic variables: Gender, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

It is apparent that test anxiety and performance are negatively correlated in educational evaluations such as university entrance exams or course examinations (Sarason, 1986). For example, in a large scale study in the USA, Chapell et al. (2005) investigated the links between test anxiety and performance with the participation of 5,551 undergraduate and postgraduate students and they documented that a significant but small negative correlation existed between the two. In test taking situations, language learners often report that they know the point but cannot remember it during the test (Horwitz et al., 1986). Aida (1994) investigated test anxiety in learning Japanese and she found that speech anxiety, test anxiety, negative

attitudes towards the class, and fear of failing were the main factors that hindered performance. Young (1986) analysed the effect of test anxiety on oral proficiency skills and she found that oral communication skills have more impact on oral test scores in comparison with test anxiety. On the other hand, Oh (1992) took a different step and investigated the three L2 reading assessment methods and their relationship with anxiety and the results show that both cloze and think-aloud processes contribute to anxiety.

Trying to offer new ways to hinder the negative effects of test anxiety, Powell (2004) applied a number of behavioural treatment methods (systematic desensitization, muscle relaxation, behavioural rehearsal, the self-control triad, and a psychoeducational component that involves error analysis and tactics for answering multiple choice questions) on 72 students of medicine who failed at least once in the professional examinations and he found that 93% of the participants eventually passed their tests.

2.5 Conclusion

Despite being one of the most widely researched topics for 30 years, there is still no generally acknowledged understanding of the notion of anxiety, and it has been viewed as an affective, cognitive, motivational or personality factor. Having a few linked characteristics to the concepts of fear, communication apprehension and willingness to communicate, anxiety can manifest itself in various situations with different symptoms. The literature suggests that the two most well-known situations are test anxiety and stage fright. Test anxiety can cause a great degree of uneasiness that could result in a reduced performance while stage fright can debilitate productivity and the efficiency of an individual's performance before an audience.

Additionally, anxiety is known to cause a wide range of physiological, academic, emotional, cognitive and social symptoms.

It is also noteworthy to mention that due to the recent developments in a dynamic systems approach, the trait-state anxiety distinction seems to be disappearing even though this early division has been useful for understanding different types of anxiety. With regard to another division of various forms of anxiety, facilitating/debilitating anxiety, Horwitz (2010; 2017) draws attention to danger of misinterpreting facilitating anxiety by trying to make an individual a little anxious for a better performance.

3. Foreign language anxiety

3.1 Introduction

Anxiety is a concept about which significant differences of opinion exist. Some people believe that anxiety is hardly more than an excuse for not participating in class and that it is being used to mask a lack of study. According to others, anxiety underlies the whole affective process of language learning, and once students are relaxed, immediate positive results will follow (MacIntyre, 1999). The term "language anxiety", which refers to the specific feeling of unease experienced by some individuals when using or learning a foreign language, has been distinguished from other types of anxiety, but few of these distinctions led to a definition which goes beyond the fact that it is "language"-related anxiety.

In spite of a considerable amount of research since the concept of foreign language anxiety was first introduced, researchers have not arrived at consistent results or come to a consensus concerning the relationship between general anxiety and language learning. Thus, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994a) suggest that what the field of language anxiety still requires is a unique definition so as to obtain a pattern which could provide consistent results. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1994b), foreign language anxiety is "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with L2 contexts, including speaking, listening and learning" (p. 284). Horwitz et al. (1986), on the other hand, describe it as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128).

Having provided two of the best-known definitions of foreign language anxiety, this chapter briefly explains the causes of language anxiety and presents an

overview of the development of language anxiety research in the last four decades. This chapter also summarizes the specific work of three distinct scholars in the field: Elaine K. Horwitz, Peter D. MacIntyre and Jean-Marc Dewaele.

3.2 Causes of language anxiety

In a foreign language class, students can sometimes feel as though they were literally in a foreign country. Many students do not always move comfortably in a foreign language framework, and for those students almost anything can become unsettling very quickly. Therefore, to gain a deeper understanding, it is necessary to investigate some of the potential sources of language anxiety; these sources can be categorized into three groups: *academic, cognitive and social.*

Academic causes consist of unrealistic learner beliefs, pronunciation errors as well as the teacher's manner and instructional methods (Gregersen, 2003; Young, 1999a). Littlewood (1984) highlights the fact that providing a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere in language classrooms is the most crucial issue for teachers, as students are more prone to experiencing anxiety during oral expression. So as to illustrate how an instructor can provoke anxiety, Young (1991, p. 428) claims that the "instructors who believe their role is to correct students constantly when they make any error, who feel that they cannot have students 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" might trigger or contribute to FLA. Additionally, Tsui (1995) posits that the type of error correction should depend on the learners' competence as well as their personalities. Low level learners tend to produce erroneous expressions, and if they are very shy, providing a relaxing atmosphere is more crucial for them than correcting the errors, as error correction practiced in a harsh or overly critical

manner, as Young (1991) highlights, is one of the factors which can provoke anxiety most. It is essential for language practitioners to reconsider their interactions with students. Teachers should let students know about their developmental stages in language learning, in order that they can set realistic and achievable goals and can be aware of their own development. Examining teachers' perceptions of the factors triggering their students' reticence, Tsui (1996) introduces five such factors: low English proficiency in students, teachers' intolerance to silence, students' fear of making mistakes, the uneven questioning of students, and lastly students misunderstanding instructions. The literature suggests a number of guidelines for teachers to consider in order to reduce anxiety levels (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2013; Horwitz et al., 1986; Price, 1991; Young, 1991):

- Creation of student support systems
- Focussing on meaning rather than accuracy
- Altering teaching methodology and techniques as well as the context
- Sensitive error correction
- Encouraging the reconsideration of unrealistic expectations
- Encouraging small group activities
- Cooperating with external counsellors or therapists on severe occasions

Excessive studying can also pose problems. While it is not clear whether too much studying is a source or a symptom of FLA, Horwitz et al. (1986) suggest that "students who are overly concerned about their performance may become so anxious when they make errors, they may attempt to compensate by studying even more.

Their frustration is understandable when their compulsive effort does not lead to improved grades" (p. 126-127).

Cognitive sources of FLA include students' personality traits, low self-esteem and the fear of losing a positive sense of identity, as well as biased perceptions of proficiency (MacIntyre, 2017). There is evidence that students believe they should not speak until they can produce the highest possible quality speech and that it is not acceptable to guess the unknown vocabulary in the target language (Horwitz et al., 1986). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) state that anxiety is often triggered by negative-self thoughts, and that these self-thoughts consume the cognitive energy which is required for task completion. Personality traits such as neuroticism (Dewaele 2002; 2013) and perfectionism (Dewaele, 2017; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002) have also been found to trigger anxiety.

Fear of being laughed at, competitiveness and misunderstood communication could be listed under *social* causes of anxiety, as they disrupt the conditions for learning (MacIntyre 1991a, 2017). It was shown that cultural factors, and the educational system, also have influences on FLA (Liu, 2006). According to Woodrow (2006), Chinese, Korean and Japanese learners suffer more from FLA compared to some other ethnic groups. As Dewaele (2007) points out, FLA could also be related to situational factors aside from sociobiographical and affective factors; he submits that FLA levels differ depending on the situations involving the specific interaction, since individuals find it less-anxiety provoking to talk to their friends privately as compared to talking to strangers.

Thus, "FLA is an enigma that merits being cracked because the potential of anxiety to interfere with learning and performance is one of the most accepted phenomena in psychology and education" (Horwitz, 2000, p.256). Even though some

people are more inclined towards anxiety, when, how, and to what extent it develops depends on multiple factors which will be explained in the following chapters.

3.3 Development of language anxiety research

In the last four decades, there has been noteworthy growth in research on affect, and language anxiety has been the one of the most heavily studied emotions among the numerous affective variables in second language acquisition, perhaps because of its intensity and frequency (Dewaele et al.,2017; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Horwitz et al.,1986, Horwitz, 2010; MacIntyre, 2017). Accordingly, the research literature on language anxiety has witnessed a steady progression over the years. In this section, I will follow MacIntyre's (2017) classification of anxiety research, which will assist in organising this progression and the assumptions about the topic.

3.3.1 Confounded phase

Scovel's seminal review of the literature on anxiety and second language achievement in 1978 suggested contradictory results, primarily stemming from the first studies into the effects of anxiety (Chastain, 1975; Kleinmann,1977). As a result, Scovel (1978) concluded 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" (p. 132). The main problem for researchers then was to define and measure both anxiety and the aspects of language acquisition and the measures adapted from traditional psychology to be used in language research was not very useful for the language itself (MacIntyre, 2017). Scovel (1978) also discussed trait and state anxiety as well as the distinction between facilitating and debilitating anxiety. Facilitating anxiety has not received much research focus in psychology; however, trait/state discrimination has proven to be a very popular topic for research (see Chapter 2).

3.3.2 The specialised approach

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) seminal paper introduced a construct of anxiety which was specific to the language learning context. Because language anxiety concerns performance evaluation, Horwitz et al. (1986) drew parallels between language anxiety and three performance-related anxieties: *communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation*. Horwitz (2017) argued that some authors had misunderstood the unity of these concepts by referring to them as the pure components of foreign language classroom anxiety.

Horwitz et al. (1986) developed a 33-item instrument, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which has been widely used in FLA studies (see Horwitz, 2010). In the same year, Horwitz (1986) published the first article using FLCAS, and the results showed significant correlations between FLCAS, trait anxiety, communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation. At this stage, language anxiety was labelled as "situation-specific" as it could be differentiated from a generally anxious personality and a momentous feeling of being anxious (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). This allowed researchers to develop situation-specific scales, and upon examining nine of those scales, MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) drew a distinction between the dimensions of general anxiety and communicative anxiety, with communicative anxiety including measures of language anxiety, a measure of audience sensitivity and a measure of native language speaking anxiety. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994b) then incorporated 29 measures of L2 and L1 performance across three stages of cognitive processing. Trying to be very specific about the types of anxiety experienced, they defined three new scales which measure language anxiety at the input, processing and output stages.

FLCAS has also been refined to measure anxiety in different skills areas, such as reading (Saito et al.,1999), writing (Hilleson, 1996), and listening (e.g., Elkhafaifi, 2005), while another body of research, predominantly by Jean-Marc Dewaele and colleagues, explored broader learner factors in relation to anxiety, such as age (Dewaele, 2013), gender (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014), psychotism (Dewaele, 2002), perfectionism (Dewaele, 2017; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002), emotional intelligence (Dewaele et al.,2008), neuroticism (Dewaele, 2002, Dewaele & Al Saraj, 2015), extraversion (Dewaele, 2002; Dewaele & Al Saraj, 2015), social class (Dewaele, 2002) and education level (Dewaele, 2013).

Adopting a qualitative perspective, Spielmann and Radnofsky's (2001) study involved adult students enrolled in an intensive French language course. Observing patterns of behaviour in the students, the researchers suggested that in the dynamic process of language learning, the euphoric (beneficial) tension was linked to one's "perceived opportunity to reinvent oneself successfully in the target language" (p. 274). One of the most interesting findings of this study was that learners were reported to be performing with a different personality, or as they termed it, "masking" their actual personality.

Several other researchers focussed on the impact of gender on language anxiety. For example, Matsuda and Gobel (2004) conducted a study in Japan with university students majoring in English. The study focused on the possible effects of both an overseas experience and gender on foreign language classroom anxiety and foreign language reading anxiety. The researchers concluded that while the overseas experience pointed towards a lower anxiety level, gender had no significant effect on the anxiety constructs (reading or/and speaking confidence); the central predictors of classroom performance were language proficiency, self-confidence and student

participation. Dewaele et al. (2016) also focussed on gender differences in foreign language enjoyment and anxiety. The researchers found that female learners were having more fun in the foreign language classroom although they experienced higher levels of anxiety than male peers. The results also showed that, comparing to their male peers, the female learners worried more about their mistakes showing less confidence.

Elkhafaifi (2005) investigated the issue of language anxiety and listening anxiety in undergraduate and graduate students of Arabic as a foreign language. The results are mainly connected to the period of time spent learning the language and the gender of the learners (females turned out to be more prone to anxiety than males). Students with higher language anxiety and listening anxiety had lower listening comprehension grades, and thus the study concludes by stating that listening anxiety is connected to, but different from, overall language anxiety.

In a recent paper, Oxford (2017) brushed up our knowledge explaining how traditional psychology and positive psychology treated anxiety. Apart from that, one of the very few studies drawing on pedagogical implications of anxiety reducing techniques was Ewald's (2007) investigation. Qualitatively analysing data obtained from Spanish language students, Ewald found that anxiety had a negative effect on the performance of the advanced language learners. The students were acting as co-researchers, and consequently the study focused not so much on the level of success, as on the personal experiences of the students with anxiety (e.g. engagement with the course, confidence, effect of classmates and teachers, classroom practices, and potential personal unrealistic expectations). With the teacher playing a key role in producing or relieving anxiety, this study developed the pedagogical implications of the matter, and offered specific suggestions as to how teachers could help to manage

their upper-level language students' anxiety, stressing the importance of involving students in language research projects, as this can be beneficial both for teaching and for research practices.

In a study involving 574 first year undergraduate non-English majors from Beijing, Liu and Jackson (2008) highlighted the correlation between FLA and students' unwillingness to communicate, and revealed the relationship between the fear of being negatively assessed, increased speaking apprehension and anxiety towards tests. Thus, the willingness of students to communicate was shown to be directly dependent on the students' FL anxiety levels, their self-rated English proficiency and the access they had to the foreign language.

Finally, Marcos-Llinas and Garau (2009) examined the effects of anxiety on achievement in different foreign language proficiency levels in Spanish. The levels of anxiety differed across proficiency levels and the results revealed that advanced learners of Spanish experienced higher levels of anxiety. This, however, did not necessarily result in lower course achievement, and in that way the study tapped into facilitative anxiety.

3.3.3 A dynamic approach to understanding L2 anxiety

Language anxiety has widely been identified as an emotion which mostly has a debilitating effect on L2 learning. Since the initial proposal of language anxiety, the results have been replicated worldwide in different settings with different participants. Yet, 30 years after their seminal study, Horwitz (2016) still emphasizes that “it has not been clear whether FLA is a single anxiety or a suite of anxieties” (p.72). It should be safe to say that “anxiety is continuously interacting with a number of other learner, situational and other factors including linguistic abilities, physiological reactions, self-related appraisals, pragmatics, interpersonal

relationships, specific topics being discussed, type of setting in which people are interacting and so on" (MacIntyre, 2017, p. 23). As a result, a new tradition is beginning to situate anxiety as a phenomenon which involves multiple factors that interact with one another and affect language learning. As de Bot et al. (2007) argues about SLA research in general, "we can no longer work with simple cause-and-effect models in which the outcome can be predicted, but we must use case studies to discover relevant sub-systems and simulate the processes" (p. 19).

A dynamic approach promises to broaden the focus of language anxiety research for several reasons. First, apart from the social and interpersonal context of the surrounding environment, the psychological context of the learner (including physiological and emotional states) can be involved in dynamic studies. Second, a dynamic view allows for the consideration of both an emphasis on the interactions of multiple factors which affect anxiety, and the ongoing interactions among various learner characteristics. Lastly, a dynamic approach makes it possible to locate fluctuations of anxiety in time (MacIntyre, 2017). The literature suggests a number of studies in which researchers employed the dynamics of learner states as the main research paradigm (Gregersen et al., 2014; MacIntyre & Serroul, 2015; Waninge, 2015).

From a broader perspective, the emergence of a dynamic approach in anxiety can be regarded as one of the natural outcomes stemming from the challenges to the classic individual difference (ID) research paradigm. These challenges were argued by Dörnyei (2009), who pointed out that IDs were traditionally viewed as distinctly definable, stable, forming relatively monolithic components, and learner-internal.

> When we look more closely, individual learner characteristics are not stable but show salient temporal and situational variation, and neither are they distinct and monolithic but involve, instead, complex constellations made up of different parts that interact with each other and the environment synchronically and diachronically.
>
> (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p.6)

As Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) highlight, we cannot see the ID factors as fully stable and distinct modules which were common to all people unlike the classic ID paradigm. With this in mind, it is worth embracing a recent and influential theory of individual differences, the New Big Five model (McAdams, 2006; McAdams & Pals, 2006). McAdams's theory will be described in more detail in Chapter 8, so only the core aspects of his construct will be highlighted here.

McAdams' Theory of Personality

Personality factors have long been seen as key aspects of how we understand variation in individual performance, and personality traits have also been registered as some of the main contributors to anxiety (e.g. Beatty & McCroskey, 2009; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; MacIntyre, 1999; Young, 1991). The most dominant personality construct of today, McCrae and Costa's "Big Five" model, includes five personality dimensions – extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience – and within this construct anxiety is one of the primary facets of the "neuroticism" dimension (Costa & McCrae, 1994; Goldberg, 1993; McCrae & Costa, 2003, 2008; McCrae & John, 1992). This component of anxiety is normally equated with trait anxiety (Eysenck, 1997), and Goldberg (1993) suggests that people with a high level of trait anxiety often experience nervousness or general emotional impairment across a range of

situations. This, however, leaves the issue of state anxiety open, which is the point where McAdams's approach becomes relevant. In his "New Big Five" model (McAdams, 2006a, 2006b; McAdams & Pals, 2006), he proposes a three-tiered conceptual framework consisting of *dispositional traits*, *characteristic adaptations* and *integrative life narratives*. That is, the new model views the overall personality of the individual as the interaction of three different levels, with each explaining psychological individuality using its own discourse (see Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015):

Dispositional traits involve personality features, such as extraversion, neuroticism, friendliness, dominance, dutifulness and depressiveness, that is, attributes that tend to be relatively stable across situations and over time; essentially we are talking here about the main components of the Big Five model. These traits act as the foundation of human individuality and provide a signature that an individual expresses in a variety of circumstances over a long stretch of time.

Characteristic adaptations refer to context-dependent constructs containing "motives, goals, plans, strivings, strategies, values, virtues, schemas, self-images, mental representations of significant others, developmental tasks, and many other aspects of human individuality" (McAdams & Pals, 2006, p. 208). This domain has been the primary focus of the classic individual difference paradigm. In comparison with traits, characteristic adaptations fit better into the social nature of everyday life, as they are enacted in the light of, and are also moulded by, the ordinary demands of social situations. However, it should be noted that due to the fact that specific situations may collate with several different characteristic adaptations and thereby result in compositions of more general learner characteristics, "the distinction between dispositional trait and characteristic adaptation may not be perfectly clear in every case" (McAdams & Pals, 2006: 208); for example, an individual's anxiety

tendencies can manifest in specific forms of anxieties, a point that we will return to later.

What makes McAdams's model genuinely integrative is the third level of the construct, *integrative life narratives,* which involves the "narrative identity" that individuals create for themselves to help to define who they are, to connect with others, and ultimately to make sense of their lives and regulate their behaviour. Narrative identity can be defined as "a person's internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose" (McAdams & McLean, 2013, p. 233). The significance of the concept lies in the assumption that individuals compose and comprehend their experiences as narratives to a large extent (e.g. excuses, explanations, myths or stories), and these narratives then turn into the underpinnings of individuals' self-concept. Indeed, self-narratives are not just stories about what happened in a specific time and spot; they also provide both an assessment of past occasions in relation to the self and a feeling of transient progression (Bruner, 1990; Habermas & Bluck, 2000).

An *L2 narrative identity* is described by Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, p.202) as "the specific aspect of an individual's ongoing internal narrative that relates to learning and using a second/foreign language", which integrates past L2-related experiences and future goals. The unique practical importance of the third level of McAdams's model lies in the fact that this is the component which humans can control the most, because its relationship with the overall framework is bidirectional: narrative identity not only unifies the personality system but also applies a developmental impact to it. Accordingly, shaping the life narrative can lead to shaping the whole mindset.

Conceiving anxiety in terms of a dynamic combination of three relatively distinct elements might offer a more nuanced understanding of how anxiety affects the learners' performance across various communication situations, language tasks, content areas and contextual conditions when compared to the traditional dichotomy of trait and state anxiety. The novel aspect of McAdams's model is the elevation of learner narratives to an identity-dimension status, that is, viewing the way learners form cohesive verbal accounts of their relevant experiences as an integral part of the overall holistic anxiety construct.

3.4 Horwitz's research

3.4.1 Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's study

FLA took a huge step forward and moved into a different era thanks to a seminal paper by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope in 1986. As mentioned briefly earlier, in their framework, Horwitz et al. (1986) drew on three related areas of language anxiety: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. They defined the first component, communication apprehension, as "a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people" (p. 127), and argued that the manifestations of this kind of apprehension could manifest in several ways; as "difficulty in speaking in dyads groups (oral communication anxiety) or in public (stage fright), or in listening to or learning a spoken message (receiver anxiety)" (ibid). Communication apprehension, which especially impacts foreign language learning particularly negatively, derives from the personal belief that one will not easily understand others and make oneself understood. In language classrooms where students are often asked to speak during communicative tasks and where a teacher constantly monitors these performances, communication apprehension is to be expected to act as a major issue which causes several problems,

such as reticence, producing limited or hesitant speech or passive behaviour in general.

Fear of negative evaluation, which refers to the "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively" is the second component related to FLA (Watson & Friend, 1969, p. 449). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) support the idea that fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension are interrelated. For example, if learners are unsure about what they are going to say in response to a question in the classroom, or when they are about to perform a task, they may experience fear of negative evaluation. It is documented that learners who experience fear of negative evaluation experience higher levels of anxiety in comparison to their peers, and these learners also tend to hold the belief that they are less competent (Kitano, 2001). As a result, this situation can cause an unwillingness to take part in activities or withdrawal from interactions (Young, 1991; Aida, 1994).

Lastly, test anxiety refers to the sense of failure related to performance evaluation. Test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation may seem similar concepts, yet fear of negative evaluation is a broader term, as it is not limited to tests only, and it may be experienced in any social situation, such as job interviews or speaking activities in the classroom. Because performance evaluation is one of the components of language classes, Horwitz et al. (1986) assert that it is relevant to FLA. Regardless of their proficiency level, almost any student may experience test anxiety, and when they do, they tend to place impractical demands on themselves and reject any result that is not a perfect score. It can also be understood that test anxiety could fluctuate depending on the test format or question type – as Young (1991) claims, "in language testing, the greater degree of student evaluation and the more unfamiliar

and ambiguous the test and formats, the more the learner anxiety is produced" (p. 429). In addition, oral exams can provoke both communication apprehension and test anxiety.

Horwitz et al. (1986) emphasise that all three areas are proposed to provide elements which can be used to describe FLA, and it should not be assumed that FLA is simply the combination of these components, as it is a much more complex phenomenon. Few writers challenged this claim, but the idea that test anxiety was also involved in this framework received some criticism. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) argued that communication apprehension and test anxiety were not linked, and they went on to also assert that test anxiety was not language-specific but was part of general anxiety. Similarly, Aida (1994), after replicating Horwitz et al.'s (1896) study and finding inconsistent results, argued that test anxiety was not language-specific and suggested replacing the test anxiety component with some other FLA related factor, such as fear of failing the class, talking to native speakers confidently or negative attitudes towards the language class.

3.4.2 Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

One of Horwitz et al.'s biggest contribution to FLA research (1986) is an instrument that every researcher in the field will be familiar with: the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Horwitz et al. (1986) expressed that they developed this instrument by considering the difficulties that 225 language learners at the University of Texas experienced while participating in a support group for foreign language learning. Students reported that they experienced a sort of "freezing" as well as many other anxiety-related psycho-physiological symptoms. This five point Likert-scale type instrument consisted of 33 items which focussed on

communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, and the scale demonstrated internal reliability by an alpha coefficient of .93.

3.4.3 After 1986

Saito, Horwitz and Garza (1999) introduced the construct of foreign language reading anxiety and presented a scale for use in its assessment (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale, FLRAS). In the same paper they also reported their findings regarding a preliminary study which investigated general language anxiety and foreign language reading anxiety of students of French, Russian and Japanese, and argued that reading in a foreign language could provoke anxiety. Moreover, it was shown that levels of reading anxiety could vary depending on the target language. Sparks et al. (2000) have taken issue with Saito, Horowitz and Garza's study, stating that students with poor L1 skills naturally experience L2 reading anxiety as they tend to assess their general reading skills. Horwitz (2000) conceded that poor L1 skills might trigger anxiety but she also highlighted that reading in L2 requires more than simple decoding skills.

In 2001, Horwitz examined the literature on language learning anxiety so as to define its relationship with achievement. She concluded that it was difficult to determine whether anxiety interfered with learning, and thus effected achievement

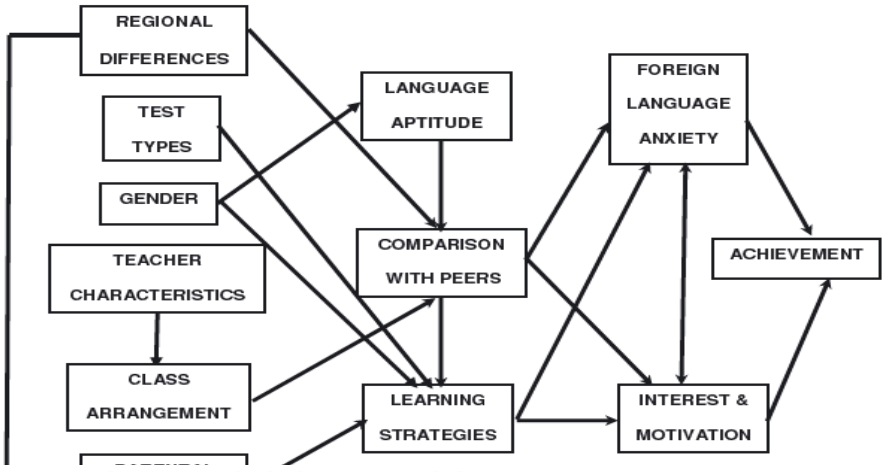


Figure 5 - The grounded-theory model (Yan & Horwitz, 2008, p. 170)

levels of anxious individuals or whether anxious learners experienced difficulty retrieving the language input they had attained. Later, in order to investigate anxiety from the learners' perspective, Yan and Horwitz (2008) carried out a qualitative study in China. The study involved 21 high-, moderate- , and low-anxious students from different course levels. After a three-step analysis, Yan and Horwitz generated the theoretical model presented in Figure 5 and suggested that the interaction of several factors involved in the language learning of these students accounted for their perceived overall anxiety.

Last but not least, teacher anxiety is another issue that Horwitz (1996) has investigated. She argued that anxiety influenced teachers' usage of the target language, self-confidence and instructional preferences. Furthermore, she submitted, non-native teachers tend to suffer from anxiety "because complex and nonspontaneous mental operations are required to communicate at all, [and so] any performance in the L2 is likely to challenge an individual's self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic", and this could in turn result in decreased communication opportunities in the classroom as well as increased student anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128).

3.5 MacIntyre's research

Peter MacIntyre has conducted a large number of experiments either by himself or in cooperation with Robert Gardner investigating various components of anxiety until he turned his primary focus onto WTC. MacIntyre and Gardner reviewed Horwitz et al.'s (1986) seminal paper in 1989, and while also reviewing other theoretical constructs and various analyses of eleven different anxiety measures, they confirmed that communicative anxiety was actively involved in French vocabulary acquisition and it was different to the general anxiety factor. Communicative anxiety was also

found to affect learning and performance, while performance could have an impact on state anxiety. In this regard, MacIntyre and Gardner showed that it was a specific type of anxiety that was linked to language learning, and that L2 performance was negatively correlated with FLA, but not with general anxiety.

Two years later, the results were replicated by examining 23 scales which were used to measure both language anxiety and other types of anxieties (e.g. trait anxiety, state anxiety, math anxiety, interpersonal anxiety, communication apprehension, novelty anxiety, audience anxiety, French test anxiety, French use and French classroom anxiety). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) reaffirmed that language anxiety was different from social evaluative and state anxiety types. It was also shown that students found French L2 tasks more anxiety-provoking than tasks in English (their first language). As highly anxious learners experienced impaired performances on vocabulary production tests, the researchers argued that one problem caused by anxiety could be issues with long-term memory retrieval.

Elaborating on Tobias's (1979, 1986) model, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994a) carried out another experiment in which they introduced a video camera to 71 students, who were assigned to one of four groups at random, at certain moments in a vocabulary task. The results indicated that anxiety was at its highest immediately after the introduction of the camera in each group and that the group which experienced anxiety the most recently showed lower achievement. Moreover, specific vocabulary deficits were reported in each stage and it was shown that language anxiety was not a function of poor performance deriving from poor cognitive skills.

In another study conducted in the same year, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994b) carried on investigating cognitive processes in terms of input, processing and output

stages with the participation of 97 students. Six different anxiety measures were used: Input Anxiety, Processing Anxiety, Output Anxiety, French Class Anxiety, French Use Anxiety and FLCAS. Three tasks were given to the participants in each stage and data collection was completed in two steps; one allocated for filling out the questionnaires, and the other for individual testing sessions. Rather than presenting each stage separately, MacIntyre and Gardner attempted to show the interrelation of the stages. The results suggested that anxiety was associated with poor performance in all the stages, with some stronger links observed at the processing and output stages. It was found that increased effort in the processing stage decreased the anxiety level at the output stage. On the other hand, findings related to stage-specific tasks and situational anxiety also indicated that language anxiety could be both omnipresent and elusive at the same time.

Presenting recursive relations among anxiety, cognition and behaviour (see Figure 2), MacIntyre (1995) has stated that "cognitive performance is diminished because of the divided attention and therefore performance suffers, leading to negative self-evaluations and more self-deprecating cognition which further impairs performance and so on" (p. 92). Even though Ehrman (1996) addresses those behaviours as "defence mechanisms" and asserts that students behave in such a manner in order to balance their emotional states, it is quite logical to perceive anxiety as a cyclical process as language itself; in Ellis' (2007, p. 23) words, it is a "complex dynamic system where cognitive, social and environmental factors continuously interact".

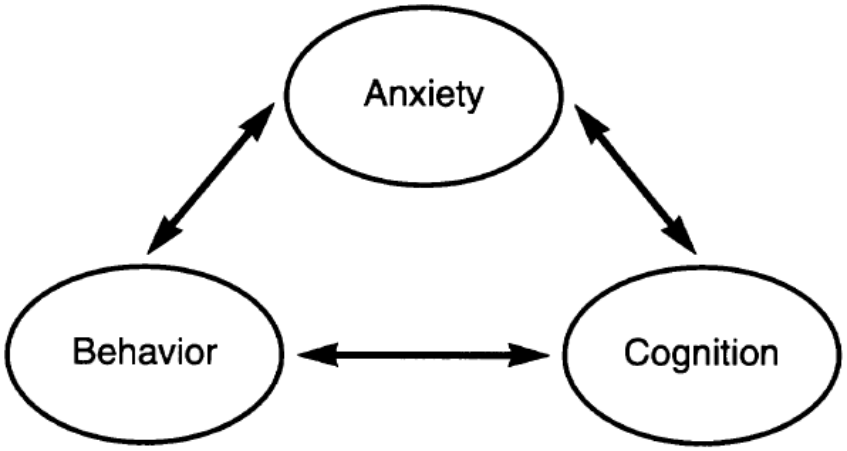


Figure 6 - Recursive relations among anxiety, cognition, and behaviour (MacIntyre, 1995, p. 93)

3.5.1 Anxometer

With a strong resemblance to the Fear Thermometer by Walk (1956), the Anxometer is a thermometer shaped measure which was designed by MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a). This basic thermometer shape is labelled “high” at the top and “low” at the bottom. Participants are asked to think about certain experiences such as worries or nervousness at a given time and then they are instructed to mark their level of anxiety by drawing a horizontal line on the Anxometer. The Anxometer is a practical way of measuring individuals’ level of anxiety and it has been used in many studies so far (Gardner et al., 2004; Khan, 2010; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991b).

3.5.2 Idiodynamic research

The idiodynamic method is a recent issue in research on anxiety and WTC adapted by MacIntyre (2012) from Rosenzweig’s (1986) work on personality. In the idiodynamic method, a communication activity (e.g. an oral interview or public presentation) is recorded. Upon the completion of the activity, individuals watch these activities and assess their own performances, or sometimes another

individuals', using special software designed for the study. After receiving an immediate printed graph, the individuals are interviewed using stimulated recall so that they can elaborate on the thoughts underlying their ratings. This retrospective interview is also recorded for a secondary analysis.

3.6 Dewaele's research

Jean-Marc Dewaele's extensive research on personality factors, their relationship to anxiety, and the functions of emotions has extended the field of language anxiety considerably, both by focussing on negatively associated emotions and by also highlighting enjoyable and pleasurable aspects inherent within the language learning process.

In an early study, Dewaele (2002) examined three personality factors – extraversion, psychoticism and neuroticism – and investigated their links to communicative anxiety. His purpose was to identify the extent to which language anxiety constituted a stable personality trait in advanced learners of second (French) and third language (English). The results suggested no significant correlation between the three personality factors and anxiety in French language learning, yet, lower levels of anxiety were observed in students with higher levels of extraversion and psychoticism. Dewaele investigated the same three personality traits and their links to language anxiety in the second, third and fourth languages of two groups of adult language learners in 2013. This time, correlation analyses revealed a significant relationship between neuroticism and language anxiety in both test groups. The importance of Dewaele's (2013) study lies in the fact that it demonstrated results that ran counter to the accepted view that language anxiety and trait anxiety were independent constructs (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989).

In addition to the finding that lower levels of L2 tolerance of ambiguity were linked to higher levels of anxiety (Dewaele & Shan Ip, 2013), Deweale et al. (2008) also investigated emotional intelligence by conducting a study and analysing a sample of multilinguals acting in five different situations in up to four languages. Considering the effects of trait emotional intelligence and sociobiographical variables on communicative anxiety in the first language, as well as language anxiety in the second, third and fourth languages, the study indicated that the participants who knew more languages displayed lower levels of anxiety. Trait emotional intelligence was shown to be inversely related to anxiety levels. The variables reflecting current language use and past linguistic history were also found to positively affect levels of anxiety, and self-perceived proficiency was negatively linked to levels of anxiety. In a recent study that built upon Gregersen and Horwitz's (2002) findings from a small sample, Dewaele (2016) observed a positive correlation between perfectionism and language anxiety.

Finally, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) have given us an insight into the interrelationship of foreign language enjoyment and anxiety. An analysis of a 21-item scale representing positive emotions towards learning, teacher and peers and an eight-item scale representing language anxiety suggested that foreign language enjoyment and anxiety were independent emotions.

3.7 Conclusion

Having reviewed the causes of language anxiety and the main trends in the language anxiety literature, it is clear that anxiety research underwent rapid progress after it was labelled as a situations-specific form of anxiety in Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) ground-breaking study. Until the early 2000s, Elaine Horwitz and Peter D. MacIntyre took the pioneering steps to define and expand the boundaries of language

anxiety research, and there were ongoing arguments surrounding the facilitative nature of anxiety. Later on, the literature mostly relied on the replication of the early studies as well as examining more applied areas within SLA such as reading/listening/writing skills studies. Over the past 15 years however, Jean-Marc Dewaele's extensive research on personality and emotional factors, and MacIntyre and Gregersen's studies on dynamic changes transformed the field.

4 Overcoming anxiety

4.1 Introduction

Anxiety is a natural human reaction that individuals all experience throughout their lives, and which sometimes provokes avoidance of certain situations due to potentially threatening circumstances. Anxiety disorders are linked with considerable practical impairment in various aspects of life. Fortunately, there are several evidence-based treatment options available that have been examined in several reviews and meta-analyses (e.g., Fedoroff & Taylor, 2001; Ougrin, 2011; Ponniah & Hollon, 2008; Powers et al., 2008).

During the 1980s and 1990s there were substantial advances in treating anxiety, parallel to the rapid development in cognitive-behavioural and exposure therapies which can be classified as the traditional treatments for anxiety. Also, there are a number of alternative ways to combat anxiety, including mental imagery, narrative therapy, medication, and lifestyle remedies. This chapter focuses on these different approaches and techniques which are known to have been effective in various treatment studies targeting anxiety, as well as in treating fear, panic disorders and depression.

4.2 Traditional treatment

4.2.1 Cognitive behavioural therapy

According to Beck (1987), automatic thoughts, dysfunctional assumptions and negative self-statements are typical causes of psychological difficulties. He further highlights that misevaluation of ongoing and past experiences lead to a negative view of the self as a “loser”; therefore, the internalised view of the outside world becomes

frustrating and the view of the future becomes an uninspired blank page. This cognitive triad may result in negative internal expressions or beliefs such as:

> I am inadequate, undesirable, worthless.
>
> The world makes too many demands on me and life represents constant defeat.
>
> Life will always involve the suffering and deprivation it has for me now.
>
> (Pervin et al., 2005, p. 480)

Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) has been widely acknowledged as an effective way to identify distorted conceptualisations and treat dysfunctional beliefs (Beck, 1993; Jarrett et al., 1999; Wright, 2003). CBT is generally delivered in 15 to 25 sessions at weekly intervals and aims to teach the patient how to monitor negative thoughts, how to examine the cause and effect relationship between emotions and interpretations of life situations and finally how to substitute these automatic thoughts with more realistic and positive interpretations.

From a historical perspective, CBT has arisen from three diverse approaches. The first dwells on Ellis's (1958) seminal paper on rational psychotherapy which suggests that emotional disorders could be improved by altering one's thinking. The second is Meichenbaum's (1977) self-verbalisation principle which highlights the importance of internal dialogues in coping with tense situations such as test anxiety. Lastly, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of anxiety possess heightened expectations of harm, Beck and his colleagues' (1974) cognitive concept of anxiety serves as the third approach. In light of this general approach, several frameworks have emerged in order to form cognitive interventions for anxiety (Clark, 1999; Hollon & Beck, 2013). The majority of well-documented anxiety treatments pertain

to general CBT interventions, and treatment manuals contrast substantially in regards to the extent which intervention (behavioural vs. cognitive) is used. However, the common aim is to focus on relief from symptoms and reduction of emotional distress by helping individuals to detect and change their biased thinking through the application of specific techniques which involve systematic desensitization, worry exposure, applied relaxation, problem solving, interpersonal skills training, and scheduling (Hollon & Beck, 2013; Rygh & Sanderson, 2004).

The first behavioural therapy can be traced back to Pavlov's fundamental study on conditioning. His work on salivary reflexes has inspired many new studies, and it offered an experimental paradigm in abnormal behaviour research (Rachman, 2015). The merging of cognitive concepts into therapy was inspired by a desire among therapists to pay more attention to the humanistic needs of individuals. In particular, the studies of Clark (1986) and Salkovskis (1985) provided a bridge which linked behaviour therapy and cognitive therapy together. Whether pure cognitive therapy or a combination of both cognitive and behavioural interventions is superior is a debatable issue on which researchers have different opinions and results (Hollon & Beck, 2013; Longmore & Worrell, 2007; Ougrin, 2011). Many studies comparing cognitive therapy and CBT without cognitive restructuring for specific disorders do not indicate an increase in efficacy when cognitive restructuring is added to pure exposure-based treatments (Deacon & Abramowitz, 2004; Powers et al., 2008; Sánchez-Meca et al., 2010).

CBT is regarded as the most suitable choice for most anxiety-related disorders (Hollon & Beck, 2013). In a large-scale study, it was shown that CBT could be as effective as pharmacotherapy at treating moderate to severe depression (DeRubeis et al., 2005). A recent meta-analysis indicated that the effects of CBT for

anxiety show similar impact levels as in routine clinical settings (Stewart & Chambless, 2009). There are several evidence-based advantages of cognitive-behavioural treatment which have been demonstrated, such as:

- Fewer side effects (van Straten et al., 2010)
- Not necessarily inducing resistance (Leykin et al., 2007).
- Resulting in a better long-term achievement (Spielmans, et al., 2011)

Investigating some sequential approaches to improve treatment gains, researchers suggest that CBT can be a powerful option for individuals with panic disorders who do not respond to medication treatment (Heldt et al., 2006; Otto et al., 1999). Additionally, it is reported that individuals describe cognitive-behavioural activities as user friendly when compared to other therapies, and it is therefore often associated with lower drop-out rates (Sheldon, 1995).

Whilst there are clear advantages to CBT, there are also several problems with this type of treatment. For example, individuals might find it difficult to engage in flexible cognitive processes and challenge their automatic thoughts regarding anxiety due to a lack of motivation, or simply having become too accustomed to those automatic thoughts to be able to change them. In this case, therapists could generate some neutral alternatives such as listing good things and bad things about a sunny day. Once individuals begin to succeed with the neutral topics, then they could be prompted to progress onto challenging their own thoughts (Newman, 2000). When CBT is used in the setting of anxiety, individuals might need additional sessions to fully recover because they may think that talking, thinking or writing about their anxiety will only make the situation worse. Therapists should make sure that they explain the rationale of the treatment clearly and that individuals fully understand it (Hazlett-Stevens, 2008; Smits et al., 2012). On the other hand, as

Blazer (1997) suggests, therapists should also consider memory training when treating the elderly in addition to a casual CBT treatment. In that way, frequency of experiencing anxiety, and severity levels of anxiety, could be decreased (Mohlman et al., 2003).

Self-monitoring

Self-monitoring is a crucial part of CBT. Individuals are instructed to become aware of their anxiety-related thoughts and record them. Diaries, checklists and other materials could be utilized so as to help people with anxiety observe their thoughts in daily life (Clark & Beck, 2010). After all, anxiety lends itself to self-monitoring. According to Marrs (1995) self-help is more effective for regulating anxiety than with regulating other disorders. Most cognitive behavioural therapists regard self-monitoring as the basis for all interventions. As anxiety is traditionally conceptualised as an outcome of both automatic and habitual responses, the first thing anxiety-prone individuals must do is to make sense of their own idiosyncratic patterns (Hazlett-Stevens, 2008).

Self-monitoring helps individuals in a number of ways. First, they become more aware of how thinking affects emotions and behaviour. Furthermore, during the recording of their anxious thoughts, individuals must focus directly on the context in a detached, objective way rather than in a subjective and negatively experienced fashion. Second, diaries and thought logs serve as databases to develop a rationale for a more accurate cognitive restructuring during intervention sessions. Finally, individuals tend to view their anxious thoughts and behaviours more objectively; therefore, they transfer the new strategies learned in sessions into their daily lives (Voßbeck-Elsebusch & Ehring, 2014).

According to Hazlett-Stevens (2008), a typical self-monitoring procedure starts with the therapist clearly presenting the rationale. It involves a number of tasks that help participants to log their anxiety between sessions and also spontaneous anxiety ratings during the sessions themselves. Therapists could also use a 0 to 100 anxiety rating scale in the beginning of each session, which could then be followed up with questions about the thoughts, feelings or behavioural changes experienced. The literature also suggests some different examples of self-monitoring forms. Leahy and Holland (2000) used a single form called "Patient's Worry Log" to evaluate the anxiety ratings and cognitive features related to it. Participants in this study were asked to record the content and situational factors that triggered anxiety as well as the predictions of when anxiety would arise. Once the experience of anxiety occurred, participants were asked to fill in the form again in order to rate their anxiety level at the moment of the specific event that caused heightened anxiety levels. In a different approach, Rygh and Sanderson (2004) used two types of forms. The first one, "The Worry Diary", simply asked individuals to record the time spent worrying, the level of anxiety with a 0 to 8 scale, and the type and the dosage of medication if taken. Secondly, individuals with anxiety were asked to use a "Worry Episode Log" so that they could record the date and time of the episode, intensity of the anxiety, and any other experienced emotional changes. Finally, Dugas and Robichaud (2007) used a more straightforward, four-columned "Worry Diary Form" on which individuals recorded the date and time at which they experienced high anxiety, and whether it represented an actual or hypothetical situation.

Technological approaches to treatment

In the past 15 years there has been increased momentum in the utilization of online and computer-based approaches in the conveyance of psychological interventions.

These approaches may lessen therapists' workload, and also lessen barriers for observation and monitoring of individuals' lives in places with limited access to opportunities for psychotherapy.

In a study assessing the viability of Internet-based CBT when contrasted with face-to-face interaction, individuals in both conditions experienced decreases in panic disorder manifestations, seriousness and anxiety recurrence, in addition to upgrades in personal satisfaction (Kiropoulos et al., 2008). Having experienced these improvements, participants appraised both conditions as sound and fulfilling. However, participants also stated that they enjoyed the face-to-face communication with the therapist more. Computer-assisted CBT might be a functional tool in dealing with mild to moderate depression. There are many online projects that exist to improve the treatment of anxiety disorders in children and adolescents (Richardson et al., 2010). In their study, Selmi et al. (1990) showed that treatment sessions delivered via a computer over six weeks was as successful as a therapist's implementing the same CBT protocol. Similarly, an internet treatment program called "the Wellbeing Program", was proven to be effective in anxiety reduction for people with anxiety and panic disorders (Titov et al., 2011).

Two other technological developments have also been found to be helpful with applying CBT. First, camera-based interventions have potential for enhancing the treatment as they could be used during behavioural exercises so that the exercises can be done in a cost-effective manner (Storch et al., 2011). Before the camera-based therapy, therapists would have to travel to the patient in order to implement and monitor the exercises. A second technological enhancement is the use of personalised mobile applications delivered on smartphones. Although the literature does not suggest much in terms of the use of mobile applications in treating anxiety,

there are promising results in weight management (Stephens et al., 2011). Overall, the research proposes that CBT is an efficient treatment for individuals suffering from anxiety. Over several different situations involving anxiety, CBT has been proven to be a powerful option due to its time-limited and structured format, as well as its theoretical grounding.

4.2.2 Exposure therapy (Systematic de-sensitization)

Appearing in the literature under various labels (e.g. systematic desensitization, reinforced practice, self-observation, successive approximation), exposure therapy refers to "a group of psychological interventions that have in common the intentional confrontation with feared, but otherwise safe objects, situations, and thoughts or memories for the purpose of reducing fear reactions to the same or similar stimuli in the future" (Cahill & Foa, 2003, p.445).

Systematic de-sensitization is based on Wolpe's (1958) concept of Reciprocan Inhibition in which he explains its function. The foundation of this theory was the idea that pairing an individual's fear response with a bodily response which is nonsensical and irrelevant could be a way to eliminate pathological fear. Wolpe further suggested that pairing of the fear response with a contrasting reaction such as relaxation would prompt a gradual inhibition and also strengthen the antagonistic response. Systematic de-sensitization became an appealing treatment method among numerous clinical reports and controlled research in the 1960s (Cahill & Foa, 2003). One of the first controlled systematic de-sensitization studies was carried out by Lang and Lazovik (1963) in the treatment of individuals with a fear of snakes (Orphidiophobia). After pairing imaginary snake scenes with relaxation practices, participants in the de-sensitization group showed improvement. In another remarkable study, the efficacy of systematic de-sensitization in treating students with

fear of public speaking and social anxiety was investigated (Paul, 1966). There were three comparison groups (insight-orientated psychotherapy, an attention-placebo condition in which participants were given a pill placebo, and a waitlist) results showed that both treatment types were superior to the waitlist and systematic de-sensitization was found to be superior to insight-orientated psychotherapy.

Exposure-based treatments share a common strategy and a set of goals. The main strategy consists of exposing the individuals to a fear-eliciting stimulus, although the feared stimulus may vary (e.g. an external object/situation, internal thought/image/memory, or a somatic reaction). Reducing emotional distress, eliminating anxiety-provoking phobic behaviour, correcting faulty treat appraisals, enhancing individuals' threshold to tolerate anxiety and improving their quality of life are the common foals of exposure-based treatments (Telch et al., 2014).

Many individuals report experiences of traumatic events in childhood, such as humiliation by the teacher in front of the class, and many others report that they suddenly experienced a blackout when delivering a speech before an audience. Sometimes individuals also report that they continue to experience similar events in their lives and, as a result, avoided them (Telch et al., 2014). According to Moscovitch et al. (2009), avoidance behaviour is crucial to the persistence of social anxiety and thus it provides a rationale for implementing exposure treatments in anxiety disorders. Beck et al. (1985) recommends integrating cognitive therapy and exposure in order to normalise dysfunctional beliefs. Developing on this, Heimberg and Becker (2002) designed a cognitive-behavioural group treatment combining cognitive restructuring and in-session role-play exposure through 12 sessions. In the group, individuals were encouraged to alter negative automatic thoughts while exposing themselves to anxiety-producing social situations or in different role play

situations. They were also encouraged to monitor changes in their anxiety levels and test their thoughts during this exposure. In addition, individuals were asked to practice exposure and cognitive restructuring skills between the sessions in potential anxiety-provoking situations in their daily life.

Fundamentally, exposure therapy and CBT share a core strategy, which is that of enabling the individuals to confront their feared stimuli; yet, the difference lies in the process of execution. The CBT therapist often has the individual conduct planned confrontations with the stimuli to correct his/her dysfunctional anxiety-related beliefs. In contrast, the exposure therapist provides the person with a treatment rationale which relies on principles of habituation, and the individual is also informed of how repeated practice will gradually decrease anxiety (Telch et al., 2014).

A typical systematic de-sensitization starts with constructing a hierarchy of anxiety-provoking situations. Individuals with anxiety are encouraged to start from confronting the lowest anxiety-provoking situation on the hierarchy all the way up to the highest anxiety-provoking situation, implementing gradual changes until habituation is achieved. It is crucial to allow sufficient time within sessions to enhance this process of "elimination" (Craske et al., 2008). However, there is no consensus on the optimal spacing for exposure therapy sessions. Some researchers suggest that closer exposures are superior as they can minimize the risk of avoidance (Foa et al., 1980) while some others argue that time serves as a context so wider intervals confer an advantage (Bouton, 1993; Bouton & Swartzentruber, 1991; Tsao & Craske, 2000). Even though gradual exposure offers practical advantages such as lower dropouts and minimization of sensation during exposure (Telch et al., 2014), in the early 1960s and 1970s there was an argument as to whether exposure treatment

would be more effective if an intense non-gradual approach was followed, or vice-versa. However, the results were contradictory as some studies showed an advantage of graduated treatment (Boersma et al.,1976; de Moor, 1970) and others showed the opposite (Boulougouris et al.,1971; Kirsch et al.,1975). A second disagreement was in whether self-directed exposure was superior to therapist-assisted exposure. The research showed that therapist-assisted exposure was more effective than self-directed exposure, and that the mix of two also outperformed self-directed exposure alone (Barlow et al., 1970; O'Brien & Kelley, 1980; Öst et al., 1991). One last concern with the exposure therapy is whether the treatment should be delivered individually or in groups. The literature suggests that individual-based treatment is slightly advantageous when treating individuals with obsessive-compulsive disorder and panic disorder (Cabedo et al., 2010; Jaurrieta et al., 2008; Jónsson et al., 2011; O'Connor et al., 2005) but there might be an advantage of group-based treatment for social phobia (Fals-Stewart et al., 1993; O'Leary et al., 2009; Whittal et al., 2008).

Last but not least, it is evident that safety behaviours could prevent the individual from fully engaging in exposure to threat (Wells et al., 1995). Recent advances in computer sciences might offer a solution to this problem through the use of virtual reality in conducting exposure therapy in the future. In a study comparing virtual reality exposure with a waitlist control condition for the treatment of 20 college students, it was found that participants receiving virtual reality exposure showed significantly greater improvement (Rothbaum et al., 1995).

The above review indicates that systematic de-sensitization serves as a highly effective intervention on its own for most anxiety disorders and that it is an important component of effective CBT packages for anxiety treatment.

4.2.3 Psychoeducation

Cognitive behavioural therapy for anxiety is based on the idea that individuals learn maladaptive patterns in receiving from and responding to their environments, which could result in a lack of powerful coping skills. With this in mind, individuals with pre-existing issues with anxiety are more likely to suffer from anxiety as they are inclined towards perceiving threats and responding with avoidance. These people develop automatic response patterns which are practiced so often that they finally start to occur unintentionally (Hazlett-Stevens, 2008). Therefore, the CBT approach first requires individuals to understand the theory so as to identify their own perceiving and responding patterns, which happens through psychoeducation.

Psychoeducation plays a crucial role in treatments and it can provide a solid starting point. CBT starts with psychoeducation about the nature of anxiety, as well as relationship building. Then, the therapist explains that anxiety can be an adaptive response, and that the aim of the treatment is to learn how to manage anxiety when it is too intense, rather than eradicating the experience of it completely. Especially, anxious children might have difficulty identifying their emotional states (Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2000), in this case, the necessary scaffolding in order to discriminate the anxious responses from real true-related responses could be provided by delivering psychoeducation (Settipani et al., 2014). Individuals' understanding of the rationale behind the treatment motivates them so that they can invest the necessary time and effort in completing the sessions and daily tasks. Appreciation of the treatment procedures through psychoeducation also fosters hope and helps to build a good relationship and alliance between the therapist and the patient from the outset of treatment (Hazlett-Stevens, 2008).

Psychoeducation is easy to administer and it can be also be group-based. Bouman (2002) gives an example of a psychoeducational programme called “Coping with Illness Anxiety”. The programme was delivered in a private community and it aimed to increase the acceptability of treatment for individuals with health anxiety who were hesitating to consult with a mental health practitioner. The programme involved demonstrations, videos, group discussions, lectures, tasks and optional homework. A brief from of the lesson contents are stated as follows:

Session 1: General overview of the programme

Session 2: What is the role of thoughts in health anxiety? How can we challenge them?

Session 3: The role of selective attention in health anxiety

Session 4: The role of checking, reassurance seeking, maladaptive behaviours and avoidance in health anxiety

Session 5: The role of stress in sensations

Session 6: Cognitive restructuring exercises to help overcome health anxiety

In a group psychoeducation programme designed for individuals with medically unexplained symptoms, participants were educated on the role of stress and they were given relaxation training. Twenty-five percent of the participants refused to have the treatment as they did not think stress management was related to their problems. At the end of the programme, the other seventy-five percent were recorded to have lesser somatic complaints (Lidbeck, 1997). As Taylor and Asmundson (2004) argue, individuals’ problems should be phrased in a positive way.

> Instead of saying, for example, "No, you don't have cancer", something like the following might be said: "The lab tests, physical examinations, and my assessment indicate that you do have a problem, but it isn't cancer. The problem has to do with excessive anxiety about your health…All of these bodily changes and sensations are real, but harmless. I think it would be helpful if we could talk about the things that cause them. What do you think?" (p. 115).

According to Voßbeck-Elsebusch and Ehring (2014) psychoeducation with anxiety-prone individuals includes four steps:

Fear and anxiety: The two concepts are explained as adaptive emotions and it is followed by a discussion regarding the maladaptive nature of anxiety. For example, in panic disorder, individuals might be taught the difference between true alarms, which indicate an impending danger, and false alarms, which are based on erroneous interpretations of benign bodily sensations.

Development of anxiety disorder: In order to reduce the severity of individual bodily symptoms, both the therapist and the patient try to reconstruct how and why the symptoms of anxiety have emerged and developed.

Maintenance of anxiety disorder: Processes such as avoidance, safety behaviours or false interpretations of bodily sensations foster anxiety disorder. Therefore, this step consists of educating the people to help them understand why their previous efforts have not yet been efficient in combating anxiety.

Model for change: This final step involves developing and introducing a model which aims to overcome anxiety in treatment.

Psychoeducation is a part of every intervention for anxiety disorders. Informing the individuals about the disorder, why and how it has developed could challenge their dysfunctional beliefs about causes of their anxiety-related problems.

4.3 Alternative therapy

4.3.1 Mental imagery

CBT traditionally lends itself to verbal interventions for cognitive restructuring and many people with anxiety do not often engage in visual imagery (Voßbeck-Elsebusch & Ehring, 2014). Thus, in recent years there has been a growing interest in implementing imagery-based approaches in treatment and it has been suggested that distressing imagery could serve as one type of internal experience that would help to hinder avoidance behaviour (Hackmann et al., 2011; Borkovec, et al. 2004).

Hall et al. (2006) define imagery as "an internal representation of a perception of the external world in the absence of that external experience" (p. 28). They also separate the scripted imagery from guided imagery in terms of the way the theme is delivered. The positive imagery approach is based on Lang's (1985) concept which suggests that imagery activates somatic responses of emotion. Once the ability to control internal images is acquired, individuals could be willing to produce various types of nervous system activation during imagery. Through imagery, people could be taught to identify anxiety cues in a non-threatening context which could also prepare them for some other imagery exposure strategies that would then be presented throughout the treatment. Instead of waiting for the actual anxiety-provoking situations to arrive, individuals could practice those situations by practicing different coping responses. As a result, replicated exposure to images

which represent future feared situations could become less anxiety provoking (Hazlett-Stevens, 2008).

Clinical and research studies have indicated this process to be effective in the various fields of psychology, sports, health, music and education (Hall et al., 2006). In sports, imagery is used to enhance athletes' performance in many ways, such as regulating excitement, relaxation, being mentally focussed and confident, executing and developing strategies as well as generating motivation (Paivio, 1985; Martin et al., 1999; Porter, 2003). There is also evidence which claims that when the principles of imagery are not fully understood or when the expected results are not achieved through imagery athletes falsely conclude that imagery is not effective (Gould et al., 2002). Imagery is also utilized in increasing musicians' self-confidence and reducing their anxiety (Bradt et al., 2011; Johnson, 2003) and in different health disorders including dental problems and cancer (Roffe et el., 2005; Armfield & Heaton, 2013) According to Arbuthnot et al. (2001) guided imagery improves the duration of healing after surgery or serious illness. They further state that imagery is also helpful in reducing stress and managing chronic pain. In terms of anxiety, the assumption of this method is that anxiety will lessen gradually (Singer, 2006).

Guided imagery has also been used in education (Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013). In a state funded project in Los Angeles, after a number of relaxation and imagery exercises, 9th grade students of English as a second language were found to score higher on language proficiency tests in comparison with the control groups. It was shown that as students visualised themselves as successful and relaxed, they learned at a faster pace and more efficiently (Murdock, 1987). Imagery in schools has been used to enhance creativity in subjects such as art and drama. It has also been an effective approach in generating and increasing self-awareness. All students,

including those with emotional disorders, are found to be engaging in the imagination practices; on the other hand, a more relaxed classroom atmosphere together with improved written and spoken contributions and high memorability even in abstract subjects such as science and maths are reported thanks to using guided imagery (Hall et al., 1990). Research also shows that if imagery is combined with relaxation activities it is more effective than imagery alone (Weinberg et al., 1981). It is suggested that the implementation of relaxation strategies such as deep breathing exercises before the imagery practice prevents athletes from distractions and increases their concentration. The combination of imagery and relaxation rehearsal is especially recommended for those who have just started to develop imagery skills. Additionally, using imagery logs or notebooks are thought to provide assistance in monitoring imagery practice and evaluating progress (Gould et al., 2002).

Imagery training is very straightforward. In a typical guided imagery session, the therapist first asks the individuals to sit back, close their eyes and establish a moment of relaxation. Then, the therapist instructs the individual to picture themselves in the scene. The scene does not have to be a real place that has been visited before. Anywhere with natural beauty could be used for imagery relaxation (e.g. a beach, snow-covered mountains, rising sun, a huge garden full of flowers). During the imagery practice, the therapist describes the details of the scene so as to make the scene as vivid as possible. Individuals imagine as many, sounds, smells, visuals and bodily sensations as they can during imagination. After finishing the imagery exposure, the therapist asks participants if they were able to visualise a vivid image and how they felt. For example, after an imagery practice aiming to lessen anxiety, participants can be asked how they dealt with the anxiety provoking

situation. If an individual finds the image more anxiety-provoking than expected then a less provocative image could be chosen. Finally, the therapist encourages individuals with anxiety to practice this imagery exposure at home by repeating the same procedures until the anxiety levels are reduced. Either in the same session or in additional sessions repeated imagery is continued until individuals report that they were able to create a vivid image and they did not find it very difficult to stay in the scene until instructed to finish the visualisation process. Sometimes, imagery exercises could feel unfamiliar and difficult at the beginning. Individuals may express that they were not be able to visualise a clear image. Yet, more and more vivid imagery can be obtained with enough practice and eventually the participants will have found yet another way to relax themselves in combating their anxiety triggers. Development of imagery skills will increase the probability that individuals will be able to successfully harness exposure therapy as well (Hazlett-Stevens, 2008).

4.3.2 Narrative therapy

Time comes into it.
Say it. Say it.
The universe is made of stories,
not of atoms.
(Rukeyser, 1968, p. 115)

In her poem, *The Speed of Darkness*, Muriel Rukeyser exposes a reality of human beings; that we are made up of, and involved in, stories. Indeed, we, as humans, tend to seek out meaning in our surroundings. If we see or hear something unusual, we do our best to figure out what it is. Finally, after understanding how and why it has occurred, we then automatically take measures to cope with it.

The first narrative theories in personality psychology date back to the late 1970s, and Tomkins (1979) presented *script theory*, imagining personality development as some kind of a playwright that manages the emotional aspect of the

human concerning salient scenes. Then, McAdams (1985) formulated a *life-story model of identity* proposing that people, beginning from young adulthood, interpreted their lives as stories which served as tools to integrate their past and imagined future for unity and purpose. *Narrative identity* is defined as "a person's internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose" (McAdams & McLean, 2013, p. 233). The basic concern of narrative identity is the way in which individuals compose and comprehend their experiences as narratives (e.g. excuses, explanations, myths or stories). These narratives then become the foundations of individuals' self-conceptualizations. According to Dörnyei and Ryan (2015), since it is under a constant exposition of other components, narrative identity is the most erratic element of personality. Still, it is the component which the individual controls the most. Moreover, as its relationship with the framework is bidirectional, narrative identity unifies the system and also applies a developmental impact on it. In other words, shaping the life narrative can actually mean shaping the whole mindset. The narrative metaphor suggests that human psychology is composed of a narrative structure which enables human life to be seen as "storied" (Sarbin, 1986). The "narrative turn" has become a noteworthy scholarly view, not only in psychology and psychotherapy, but also in humanities, social sciences and health care (Bruner, 1986; Crossley, 2000; Flaskas, 2002 ; Greenhalgh & Hurwitz, 1999; Launer, 1999; McLeod, 1997; Schafer, 1992) .

Narrative therapy "allows a person to re-author his/her life stories by focusing on the positive interpretations" (Seo et al., 2015, p.379). It aims to create new narratives in a positive trajectory instead of negative ones, because these negative stories can cause people with issues with depression or anxiety to excessively relate

themselves to problematic life narratives (White & Epston, 1990). Therefore, during the therapy, the person with anxiety ought to take the storyteller position, rather than listening to the therapist, in order to be able to have a positive view towards himself/ herself and the life he/she is living in. Sierpina et al. (2007) suggest that an effective intervention to minimize the symptoms of depression or anxiety needs to be delivered in a more humanistic and holistic way to the clients. Although CBT is a well-known and an effective therapy for anxiety disorders, postmodern critiques of CBT highlight the necessity of differentiating between the problem and the person, considering that the individuals are all living in a social context and they should play the central role as authors constructing stories (White & Epston 1990).

Negative feelings lead to negative contemplations about the self and the world, which then lead to negative behaviours such as isolation and avoidance of social interactions (Greenberg & Paivio 2008). In contrast, hope gives the motivational energy to defeat the harshness of life by allowing individuals to make vital steps towards a superior life. The more individuals have hope, the more likely they are to experience positive feelings (Snyder, 2002). According to Payne (2006), there is no fixed approach for the length of narrative sessions. There are examples varying between 50 minutes to over 2 hours (White, 1995). However, narrative therapy is not considered to be one of the brief therapies and Payne outlines the main steps for narrative therapy practices:

- The person tells his or her story
- Naming the problem
- Using externalizing language
- Considering social and political issues
- Relative influence questioning
- Deconstruction of unique outcomes

- The person is invited to take a position on the problem
- Use of therapeutic documents
- Using outsider witnesses
- Re-membering
- Continuing therapy: telling and re-telling
- Moving towards enrichment of the self-story
- Ending therapy

Comparing self-defining memories of 103 undergraduate students, Blagov and Singer (2004) pictured four specific aspects of self-defining autobiographical memories (specificity, meaning, content and affect) and their associations with self-restraint, distress and defensiveness. Memory specificity was found to be negatively related to abusive protectiveness. Additionally, memory content and affect were reported to determine participants' levels of subjective distress. On the other hand, some research suggests that the preferences of listeners might have a relationship with individuals' short term storytelling goals. For instance, Thorne et al. (2004) found that audience members tended to lean toward self-defining stories about gaining insight instead of learning from their mistakes. The listeners also liked to hear stories of overcoming traumatic events but not those of vulnerability (Thorne & McLean, 2003).

In order to help the clients find positive interpretations, narrative therapists act like supporting patients. They start by stating that the problematic issue is not the individual, but instead it is the issue itself (Drewery & Winslade, 1997). In this way, individuals try to separate their negative stories and therapists listen to the unique, anxiety-related experiences in which patients effectively tackled in the past.

Narrative therapists then help individuals with anxiety to retell their stories by focussing on positive notions.

Producing a life narrative includes one's past, present and expected future by utilizing critical past occasions to create cohesion in an individual's life. As indicated by McAdams, because the narratives are under a constant change, identity development becomes a life-long task. Therefore, making a meaning of past experiences has been one of the focus points of narrative researchers (Habermas & Bluck, 2000, McLean et al., 2007). Meaning-making has been found to be more likely to occur in negative experiences than in positive experiences and an individual's experience of difficult events in the past appears to be a strong component of their identity development and psychological well-being (Pals & McAdams, 2004; Thorne et al., 2004). Mahoney (1995) argues that, if painful occasions are not structured into narratives, they may result in continuity of the negative thoughts and feelings. There is also evidence that writing exercises improve individuals' physical and mental health and lead to better grades (Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999). While doing the analysis, Pennebaker and Seagal found abundant use of positive emotion words and moderate use of negative words in these writings. The most promising finding in this study is the growing number of insight and causal words, as it establishes a direct link between putting experiences in stories and the benefits to mental well-being. Although McLean (2008: 1692) warns of the danger of this reflective process by suggesting that "it may also be risky as we open ourselves up to the vulnerabilities of reflection', Pasupathi (2003) asserts that less negative emotion is reported in an individual's retelling narratives than was reported in the initial experience. She further asserts that one factor contributing to this trend is the

fact that people create insights based on their experiences and make meaning of them.

These studies are consistent with current perspectives on narratives in proposing that it is crucial for individuals to deal with their anxiety related problems by producing a story to clarify and understand past experiences, current life concerns and the imagined future. A cohesive narrative then becomes a kind of a guide which helps to sort out the emotional impacts of an experience.

4.3.3 Medication and lifestyle remedies

Pharmacotherapy could be considered as an option in treating panic disorder and generalized anxiety disorder depending on the patient's preference (e.g. in cases of limited time and situations where the patient is not responding to psychotherapy). The most significant pharmacological treatment options for the long-term treatment of anxiety related disorders are antidepressants and benzodiazepines. (Kapczinski et al., 2003). The efficacy of antidepressants and benzodiazepines is supported and evaluated by widespread research, but no compelling evidence has proven one to be superior to the other (APA, 2009). For the key psychological symptoms related to generalized anxiety disorder, such as excessive worrying or repetitive negative thinking, recent drugs from the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs, e.g. escitalopram) or selective noradrenaline-norepinephrine compounds (SNRIs. e.g., venlafaxine) could also be preferred over the use of traditional tricyclic antidepressants like imipramine (Gerlach & Stevens, 2014). Alternatively, patients may prefer one of the promising, new options of pharmacological treatment for generalized anxiety disorder, such as the anticonvulsive drug pregabalin (Micheva et al., 2006). The recent trend in pharmacologic treatments, SSRIs and SNRIs, is known to have lesser side-effects and lower risk profiles in the treatment of panic disorder

and other anxiety disorders. (Clum et al., 1993; Hoffman & Mathew, 2008; Mitte, 2005; van Balkom et al., 1997). The co-administration of multiple medications is another approach that some research reveals has few benefits (Szuhany et al., 2014). One significant advantage of benzodiazepines over antidepressants is that the rapid response of benzodiazepines can be beneficial in proving an immediate relief for patients with severe symptoms at the start of the treatment (Szuhany et al., 2014). However, there are a few disadvantages and concerns regarding the use of benzodiazepines such as the physiological dependence of most patients, which can be abused (ibid.). Benzodiazepines could also cause damaging effects on cognitive functioning, particularly in long term use (Barker et al., 2004).

There is a lack of sufficient data to make a general statement about the relative efficacy of SSRIs (Szuhany et al., 2014). Dannon et al. (2007) conducted a long term comparison study of fluoxetine, citalopram, paroxetine and fluvoxamine. Paroxetine and citalopram led to faster effects than fluoxetine or fluvoxamine on patients through the first month of treatment. However, no significant results were found in the long term. Thus, a conclusion cannot be drawn due to insufficient evidence and further research is required.

A meta-analysis of controlled studies applying CBT and/or pharmacotherapy with anxiety disorders has not revealed any significant results between the two methods of treatment (Gould et al., 1997). Lindsay et al. (2007) carried out a study to compare a CBT group, an anxiety management training (AMT) group, a benzodiazepine treatment group and a control group. The study lasted for four weeks with the participation of 40 individuals. The study indicated that despite the drug treatment leading to the highest levels of improvement at the beginning of the study,

the benefits reduced over time. In addition, there were significant and consistent improvements during all processes of treatment in the CBT and AMT groups.

One of the goals of pharmacotherapy is to find alternative therapeutic methods in treatment, particularly for disorders which are chronic or recurrent, in order to prevent the high risk of dependence to benzodiazepines (Curran, 1991). Kava plant (Piper methysticum) and Passion flower (Passiflora incarnata) are the two of the studied herbal therapies. In the South Pacific, people have widely used the rhizome of the kava plant (Singh & Blumenthal, 1997). Kava is known to have anticonvulsant calming and muscle relaxant properties despite being traditionally used to treat anxiety (Bone, 1994). On the other hand, the incarnate element of Passiflora contains flavonoids, maltol, hydroxycoumarins and alkaloids which belong to the beta-carboline family (Bennati, 1967). Bourin et al. (1997) and Pittler and Ernst (2000) reviewed extracts of kava, including passion flower and valerian (along with other extracts), but the results were not consistent. By binding the active elements of the kava or passion flower with benzodiazepine receptors, some results might be obtained, but the effects are still lower than benzodiazepines. As a result, Bourin et al. (1998) suggests the use of low doses of benzodiazepine rather than herbal therapy.

Lifestyle remedies

An individuals' daily irregular life style, such as inadequate sleep, poor diet, insufficient taking care of one-self during sicknesses, excessive workload, and inadequate physical activity can cause emotional weaknesses (Rygh & Sanderson, 2004). These can be managed by applying regular programmes. For example, an individual can regulate eating habits by eating regularly with a nutritionally balanced diet. To deal with sleep deprivation, individuals can establish positive sleep routines

which limit or lengthen sleep times according to the individual's needs. Additionally, benefits of exercise on individuals' mood have been found in several research studies. A meta-analysis of treatments of severe depression evaluating exercise agendas vs. non-active comparison circumstances revealed that depression symptoms are likely to be reduced by exercise (Stathopoulou et al., 2006). The role of exercise in decreasing anxiety sensitivity is also evident (Smits et al., 2004). Smits et al. (2008) conducted a study by assigning participants to a two-week exercise intervention, or a two-week exercise intervention combined with cognitive restructuring. Participants in both exercise situations showed clinically significant reduction in anxiety severity, superior to the waitlist condition. When physical activities were at consistent level, it could play a role in dealing with anxiety and could be applied as a way of mediation. The impact of high- and low- intensity exercise on reduction of anxiety levels was found in another study (Broman-Fulks et al., 2004). Particularly high-intensity aerobic exercise proved faster in decreasing anxiety levels. Hovland et al., (2012) carried out a study to examine a group of CBT patients vs. a group of exercise treatment for panic disorder and the results indicated that CBT significantly alleviated avoidant behaviour and body sensations compared to exercise treatment alone.

The next step for individuals with anxiety could be identifying neglected activities and a detailed plan can then be prepared to facilitate change. The activities in the plan should be followed in small steps and individuals are encouraged to concentrate on the present as much as they can in order to make every experience purposeful and deliberate (Borkovec, 2002). The individuals tend to experience difficulties in initiating leisure activities and health promoting behaviours while being overwhelmed with indications of anxiety and depression. To deal with this,

individuals are encouraged and invited to reveal the priorities in their lives, beyond anxiety and negative thoughts, and to identify life activities that they value most or wish to do more frequently. There is evidence that scheduling pleasant events and engaging in desired activities increases positive reinforcement from the environment (e.g. Lewinsohn, 1975; Martell, 2003).

Lastly, time mismanagement is common for individuals with anxiety disorders and it can cause taking on too many responsibilities in a limited time, underestimating the time needed to accomplish duties, and an inability to prioritise the significance of activities. With effective time management, individuals can learn to prioritise activities relative to values and life expectations, and develop functioning time frames more efficiently and effectively, which might contribute to reducing the overall anxiety experienced (Rygh & Sanderson, 2004).

4.4 Past approaches to reducing language anxiety

Since the 1980s, there has been extensive research into the concept of language anxiety. Researchers have asserted frameworks, descriptions and empirical evidence in order to clarify language anxiety further. There has also been extensive research in order to seek out ways to alleviate language anxiety. Certain teaching approaches have been found to be less-anxiety provoking. One of the most studied approaches is cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is shown to create an ideal atmosphere in the classroom as learners are independent, supportive and goal-oriented. In this approach, students often interact with each other because they have to exchange information in order to accomplish a goal as a group (Kagan, 1995). With this regard, cooperative learning could be considered a reinforcing element to minimize anxiety.

Having administered FLCAS and two proficiency tests to 40 students in order to examine the effect of cooperative leaning on reducing foreign language anxiety

levels, Suwantarathip and Wichadee (2010) stated that students' overall anxiety levels significantly decreased during cooperative tasks. Moreover, students were reported to score higher on the proficiency tests after cooperative teaching and they developed positive attitudes towards this approach as a whole. Similarly, applying drama activities in the language classroom has been shown to reduce learner's language anxiety. Investigating the use of drama on anxiety reduction, Atas (2015) conducted a study with 24 high school students in Turkey. Pre- and post-test results, students' diaries and semi-structured interviews indicated that six weeks of language and drama training significantly lowered students' oral communication anxiety. Drama activities were also reported as increasing learners' self-confidence (Stern, 1980; Stinson & Freebody, 2006).

Another body of research relied on the role of the teacher in the language classroom. The following quotations from two students clearly shows how teachers could affect learners' behavioural as well as emotional states in the classroom:

> The teacher was very serious and strict. I think that is the teacher's problem. He did not know how to…You know, people can only talk to each other in a more relaxed atmosphere…' (Lin, 2002, as cited in Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003, p. 25).

> The professor… the way he comes across is very bad. And he would make you feel like you were so stupid to the point that you're almost ready to leave his class, and one day a girl left in tears because he made her read something and she had a problem with stuttering when she got nervous' (Kelly Hall & Davis 1995, p. 10).

Teachers' attitudes towards beliefs regarding language learning, their reaction to the errors and the environment they create in the classroom have been shown to be related to language anxiety (Hashemi & Abbasi, 2013). In a two-step research project, Alrabai (2015) investigated the effects of instructors' anxiety reducing strategies on learner anxiety levels. In the first stage, in order to identify sources of foreign language anxiety for Saudi learners, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale was administered to 596 students. In the second stage, 465 learners were divided into two groups (experimental vs. control) and several anxiety-reducing strategies were implemented in the treatment group for approximately eight weeks.12 instructors were recruited for this research and they were all received a two-week intensive pre-treatment training which covered the following strategies:

- Demonstrating proper teacher behaviour to learners
- Reducing learner communication apprehension
- Reducing learners' fear of negative evaluation
- Reducing learners' fear of language testing
- Addressing learner anxiety-provoking beliefs and misconceptions
- Helping students establish specific and realistic goals for learning English
- Increasing students' self-confidence

The results revealed significantly decreased levels of anxiety in the treatment group in comparison with the control group. As Young (1999) highlights, it is well-known that the instructor can influence the class to a great extent both in a good or bad way; yet, what is more difficult to identify is the broad spectrum of activities, teaching

materials or interactions in the classroom as they can also lead to unpleasant experiences for the learner.

> I think we need more fun activities, things that involve us more with French… like when she tells us to speak French we really don't consider that a fun activity.
>
> (Kelly Hall & Davis, 1995, p.12)

This quotation indicates that anxiety could also stem from un-engaging language tasks. As a result, after reviewing the sources of language anxiety, researchers came up with suggestions and practical activities related to all core language skills:

- *Reading anxiety:* Eliminating the misconception that successful reading can be evaluated by the proficiency in answering comprehension questions, acknowledging that reading is not just a private task but also a social task, understanding that reading is not a linear process (Lee, 1999).
- *Speaking anxiety:* Carrying out communicative activities that provide oral practice in a non-threatening manner, teachers' developing error correction and oral evaluation skills (Phillips, 1999).
- *Listening anxiety:* Recognizing learners' fear of failure, making use of visuals in listening tasks rather than implementing pure audio records, making input comprehensible (Vogely, 1999).
- *Writing anxiety:* Teaching drafting hints to students so that they will consider writing as a process, emphasizing peer responses to writing instead of teacher-only evaluations of writing, encouraging writing journals or some other sequenced writing assignments that will not exclusively focus on form (Leki, 1999).

Experimental research on implementing traditional or alternative treatment approaches mentioned in this chapter to reduce language anxiety is quite scarce. In a more recent publication, Gregersen and MacIntyre (2014) presented a number of practical exercises based on the theory of systematic de-sensitization and strategy mapping but researchers never really investigated the efficacy and applicability of these methods in language anxiety reduction.

4.5 Conclusion

Research has shown several effective methods for treating anxiety disorders. Traditionally, CBT is regarded as the most preferred option for most anxiety-related disorders. For mild level anxiety, psychoeducation, which is to be delivered by a therapist or through an educational activity, might be the first choice. If the individuals with anxiety do not respond to psychoeducation, then more intensive exposure interventions could be considered as a treatment. For those preferring pharmacotherapy for its short-term efficiency despite their side-effects, there are a number of antidepressants, benzodiazepines and serotonin reuptake inhibitors available, although it is not clear whether the long term gains of medication are as effective as psychotherapy. It has also been shown that encouraging individuals with anxiety to regulate their daily lives through effective time management, leisure activities, physical exercises, a nutritionally balanced diet and adequate sleep could positively contribute to anxiety reduction. Additionally, mental imagery and narrative therapy are suggested to be two other strong alternatives which could help individuals identify anxiety cues in a non-threatening context. Finally, in terms of foreign language anxiety, there has been extensive research investigating the ways to minimize anxiety in language classrooms. Researchers have suggested many applications in order to create a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere, yet, as anxiety is

elusive and it is still one of the most influential concepts in L2 learning, it is obvious that it is time for a new approach to individual differences and foreign language anxiety which could utilize multiple variations of the treatment components reviewed in this chapter.

Part II: Research Foundation

This part describes how the research methods and processes worked in three separate, but linked studies, initially to understand the nature of language anxiety, then to begin to rethink the conceptualisation of language anxiety as a self-dimension, and finally to clarify and build upon the initial findings in a practical manner. Although the specific data collection and data analysis processes are described in the relevant chapters in Part III and Part IV in detail, this chapter briefly explains the rationale behind the principles of the way in which the studies have been conducted. This part also provides, in Chapter 5, a brief background to the past and present situation of English language education in Turkey.

5. Research site

This study was carried out with Turkish learners of English; therefore, for a better interpretation of the results, the following chapter aims to provide a brief background to both the past and present landscape of the education system in Turkey, with a particular focus on English language education. Turkey was a good location for such a study for several reasons such as, easy access to voluntary participants who learned English as a foreign language and who were known to experience debilitating levels of language anxiety, availability of private language schools and the opportunity to obtain richer qualitative data as the participants would also be interviewed in their first language.

English language education in Turkey

A brief history

Foreign language education plays a strategic role in developing human capital. With this in mind, it has been treated as a crucial component in education curricula across the globe. The English language has gradually gained global importance over time, rising in importance particularly after the events of World War I, and is presently the most commonly taught foreign language in Turkey.

Turkey is split over two continents, with 97% of its land in Asia and the remaining 3% in Europe. Due to this geographical division and its proximity to the Middle East and Africa, Turkey is a very linguistically diverse country. During the Ottoman reign, although the daily language was Turkish, a large component of the study of literature was Persian languages. On the other hand, as the empire ruled over a substantially wider region and as the language of the disciplines of Islam was Arabic, it became a public requirement to learn a foreign language, specifically Arabic. Later on, with the modernisation movement which took place in the 19th century, there was an inclination towards Western languages as the Ottomans attempted to improve their military and medical structures through French cooperation. A number of missionary schools were also founded during the same century. In these schools, the medium of instruction was in either English, French, German or Italian. (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011; Boyacıoğlu, 2015; Yağmur, 2001).

Since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, significant social, political, legal, economic and educational reforms have taken place. As a result of these reforms, as well as becoming a member of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and entering into negotiations with the EU (European Union), teaching English language has gained prominence. Even though the official language and the

language of education in Turkey is Turkish, English is the only foreign language that is taught as a compulsory subject in the education system.

The spread of English through education dates back to 1955. In order to increase the number of people who were capable of speaking both English and Turkish, several schools, known as "Anatolian High Schools" (Anatolian lycées), were founded. These schools offered dual-language instruction at the level of secondary education, with certain courses taught in Turkish and others in English. These schools also offered a one-year English language education course, and students graduating from Anatolian high schools, and from some private high schools, achieved higher proficiency in English in comparison to the other students studying at general high schools, due to the longer exposure time to foreign language education (Kırkgoz, 2007). However, over time, it became more and more difficult for students to perform well on the nation-wide university entrance exams, which were administered in Turkish. As a result, dual-language instruction was abandoned in 2004, and foreign languages were to be taught in the same way as any other subject (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011). It is also worth mentioning here a unique type of high school introduced in 1994, Super (foreign language weighted) High Schools. The time period of education in these schools consisted of four years with the first one being a preparatory year, like Anatolian high schools, with up to 24 hours of foreign language education (English); however, the language of instruction was in Turkish after the preparatory year. To be able to enter one of these schools, students had to achieve a good score in their GPAs, with Super High Schools often requiring a minimum score of 4.0 out of 5.0. Moving to the higher education level, the first state-owned English-medium University, Middle East Technical University, was

founded in 1956 and, as public demand for more English-medium universities increased, the first private university, Bilkent University was established in 1983.

The 1997 education reform

Until 1997, the Turkish education system involved a five years of primary education, three years of secondary education and three years of high school education, which then led into higher education. In 1997, the Turkish Ministry of National Education made drastic changes to the education system, as well as in the nation's English language policy. With this reform, primary and secondary education were integrated into a single stream which extended the duration of the primary education from the previous five to a compulsory and consecutive eight years. Foreign language education was made compulsory starting from the 4th grade, and students were expected to receive at least two hours of language instruction per week in the 4th and the 5th grades, with this number increasing to a weekly minimum of four hours in the 6th, 7th and the 8th.

Another importance of the 1997 reform was that it was the first time the concept of the communicative language teaching approach was introduced in Turkey (Kırkgöz, 2005). Enhancing learners' communicative competence, promoting a student-centred approach and promoting positive attitudes towards foreign language learning were some basic goals of the new policy, so teachers were expected to take on a wider range of responsibilities. However, as Kırgköz (2005) pointed out, the new design was not as successful as it was intended to be due to discrepancies in the quality of instruction provided, the range of materials used, the number of hours allocated to foreign language teaching, and the qualifications of the teachers. On the other hand, since such a drastic change happened in such a very short period of time, the availability of language teachers at that time was also questionable. As Koçak

and Kavak (2014) reported, in order to compensate for the national lack of professional English language educators, many teachers from other areas (etc. Mathematics, Biology or Religious Studies) were employed as teachers of English.

The status of Anatolian high schools and Super high schools remained the same. That is, these schools offered a one-year preparatory course with 24 hours of English language education and three years with other courses instructed in Turkish. However, students were still able to take a minimum of ten weekly hours of English courses in each year (Genç, 2004). On the other hand, students studying at general high schools, which did not involve a preparatory year, were expected to have at least four hours of English classes per week throughout the three years.

After 2005, general high schools began to be transformed to Anatolian high schools and the opportunity for taking a preparatory year was abolished. Instead, students were directed to receive English language education gradually throughout four consecutive years during their high school education.

The 2012 education reform and the current status of English

Year 2012 witnessed another drastic reform. In this recent reform, the Turkish Ministry of National Education revised the education system and introduced a three-tiered, 12-year compulsory education model which is publicly known as the 4+4+4 system (see Figure 7).

This current structure of the Turkish national education system consists of the following levels: non-compulsory pre-primary education, compulsory primary education, lower secondary education and upper secondary education (high schools). Primary school education begins at the age of five and a half and lasts four years before lower secondary education starts, which lasts for another four years. High school education also lasts four years, but a few well-established and privileged

foreign-language-medium high schools are able to offer a five-year education programme, with the first one being the preparatory year. High schools could therefore be broadly categorized as follows:

- Anatolian high schools
- Science high schools
- Social sciences high schools
- Religious education high schools
- Fine arts high schools
- Vocational and technical high schools
- Private high schools

Students must take a series of nationwide centralized exams, the results of which constitute their overall Grade Point Average (GPA), and determines which school they will study at. Fine arts high schools have their own talent-based examinations. The essential novelty that the 4+4+4 system has brought in is that the starting age for learning English has been lowered to the age of six and a half years (second grade) (Table 2).

	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
Number of English lessons (per week)*	2	2	2	4	4	4	4	6-7	3-4	3-4	3-4

*duration of a lesson is usually 40 minutes

Table 2 – Number of English language lessons per year in Turkish National Education System (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2014; 2017a)

In Turkey, both state and private (non-profit foundations) universities are funded by law and they are all managed, coordinated and supervised by YÖK (the Council of Higher Education). Admission to undergraduate programs is based on nationwide selection examinations, which consist of a yearly, two-staged, central examinations, called YGS and LYS. These exams are administered and evaluated by the Assessment Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM), and candidates attend universities based on composite scores of their GPAs and selection examination scores. In universities with Turkish-medium instruction, English language education is an important piece of the curriculum as a compulsory subject for all first-year students. As of May 2016, there are 193 universities and over 6.5 million students enrolled in the higher education system in Turkey (Yükseköğretim Kurulu 2016a; 2016b).

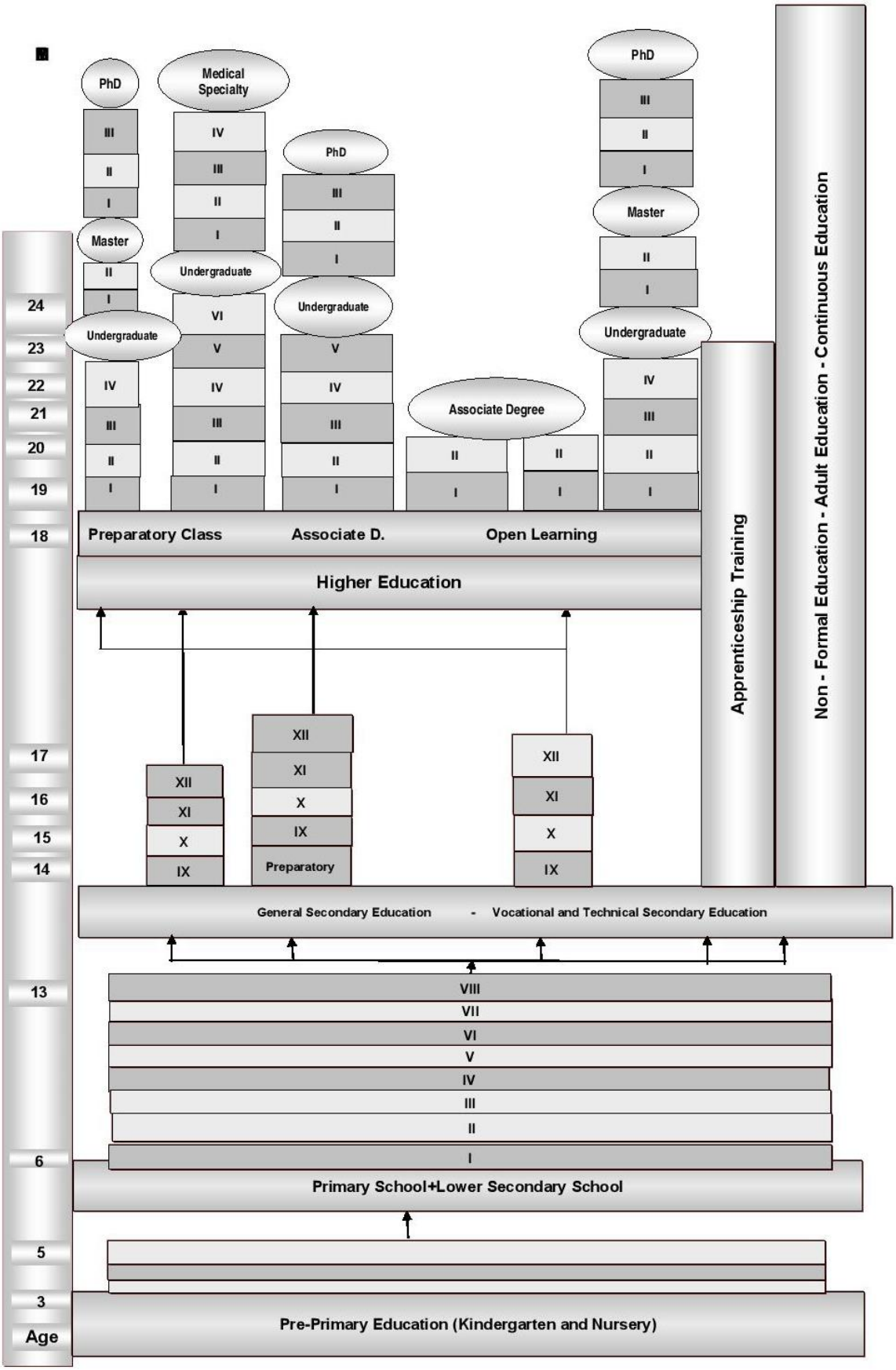


Figure 7 – Turkish National Education System (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2017b, p. xxvii)

6. Research design

This thesis involves an incremental three-phase design, which started out with a preliminary qualitative study to survey the scene, expanded through the use of a survey, and then put into practice by an intervention programme. More details regarding the specific methods and procedures employed in each of these studies will be given in the individual chapters in Part III and IV where their results are reported; here, I elaborate on the rationale and principles behind the overall research design.

The processes that led me to embark on this complex project occurred naturally. Being aware of the fact that anxiety is one of the most elusive concepts amongst individual difference characteristics, the goal at the outset of this research journey was to obtain a broader understanding of the nature of anxiety; as such, the study started out by collecting exploratory qualitative data from highly anxiety-prone learners in order to gain new insights from their perspectives, as they have personal experience of the debilitating effects of anxiety. To be able to do that, one of the most widely used sampling methods, used in various disciplines across the social sciences, was employed: *snowball or chain referral sampling.* In the snowball sampling method, the process starts with an individual (also referred to as the "source") with the desired characteristics (in this case, a person claiming to be anxious in language settings or manifesting anxiety symptoms), and, by using that individual's social network, goes on to recruit other individuals with similar characteristics.

As a result of the notions which emerged from the first set of these exploratory qualitative interviews, a small-scale follow-up step was designed to be more specific by including a quantitative component, FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986), and the general anxiety section (neuroticism) of the Big Five Inventory (John et al.,

1991; 2008) which was primarily used for a principled selection of interviewees for the following dominant qualitative phase. Based on the results, 16 learners of English with the highest anxiety measures on one or both scales were selected for interviewing.

One of the main themes emerging from these datasets was that several learners talked about the way in which they were affected by anxiety in a somewhat detached manner, while referring to an anxious persona that they had difficulty in controlling - or, as one participant labelled it, "the anxious me". These findings gave way to the insight that using the concept of the "anxious self" could prove to be a fruitful approach to the subject. The search for a framework that could potentially accommodate this new concept led me to an influential and recently published theory of individual differences proposed by Dan McAdams, known as the "New Big Five" model (e.g. McAdams, 2006a, 2006b; McAdams & Pals, 2006), which now constitutes the guiding theoretical paradigm underpinning the data analysis. This adaptation of McAdams's framework suggested that anxiety was not uniform and that language anxiety could be reflected in the three levels of his model seamlessly: (1) certain tendencies that are sometimes reflected in a pure form (dispositional traits), (2) sometimes reflected in combination with some other factors (characteristic adaptations), (3) and individuals' cohesive life narratives that accommodate but also adjust these manifestations (integrative life narratives).

As previously stated, this adaptation of McAdams's framework suggests that anxiety is not uniform. There are certain tendencies that are sometimes reflected in a pure form and sometimes in combination with some other factors, which is further complicated by the fact that people often construct cohesive life narratives which accommodate, but at the same time adjust, these manifestations. The exploratory

interviews confirmed that people regularly produced narratives in order to create cohesion in their anxiety-related experiences and perceptions, and that these might be utilized as a guide to dealing with the negative effects of anxiety. This immediately led to the idea of designing an intervention programme, however it was important to ensure that the programme was well-grounded, and the scene must be surveyed once again, but this time quantitatively. Designing and administering a structured questionnaire was intended for the purpose of broadly testing the underlying mechanisms of the anxious self. Once this had been completed, it was thought that the questionnaire itself would constitute a useful and reliable instrument for potential application in more complex study designs, such as the intervention study.

The primary instrument used for quantitative research in this study, which has been titled the Anxious Self Scale for Language Learners, is a 56-item five-point Likert-type scale generated in order to measure not only students' level of general and language anxiety but also targets some certain aspects constituting what students refer to as the anxious self (more information will be given in Part III). I should emphasise here that the construction of this questionnaire directly concerned the data obtained from the preliminary exploratory interviews only. The two studies mentioned in an attempt to survey the scene so far enabled me to draw a broader picture of language anxiety by reframing it from a self-based perspective, the anxious self, and subsequently this process led me to relate the anxious self to future motivational self-guides such as the ideal self. In this way, it became possible to employ imagery-based strategies in shaping the anxious self from the theoretical basis of specific and well-known traditional strategies in psychology, such as applied relaxation and systematic de-sensitization.

After investigating the general mechanism of the anxious self and testing the reliability of the questionnaire itself, I designed a five-week intervention programme with the specific aim of reducing levels of anxiety in participants, which followed the new approach mentioned above. This new approach also had obvious links to the recent emphasis in SLA on the significance of the learner's self-concept (Csizér & Magid, 2014), the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009), and the New Big Five model (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; McAdams, 2006; McAdams & Pals, 2006). The intervention study followed the procedures developed for the visualisation aspect of the ideal self in motivational psychology (Dörnyei, 2009; Magid & Chan, 2012; Oyserman et al., 2002) as well as systematic de-sensitization (Heimberg & Becker, 2002; Telch et al., 2014). The programme involved 18 activities consisting of eight visualisation and de-sensitisation techniques, two relaxation techniques, two confidence-building activities and six content-based activities.

A wide range of data collection methods were employed in the intervention programme for the appraisal of the programme in both major and minor scales. The programme was both preceded by, and followed by, the application of a quantitative instrument, the Anxious Self Scale for Language Learners, which was also used in the standalone quantitative study for the purposes of surveying the scene. Additionally, to explore the impact of the intervention, individual in-depth interviews, retrospective interviews and focus group interviews were conducted during pre, post and sometimes concurrent intervention stages. Changes in students' weekly well-being levels were recorded on a six-point semantic differential scale. In order to evaluate levels of stage fright anxiety while students were giving a presentation on the stage before and after the interview programme, a rating scale was developed and employed. Lastly, a research journal was kept and notes on that

as well as the students' writings activity worksheets were also taken into account. All the details regarding data collection procedures will be explained step by step in the individual chapters in Part IV.

7. Data handling

Although the three-phase design in this thesis grew organically, from a general perspective, a mixed method approach was utilized (starting out with qualitative interviews, administering a questionnaire survey, and concluding with an intervention study consisting of a variety of methods). The mixed methods design is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods and has advantages for investigating social and educational issues in reaching multiple audiences and in verifying findings (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2014). In addition, the fact that three distinctive research methodologies were employed in this study reflects the dynamic and complex nature of anxiety, as anxiety has several levels of abstraction.

As mentioned earlier, most of the details regarding data collection, participants and data analysis processes are described in the individual chapters in Part III and IV; therefore, I will provide a general overview of data handling methods in this section.

7.1 Data collection

7.1.1 Questionnaire data

For the three studies that contained the use of a questionnaire, the administration phase differed in terms of sampling. For the preliminary exploratory study, the administration was based on convenience sampling, meaning that the target population were chosen according to ease of accessibility (N=74). For the main quantitative study, maximum variation sampling was employed (N=514). In this sampling method, the selected cases represent notably different forms of experience (e.g. high school language courses, high school other courses, undergraduate courses for English majors, undergraduate courses for non-English majors, postgraduate

courses). Finally, homogeneous sampling was used in the intervention study (N=30), due to the nature of intervention programmes, which consisted of carrying out an "in-depth analysis to identify common patterns in a group with similar characteristics" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 127).

In all the studies, all the participants were fully informed about the study prior to the administration. They were told that they were free to opt out at any stage and their choices would not affect their grades. The benefits of being involved in the studies were also explained to participants.

7.1.2 Weekly well-being scale

The five-week intervention study was designed for a gradual and systematic reduction of anxiety. Therefore, each of these five weeks served as an individual unit to help realize a common aim. In order to evaluate the activities employed in a particular session, to gauge participants' general reactions to the intervention and to observe whether a certain week had a significant effect on students' overall appraisal, a weekly scale was designed and then administered at the end of each weekly session. Adapted from Dörnyei and Murphey's (2003) quick emotional temperature scale, the weekly well-being scale consisted of a four six-point semantic differential scale which was formulated in a way that made it easier for learners to produce honest responses (see Part IV for details).

7.1.3 Performance rating scale

Before the intervention sessions started, learners were required to give a five-minute presentation in English on the stage. Learners were required to deliver another five-minute talk on the stage five weeks later when the intervention sessions ended. All of these presentations were recorded by using a video camera. In order to evaluate the participants' pre-intervention and post-intervention performances, and in order to

develop a simple and practical instrument which could be used to measure L2 stage fright levels during oral presentations in L2, an adapted version of the five-point Likert-type Social Performance Rating Scale (Fydrich et al., 1998) was used in this study. The scale consisted of two complimentary counterparts; one focussing on positive (control), and the other one on negative (discomfort) manifestations, with the remaining four items concerning specific symptoms of the unease, such as gaze, vocal quality, length and speech flow. The observation was straightforward as the scale also included an anchors section which was also modified so as to serve for the L2 stage fright (see Part IV for details).

7.1.4 Qualitative interviewing

> 'I would suggest that sampling strategies involving people … are more akin to opening a Pandora's box' (Curtis et al., 2000, p. 1008).

Conducting interviews is a way of "generating empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2002, p.112). However, the main difference between everyday conversation and interviews is that interviews are self-conscious, orderly and wholly or partially structured. In order to investigate the inner worlds of the participants, it is important for a researcher to build a strong rapport with the participants so as to make them feel at ease. It must be remembered that participants may require time to warm-up to interviews. Therefore, especially in focus groups, it might be useful at the beginning to engage the participants in some sort of activity that shifts their attention to the main topic. It is possible to record the interview with either audio or video recording devices, which would allow the researcher to fully focus on the interaction with the participants

instead of trying to write or type what participants say. Having said that, transcribing interviews as soon as possible could make researchers' work less demanding as the conversation would still be fresh in their mind. It is also important for the researcher to ensure that the interview takes place in a comfortable environment, to arrive on time, check that the equipment is working, and check that the paperwork is in order (such as the informed consent forms or the questionnaire data for retrospective interviews). All interviews conducted throughout this research project were conducted with mindful consideration of these issues.

In-depth and narrative interviewing

The basic interview method used in this study is semi-structured in terms of its format as it is "suitable for cases when the researcher has a good enough overview of the phenomenon or domain in question and is able to develop broad questions about the topic in advance but does not want to use ready-made response categories that would limit the depth and breadth of the respondent's story" (Dörnyei, 2007, p.136). However, the basic method in this study also follows the principles of in-depth and narrative interviewing.

In-depth interviewing is regarded as the most frequently-used technique in Applied Linguistics, in which both the interviewer and the interviewee try to produce meaning concerning a certain topic (Block, 2000; Esterberg, 2002). Narrative interviews, on the other hand, tend to be used in the context of life-history related questions. The narrative approach places the individual at the heart of the study, and helps represent more closely than questionnaires and graphs the ways in which they make sense of their lives and what meanings they assign to their own stories (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

According to Anderson and Kirkpatrick (2016) a typical narrative interview starts with the researcher explaining the interview process, establishing rapport with the participant, and gaining consent for the study. Then, the participant begins telling his/her story during which the researcher uses non-verbal encouragement, such as smiling and nodding. After the narrative is elicited the follow-up stage starts and the researcher asks for more details to fill in any gaps. Finally, the researcher concludes the interview after asking for final remarks.

McAdams (2009), on the other hand, outlines a standard life-story interview which involves asking the participant to think of his/her life experience as if it were composed of different phases, such as book chapters:

- Life chapters (participants divide their life experiences into major chapters and describe each of them)
- Eight key episodes (high point, low point, turning point, earliest memory, important childhood episode, important adolescent episode, important adult episode, other important episode)
- Life challenge (interviewee explains the biggest challenge he/she has faced)
- Main characters (interviewee identifies two main characters in his/her life episode, one with positive influence and one with negative)
- Future plot (interviewee shares the insights regarding the future direction of his/her life story)
- Personal ideology (this phase includes questions about participants' values and how they have developed over time)
- Life theme (identification of a single theme explaining the life story)

It is important that participants generate the narratives independently without too much spoon-feeding by the researcher, as particular thoughts or memories could be

elicited by narratives only, not by direct questioning (Hopf, 2004). The researcher is free to actively contribute to the interview by asking questions in the follow-up; however, it is crucial to formulate the questions in such a way that they encourage the participants to produce further narratives. Fischer-Rosenthal and Rosenthal (1997 cited in Hopf, 2004) illustrates three types of follow up questions:

- Steering towards a particular life-phase (e.g. Could you tell me a little more about your high school years?)
- Steering towards a situation mentioned in the main narrative (e.g. Could you give me a little more detail about your first presentation in a foreign language?)
- Steering a sample narrative towards an argument (e.g. Can you still remember a situation in which you lost all belief in being able to succeed in the foreign language classes?)

Retrospective interviewing

Retrospective interviewing was another method which was used in this research, especially during the post-intervention, post-questionnaire and post-performance interviews. Drawing out the retrospection of participants regarding the activities they completed in the interview sessions, the items they chose on the questionnaire and the attitudes while giving a presentation on the stage enabled me to elaborate on and build upon certain aspects of language anxiety and learner characteristics.

Focus-groups

Alongside individual, in-depth, narrative, and sometime retrospective interviewing, the study also included focus group interviews in order to gauge students' overall appraisal of the activities used in the intervention sessions. The focus group method allowed participants to think and brainstorm together on emerging issues while the

role of the researcher is shifted from interviewer to moderator. This method also allows participants to have the freedom to discuss the topic between themselves, so it can create a synergy inside the room which yields high-quality data. (Dörnyei, 2007).

7.1.5 Research journal

Research journals are diaries kept by researchers themselves during the course of a research project, rather than by the participants of a study concerning the topic of the investigation (Dörnyei, 2007, p.159). A typical research journal could include a range of items, such as observation data, interview data, informal conversations, contextual information regarding data collection methods, reflections on method, ideas for potential next steps in the research, and possibly additional items (e.g. letters, photographs) (Altrichter & Holly, 2005).

During the intervention study, a research journal was kept primarily for recording the occasional observations in the classroom with interpretative ideas so as not to lose them. On the other hand, the challenges that participants faced, especially during the oral presentations, were recorded in order that those moments with the video data could be used as the stimulated recall. The research journal also included contextual information, reflections and ideas and expanded insights documented throughout the intervention programme. Additionally, the journal also allowed an on-going analysis to evaluate intermediate results.

7.1.6 Worksheets

Throughout the intervention programme, several tasks required participants to write short texts. As a result, the intervention study yielded some precious hands-on data. These included:

- statements about learners' anxious selves;

- detailed descriptions of anxiety-triggering situations and learners' strategies to overcome these;
- general descriptions about learners' future anxious selves indicating the feasible parts;
- compositions in which learners put a positive spin on negative events in their past language learning history, showing how it contained the foundations of spectacular future success;
- letters from the improved anxious selves of learners.

7.2 Data analysis

7.2.1 Analysing quantitative data

The questionnaire data for the exploratory study were coded in SPSS. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed to establish the internal consistency of the scales. As this questionnaire was purely intended for the purposes of selecting suitable participants with high anxiety levels, the participants' data was then lined up according to their respective anxiety scores for the qualitative phase.

The data retrieved in the main questionnaire study were also coded in SPSS and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were computed. Then, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to explore the relationship between language anxiety, general anxiety, fighting dispositions, safe player actions and L2 stage fright. Independent samples of t-tests were conducted to compare all the five variables across gender. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with S-N-K and L-S-D post hoc tests were carried out to explore the difference in anxiety levels, fighting dispositions, safety-seeking behaviours and L2 stage fright levels among the six different class types. The same procedures were carried out for the questionnaire part

of the intervention study; changes between pre-intervention and post-intervention situations were also compared by carrying out t-tests.

As the intervention study also included a semantic differential scale and a rating scale, this data was also analysed. The weekly well-being scale was also coded in SPSS, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed to establish the internal consistency. Later on, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to explore the consistency between the pre and post test scores retrieved from the main questionnaire and the weekly well-being scale. On the other hand, one-way ANOVA with S-N-K and L-S-D post hoc tests were carried out to explore the students' improvements over the five intervention weeks.

Lastly, the rating scale developed to measure students' levels of L2 stage fright was filled in for each participant (presenter) according to the anchors provided. In addition to this, after becoming familiar with the anchors and with the scale, another researcher (rater) filled in the scales for each person. In order to test the consistency of both ratings, a reliability analysis of the scale was carried out, and, by conducting t-tests, the changes between the pre and post intervention performance were evaluated.

7.2.2 Analysing qualitative data

Qualitative research generally results in a great deal of verbal data that must be transcribed and then interpreted by using one of the text-based analysis approaches. Deciding on which approach to use aligns with particular goals and stages of the research. Researchers using an *"editing style"* generally make observations through systematic readings and then organise these observations into *"codes"*, which would require further interpretation. However, when researchers use a "template", they pre-define the codes before the in-depth analysis of the text. Two of these approaches

allow the text to alter codes with recursive arrows occurring in each (Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

Content analysis and thematic coding analysis, following the principles of the template approach (Crabtree & Miller, 1992), was employed for the purposes of analysing the qualitative data across all three studies systematically and in a flexible manner, depending on the data and the phase.

Template approach

The template approach refers to coding the textual material based on codebooks, which is based on a structured or a semi-structured template. The goal of this guide to analysis is to enable the researcher to code large amounts of text in a way that the related segments could be assembled in one place for easier interpretation. Once the segments have been organised, the secondary goal is to summarize the data. Researchers could either choose to cut the typed output into individual segments and sort them, or read through all the segments again to determine the recurrent ones. At this stage, the themes could be color-coded for better coherence. If the codebook is prepared in a totally priori manner, there is a potential risk of missing information; however, producing a codebook and coding the text through the template analysis is not only quick, but also easy to grasp and reproduce.

In this research, after transcribing the interviews, I took notes for general patterns in the first readings, and then I carried out a second phase of thematic coding by identifying the sentences that had the same theoretical or thematic idea, which I then labelled using the same code (Gibbs, 2007). These codes were examined and broader themes were established amongst them based on the research aims. Following this, especially while analysing the interviews conducted as a part of the intervention study, an analysis guide, which included the categories of the initial

coding themes, was developed in order to identify the relevant qualitative data to present for the interview study.

Content analysis

Originating from a quantitative analytical method, content analysis is closely associated with qualitative research, and involves calculating the number of instances (e.g. words, phrases or certain grammatical structures) occurring in a text. However, over time, this analytical method relied less on numbers and more on the text itself for the discovery of the emerging themes, and the interlinked relationship of these themes. Qualitative content analysis concerns a second-level or *latent level analysis* which refers to the interpretive analysis of the deeper meaning of the data. This type of analysis generally proceeds in the following sequence: transcribing the data, pre-coding and coding (initial and second-level), growing ideas and, lastly, drawing conclusions (Dörnyei, 2007).

After finishing the transcription process and going through an initial process of becoming familiar with the data, especially during the preliminary data collection phase, the transcriptions were read once again and were documented along with any additional ideas in the research journal. In the next step, the texts were reviewed once again, and the relevant topics were highlighted by adding an informative label on the margin. Particularly interesting or striking extracts were also highlighted, even though some were not relevant to the main focus area. At the second level of coding, I went beyond the descriptive labels by combining closely related categories and identifying any visible patterns. During the preliminary investigation, which gave the insights towards the anxious self, I was pleased to see that the majority of the interview extracts fitted into the system, giving validity to the coding system used. I also prepared some *vignettes* (short narratives to provide detailed descriptions of

particular experiences) and short *interview profiles* (summaries of participants' accounts in the interviewees' own words) at this level which also enabled me to highlight salient themes (Dörnyei, 2007). In terms of the latent content analysis, my interpretation started right from the moment I first read the transcripts, but this iterative process helped me identify the overarching themes that the main argument would be centred around.

7.3 Research ethics

Ethics is described as "the systematic study of our formalization of rules concerning the separation of good conduct from bad" (David & Sutton, 2011, p.30). There are two very important issues in ethics: confidentiality and anonymity. Before carrying out a study, participants must be assured that the collected data will be securely stored on a password-protected computer, hard drive, or physically stored in a secure location, and that the participants' identity will remain anonymous. In this research, prior to conducting the interviews and administering the questionnaires, participants were introduced to the researcher as well as the aims of the research, and they were given the option to withdraw at any stage of the study. To clear any confusion, participants were also allowed to ask questions before and during the study. Also, to respect the participants' confidentiality and to keep anonymity, codes were used instead of names in this thesis.

Codes were also used during the study. In the exploratory study, for example, each questionnaire was labelled numerically and participants were be asked to either pull and keep the label (number) or memorize it so that after the questionnaire data analysis, the individuals with the desired characteristics who were willing to participate in the interview phase could be selected. In this way, their identities were kept confidential and a potential bias would be avoided. In all study steps,

participants were asked to sign informed consent forms beforehand (see Appendix 1).

The interviews were not too emotional even though they involved questions designed to produce narratives regarding learners' language anxiety experiences. However, in order to hinder potentially stressful situations, some warm-up questions were asked before the main questions. Additionally, I was speaking in a sincere, non-judgmental manner so that the participants could openly express themselves. Good use of body language (e.g. posture and eye contact) was also essential as it helped establishing a non-threatening atmosphere.

Part III: Surveying the Scene

Part III describes the preliminary steps of this complex research journey that prepared the grounds for the final intervention programme (to be described in Part IV) by introducing two separate studies which aimed to investigate the underlying mechanisms of language anxiety. A common feature of these studies is their exploratory nature that provided insights from anxious learners' vantage points.

8 Preliminary exploratory study

8.1 Introduction

Anxiety is known for inhibiting people in various activities and, in extreme cases, even potentially damaging their lives. Anxiety has also been recognised to affect foreign/second language (L2) learning and use, and the SLA literature typically distinguishes "language anxiety" from other types of anxiety. Given the phenomenological saliency of anxiety, it may be surprising to many that there is no generally accepted definition of the construct, making it one of the most elusive concepts amongst individual difference (see Part I)

Not only has language anxiety been a highly elusive concept, but a review of the literature reveals that anxiety research has been at a relative standstill for more than a decade. To illustrate this, a search in six leading journals in Applied Linguistics (*Applied Linguistics*, *Language Learning*, *Language Teaching*, *Modern Language Journal*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* and *TESOL Quarterly;* for a justification of these forums, see Boo et al., 2015) indicated that the total number of articles in these journals was fewer than 10 between the years 2005 and 2013,

representing a decreasing trajectory in comparison to the previous two decades (see Figure 8). Interestingly, there has been a dramatic increase in this respect over the past two years, but it is fair to conclude that the recent surge presented little discussion of theoretical perspectives and developments in models of anxiety but focused primarily on practical aspects of combating anxiety. One valuable exception to this trend has been a recent paper by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), which highlighted the need to reflect on the *functions* of emotions rather than merely categorising them as positive or negative ones, thereby initiating a serious rethink about the conceptualisation of anxiety.

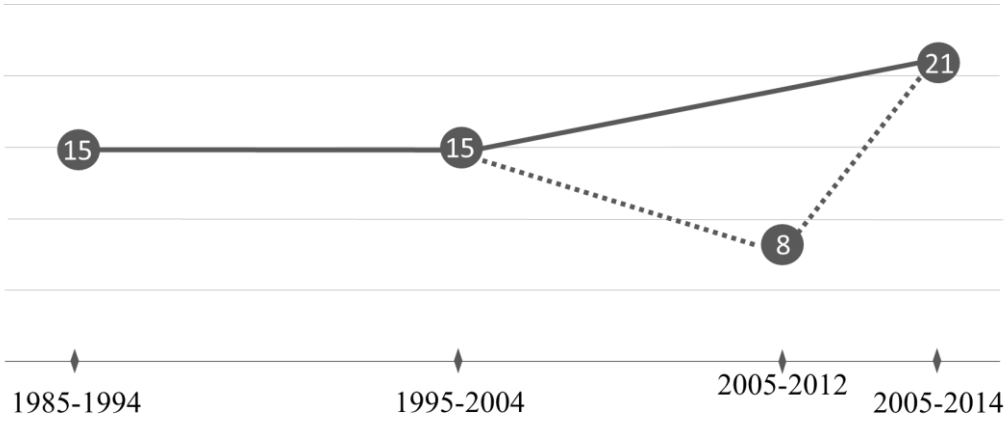


Figure - 8 Number of articles on anxiety published in six prominent journals in Applied Linguistics in the last three decades

In the light of these considerations, it is reasonable to conclude that we may need a fresh approach to re-establish the momentum of language anxiety research. Therefore, the study reported in the current chapter started out by collecting exploratory qualitative data from highly anxious learners in order to gain new insights from their vantage point as they experience the debilitating effects of the construct (although it must be noted here that FLA may also have a facilitating but rather inconsistent impact; see Part II). Because the proposed notion of the "anxious self" has directly emerged

from this empirical data, I start the discussion by introducing the methodology of this study before returning to some further theoretical discussion.

8.2 The study

Phase 1: In order to obtain a broad understanding of the nature of anxiety, I decided to focus my research on learners whose experience of language anxiety was so strong that it resulted in a debilitating effect. First I contacted two instructors of English and two assistant professors at four different universities in Turkey, who all had an awareness of language anxiety as a result of their academic studies, and asked them to refer me to students who exhibited some of the well-known symptoms of debilitating language anxiety, such as the inability to express themselves while performing language skills; freezing up during oral production; displaying physiological symptoms (e.g. blushing, shaking, sweating) when called on; avoiding eye contact with the teacher; excessively worrying about being left behind; and over-studying with no gains. As a result of the teachers' help as well as of subsequent snowball sampling, I conducted qualitative interviews with 20 participants on Skype, each lasting for approximately half an hour and involving questions to elaborate on how students perceived anxiety, what made them anxious and when/whether they became aware of anxiety. All these participants were Turkish learners of English at an intermediate level and all they were all interviewed in their L1, Turkish.

Phase 2: In order to further clarify and build upon the obtained findings, I first administered an anxiety questionnaire – comprising the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986) and the general anxiety section (neuroticism) of the Big Five Inventory (John et al., 1991; 2008) – to 19 male and 55 female participants (mean age 19.8) who were studying English at Turkish universities, and I selected for interviewing 16 of them with the highest anxiety measures on one or both scales – the

distribution of the data was such that these 16 participants formed a natural cluster with a considerable gap between them and the next group of learners in terms of their anxiety scores (the questionnaire will be explained in Section 10.2.2 in detail). All the selected participants were studying English Language Teaching, with their English proficiency being at an upper-intermediate level. The rationale for choosing students with such relatively high level of proficiency was to exclude cases when anxiety was caused purely by the limited language code at lower proficiency levels. Each participant was interviewed face-to-face and the data were submitted to stepwise content analysis to distil salient themes.

Data analysis: Although, as mentioned above, the study included a quantitative component, this was primarily used for the principled selection of interviewees for the subsequent, dominant qualitative phase. All the interviews were transcribed and analysed through latent content analysis to elicit general themes and patterns concerning both the symptoms of anxiety and the classroom situations that might trigger these characteristics. First, I highlighted relevant extracts in the transcripts and assigned codes for them. Then, I examined the codes and created broader themes amongst them based on the research aims and interview questions (e.g. anxiety-provoking situations, behaviours and thoughts while feeling anxious, describing anxiety, language anxiety vs general anxiety). Following this, in an adaption of Crabtree and Miller's (1992) template approach I developed an analysis guide that reflected McAdams's New Big Five model and his 3-level conceptual framework (see later for details) and juxtaposed the categories of the coding themes and the template in order to identify the relevant qualitative data for the study. Each broad theme was then submitted to a more detailed analysis which enabled me to form more specific categories under each theme (e.g. stage fright, fear of negative evaluation, heightened

expectations). This hierarchical pattern not only helped provide a general model but also allowed me to discover some fine links and distinctions within and between the initial broad themes and levels in the template.

8.3 The Anxious Self

Anxious self could be described as one's anxiety about what to do in L2 classes or L2 spoken environments, about how others will respond and about the likelihood of taking successful action in L2 when necessary. It is a self located in some specific or all L2 spoken conditions which may turn hostile at any moment. A fighter person imagines an L2 speaking environment where it is friendly and full of successful lines which will eventually lead that person speak more fluently, more accurately and more comfortably. A quitter person, on the other hand, imagines an L2 speaking environment where it is unfriendly filled with obstacles which will eventually limit the chances for success. One of the main themes emerging from the first round of interviews was the fact that several learners talked about the way by which they were affected by anxiety in a somewhat detached manner, referring to an anxious persona that they were not fully in control of. The following two extracts from two different participants illustrate this point well:

> I envy my classmates because they can express their ideas the way they want and I can't. When I am anxious, I am aware of myself and my behaviours yet I cannot control my movements and I often ask myself: "What am I going to do now?" … I cannot reflect on my inner speech while performing; I keep telling myself that I should always smile but I have an anxious side and I cannot deny it. I believe that I can control the anxious side of me more and more, yet I do not know exactly how. (Female Interviewee 1, hence FInt 1)

> Normally I can do whatever I want but the person who presents (herself in the English class) cannot do what she wants. (FInt 6)

Thus, some learners found it conducive to describe their anxious manifestations in L2 performance as if those were the outworking of a fairly independent dimension of their

overall self. This framing of the issue had obvious links to the recent emphasis in SLA on the significance of the learner's self-concept (see e.g. Csizér & Magid, 2014) and, within the domain of motivation research, the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009a, 2009b). This prompted me to explore as to whether conceptualising the "anxious self" might be a fruitful approach to shed new light on the subject. A search for a potential conceptual framework that might accommodate this new conceptualisation led me to an influential recent theory of individual differences by Dan McAdams, the New Big Five model (e.g. McAdams, 2006a, 2006b; McAdams & Pals, 2006), which I then adopted as the guiding theoretical paradigm for the data analysis (see Part I, Section 3.3.3).

8.4 Situating anxiety in McAdams's theory of personality

As will be illustrated below, language anxiety is reflected in the three levels of his model seamlessly: first, it includes an initial element of inherent tendency which is biologically/genetically related; second, state anxiety can be understood as an example of characteristic adaptations; third, the interviews confirm that people regularly produce narratives to create cohesion in their experiences and perceptions so that the unified narrative can become a kind of guide to be used to deal with the negative consequences of anxiety. Let us look at the three levels more closely in the light of the data.

8.4.1 Dispositional trait level

It is a well-known observation that anxious learners often experience one or more unpleasant symptoms. The most common ones are physiological ones such as a high heart rate, stomach pain, feeling hot, trembling voice, blushing and shaking of hands or legs, etc. For example, the interviewees report,

> I feel my heartbeats. (FInt 1)

> I suddenly feel hot and my hands start shaking. I don't know if my face really turns red but I certainly feel like that. (MInt 8)
> My legs shake. Sometimes it is so extreme that I barely stand. (FInt 14)

Some of these symptoms were observed during the interviews themselves. Additionally, anxious students can sometimes have difficulty concentrating, and can find themselves freezing up while performing, for example,

> It feels like I am paralysed. When I am on the stage, something unidentifiable happens. Last year, even though I was well-prepared for a topic, I could not even talk about it. (FInt 12)

Anxiety may also manifest in some extreme symptoms such as unexplained pain, muscle stiffness or even fainting:

> It was during an exam period. I woke up early in the morning. All I thought about was the exam that day. I felt dizzy and headed to the bathroom. Then, I fainted on the way there. (FInt 3)

The interview data elicited from the participants offers a clear indication that there is a tendency in some learners to experience symptoms of anxiety on a recurring basis, resulting in a rather resigned, settled disposition. The following three extracts are typical examples in this respect:

> It (anxiety) is somehow inside me. I can’t get rid of it. I am an introvert person and I think that is all because of it. (FInt 4)
>
> I get nervous easily. I am concerned about the reactions I may be receiving upon my decisions or participations. It is not extreme but it prevents me from making decisions freely. (FInt 15)
>
> I think it is my general personality. I do not like talking to people because I do not feel comfortable. (FInt 9)

One of the most recognizable features of dispositional traits is that they are relatively consistent across different circumstances, and indeed, the qualitative data suggest that most of the participants experienced detrimental effects of anxiety in different walks of their lives. For example, one interviewee (FInt 15) stated, “No matter what I do or which subject I study, I will become anxious as it is one of my main characteristics”.

Moreover, as the following extract illustrates, some of the data also point to the heritable nature of dispositional traits (even though further research would be needed to determine exactly what and to what extent is inherited): “My mother has always had anxiety. She often tells me that we are similar to each other in terms of anxiety” (FInt 11).

8.4.2 Characteristic adaptation level

Some people experience a debilitating, fear-like emotion in certain situations which not only reduces the productivity and the efficiency of their performance but which also causes a great deal of uneasiness in them. However, unlike dispositional traits, these emotions are characteristic of only specific aspects of particular people’s social life, with some well-known adaptations of this kind including *stage fright* and *test anxiety*. Stage fright is a widely known and experienced anxiety manifestation in a distinct type of communication situation; it can be understood as a “dynamic event that revolves around fluctuations in individuals’ perceptions of their own competency in public speaking settings” (MacIntyre & MacDonald, 1998: 360). Giving a speech, singing or acting before an audience are some of the most common situations in which people experience stage fright, and several examples of it could also be found in the dataset; for example, “I can easily become anxious in front of a group of people. I also feel anxious if there is an authority – you know, the feeling of being evaluated” (FInt 4). This extract also highlights the role of the presence of an authority as another factor contributing to anxiety arousal.

Test anxiety is one of the clearest demonstrations of how a specific instructional task can mediate anxiety. With the growing impact of examinations in modern society, test anxiety has become a pervasive issue (Huang & Hung, 2013; Sarason 1986; Zeidner, 1998), as individuals increasingly come across test situations not only in

classroom settings but also in other aspects of life such as job interviews or applying for educational programs. One of the participants (FInt 5), for example, reported: "I am anxious not only in classes in English but also in others, especially during exams. Sometimes I cannot even focus on the questions".

Besides the above examples of adaptation to communication situations and task types, the data also highlight several other archetypical adaptation forms. A frequent anxiety type concerns the *fear of negative evaluation* – for example, "Others might think that I am not capable enough. I might fail and others might laugh at me" (FInt 6) – which may be particularly salient within a competitive classroom goal structure: "…when I see my friends studying or participating more than I do, I feel anxious" (FInt 1). It is no coincidence that the adaptations mentioned so far as emerging from the data correspond with the three well-known components – communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety – that Horwitz et al. (1986) identified in their seminal paper as shaping foreign language anxiety.

The interviews with anxious learners suggested two more common characteristic adaptations. One of these is related to the *content* of the communication, particularly unfamiliar content. The best example for this type in the dataset involved an account when a participant who normally displayed heightened language anxiety talked about a situation when this did *not* happen:

> The lesson started with what we already knew, for example with Facebook, we were familiar with the topic and were able to understand it. We started talking about this… I was very relaxed. I could answer everything. (FInt 16)

Finally, a theme that would resonate with many anxious learners concerns the perception of heightened *expectations:*

> I have to express my ideas freely and I have to answer when people ask questions. I am a second year university student. People have expectations. This

> is what an educated person should do. When I cannot answer I feel like an idiot. (FInt 11)

I have argued earlier that characteristic adaptations are mediators that bring to the fore general anxiety tendencies in the individuals' actual lives, and therefore I asked the interviewees *when* they first came to realize their anxiety dispositions. Many students reported that they first experienced their anxiety in their adolescence as they tried to find their position amongst their peers. For example, one of the students stated that she became aware of her anxiety during social interactions in her high school years when she noticed that she actually cared about the other students' opinions:

> I think I started to be anxious in high school when social relationships became more serious. I am generally comfortable in the school but when I feel that the outcome of my task performance may be negative, then I start feeling anxious. I can't help thinking what others might think about it. (FInt 7)

However, with some other interviewees (FInt 4) the first memories of experiencing anxiety go back to a younger age ('I have always had this problem. When I was 10 years old there were classroom representative elections. I gave a speech and I started crying'), while some others first encountered it only when they attended university (also see e.g. Daly, 1991):

> It (my anxiety) started at university because the classroom activities demanded extra effort…I remember my first presentation in English. I looked at my friends' faces and I saw that they were all looking at me… (FInt 1)

8.4.3 Narrative identity level

The narrative level of anxiety concerns learners' attempts to make sense of their anxious reactions, to understand why and how those occur, as well as to organise and process them through explanations and rationalisations. Interviewing as a research method taps into this narrative mode by definition, and the analysis of the corpus

foregrounded three typical approaches the participants' narratives took, representing three reaction styles: *fighter, quitter* and *safe player.*

Fighter: Some students explicitly expressed that they would like to get rid of their anxiety, adding that they had already started developing a disposition of adopting such combative behaviour. It was promising to see that through such a conscious stance these students – who, I should recall, had often experienced a debilitating degree of anxiety – started to deal with their anxiety in a constructive manner, as illustrated by the following two examples:

> Now I am more aware of myself. I am not as anxious as I was before. Only in a few circumstances – I am going to be a teacher of English. English language will be my job. So I cannot be an anxious teacher, right? (FInt 10)

> Actually, I often criticise the anxious me and find it unnecessary to be anxious. The positive side is that I have become a person who does detailed research to be well prepared before attending to a lecture, going somewhere or doing something. I have also started reading about anxiety. What I am saying is I do not give up. I am trying to improve myself. It is getting better and I feel happier. (FInt 1)

Quitter: In contrast to the fighters, some other students perceived their anxiety in an unconstructive and non-forward-pointing manner, even though the actual symptoms they experienced were no more severe than those felt by the fighters. They became resigned to failure in trying to overcome their anxiety, as is expressed by the following statement clearly: "I do not think I can change. It is typical me. I have always been anxious and I will always be, I know" (FInt 9). As a result, the typical coping mechanisms such students adopted were characterised by *flight* rather than fight; for example, in the following example one of the interviewees reported the intention of taking another course at university instead of the L2-related subject he was studying:

> I want to talk in the classroom but I can never take the first step. It does not matter whom or where I speak… As long as I speak in English, I am always nervous. To tell you the truth, I do not struggle. I have not attended the presentation sessions this semester and I will fail for that. I consider changing

> my course and study educational sciences instead of English language… (MInt 8)

Safe player: The findings show that anxious students sometimes employ "safety-seeking behaviours", which are measures that an individual takes to circumvent a potentially negative event. In the language classroom, these students avoid or minimise the chance of being asked to perform in the L2 by not initiating speech, avoiding eye contact, sitting at the back of the class or giving monosyllabic answers (for a detailed description of this disposition see e.g. King, 2014; Oxford, 1999). As the following example illustrates, such behaviours can turn into a cohesive avoidance type which would also affect other aspects of the individual's everyday life:

> If I noticed an item I bought from a store was damaged I would never go there to ask for a new one. It is the same in the classroom. I never take responsibility and answer a question. Most of the time I sit at the back of the classroom. (FInt 11)

Finally, there were also examples of students who simply had not produced a clarifying narrative for themselves and thus had not constructed any cohesive meaning of their experiences. This was revealed when they indicated to us that taking part in the interview – which, by definition, pushed them into a narrative mode – played a conducive role in helping them to make sense of their experiences. For example, at the end of an interview, one participant (FInt 6) said, "Thank you! Really… I have found that the problem is within myself because I limit myself".

One of the most remarkable findings of the interview data has been the observation that when students managed to structure painful memories into constructive narratives, this had a "redemptive" impact on their negative thoughts or feelings. Some individuals, for example, were ready to share their personal narratives with others, and interestingly, they seemed to coincide with the ones showing a fighting disposition. On the other hand, it seems that a reluctance to share stories with

others may leave students alone with their anxious thoughts, which might in turn make it more difficult to let students process their experiences. For example, one of the interviewees has defined anxiety as a difficult concept to explain and told us how she became resigned to it even though she attended classes:

> I can't really explain it (my anxiety). I sometimes cry after my presentations then people see how sad I feel and they try to cheer me up. This is how I am and I accepted it. (FInt 4)

When the data were examined to understand how people explained such an avoidance, it appeared that a key contributing factor involved the fact that the people concerned *feared* others' negative opinions about themselves and chose therefore not to talk about their experiences because they thought others might perceive them as a weakness; for example, "I do not want them to think bad about me or have pity on me" (FInt 13).

8.5 The Anxious Self revisited

In the interview extracts cited in the previous section, several participants described themselves as cohesive personas – or as one participant called it, "the anxious me" – when they operated in an anxious state, and in several cases they talked about this "anxious self" as a side of themselves that was fairly distinct from other aspects of their existence, having a life of its own. From this perspective, the three reaction styles emerging from the narratives can be viewed as manifestations of three typical anxious self types that are given shape by the narrative level of the students' self-system. Yet, it needs to be stressed that the anxious self concerns anxiety facets at all the three levels of McAdams's three-tiered model, and the following two narratives offer illustrations of how the various dimensions contribute their unique impact to the mix.

> I attended an English Language Teaching department two years ago and I had to take an exam for preparatory year exemption. When I first arrived at the university I knew no one. I did not even know where the exam would take place. I was so anxious that I could hardly breathe. As a result, I decided not to take the exam and I went back home. That would cost me one extra year at the university

> and I was depressed for a while questioning my action. After one or two months, as I started to take the preparatory class, I came to realize that I actually needed it. I was going to become an English teacher but I did not feel proficient. In a way, that year was an opportunity for me to learn English well. I also met some really nice friends. We are still in the same classroom. If I had taken that exemption test probably I would not have been in a different position. I would not be self-confident. Now I am more aware of myself. I am not as anxious as I was before. Only in a few circumstances – I am going to be a teacher of English. English language will be my job. So I cannot be an anxious teacher, right? (FInt 10)

> I am generally an anxious person. Homework, not being well prepared for tasks, attempting to do something – these things often make me anxious. Sometimes I can feel my heartbeat and I feel like talking to someone to tell what has happened. … I do not think I am worse than my classmates (in terms of English language skills) but, especially in the classroom setting, when I see my friends studying or participating more than I do, I feel anxious. I start questioning my style. I can say that I feel insecure in English. … Actually, I often criticise the anxious me and find it unnecessary to be anxious. The positive side is that I have become a person who does detailed research to be well prepared before attending to a lecture, going somewhere or doing something. I have also started reading about anxiety. What I am saying is I do not give up. I am trying to improve myself. It is getting better and I feel happier. (FInt 1)

These extracts make it evident that both students had anxiety tendencies and suffered from these by experiencing some of the well-known symptoms. Yet, they showed marked differences at the characteristic adaptations level: the first student's anxiety mostly manifested itself in test situations, whereas the second student was more affected by the competitive perspective. The narrative level, however, shows a common feature in the two students: both of them were able to develop a cohesive narrative with a positive trajectory regarding their anxiety experiences, resulting in fight rather than flight. However, by looking at a third extract below, it can also be seen how some students construct counter-productive narratives that lead them to give up fighting. Even though this student reported to have chosen to train to be a teacher willingly, she had developed a narrative with a negative trajectory through her course, which resulted in the idea of changing profession.

> I think it is my general personality. I do not like talking to people because I do not feel comfortable. I prefer being alone. I have always been like this and I have not questioned why. I suffer from anxiety in almost all the other classes. Of course it is worse in English because presentations and in-class speeches put extra pressure on me. I do not like these and I often feel like not doing these. During presentations, I do not know how to react, I just imitate others and I do not like it. Actually even the presence of different faces looking at me when I talk is enough to make me anxious. As I said, I normally keep with a distance from other people but when I am anxious I am even more unbearable for them. I am not that kind of a person to talk to a group of people. That makes me think about my future career and I think I should be into a less formal profession (than becoming a teacher), such as running a small coffee shop. It seems risky but I think I will take the risk. Just I need to find the strength. … I do not think I can change. It is typical me. I have always been anxious and I will always be, I know. (FInt 15)

Interestingly, as this student tried to make sense of her anxious reactions, she observed features of the communicative context that heightened her anxiety and blamed the people around her. As a result, she decided that escaping anxiety meant escaping from crowds, implying that she had better choose a job which would require less exposure to formal group talk and to interaction in general.

8.6 Conclusion

This section described the process of preliminary exploratory investigation whereby the concept of the "anxious self" emerged from the qualitative data and found an accommodating theoretical paradigm in McAdams's novel three-tiered model of personality.

Anxiety as a dynamic combination of three distinct facets could offer a more nuanced understanding of how anxiety affects individuals across various situations rather than the traditional categorisation of trait and state anxiety. The peculiar aspect of McAdams's model is viewing the way learners form cohesive verbal accounts as an integral part of the overall anxiety construct. The adaptation of McAdams's framework suggests that anxiety is not uniform. There are certain tendencies that are sometimes

reflected in a pure form and sometimes in combination with some other factors, with further dynamism added by the fact that people often construct cohesive life narratives that accommodate but at the same time adjust these manifestations. In this way, individuals can integrate and organise feelings in a coherent way in order to achieve a sense of consistency and control over their lives, which allow them constructively process anxiety-provoking experiences.

Finally, helping learners to produce constructive narratives about their overall anxious selves might offer a way to re-process their anxiety-related experiences positively, thereby combating some of the harmful effects of debilitating anxiety. On the other hand, reframing anxiety as the anxious self might offer a way to link anxiety research to other areas of SLA where the importance of the self-concept has been recognised. An obvious link in this respect would be relating the anxious self to future motivational self-guides such as the ideal self, and it may also be possible to employ imagery-based strategies in shaping the anxious self in a similar manner to how the role of vision has been explored in promoting the ideal self (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014).

9 Questionnaire study

9.1 Introduction

The preliminary study reported in the previous section started out by collecting exploratory qualitative data from highly anxious learners in order to gain new insights from their vantage point and the findings obtained in that study gave the insight that conceptualising the "anxious self" could stand for a fruitful approach to the subject.

Adopting McAdams's framework as the guiding theoretical paradigm, the initial findings were then corroborated by an actual survey with a questionnaire as utilizing a structured questionnaire was one of the most convenient ways to collect data in such a fresh research project. The questionnaire would help to broadly test the underlying mechanisms of the anxious-self and once complete, it would constitute a useful as well as a reliable instrument to be used in a more complex study designs such as an intervention study.

In this section, I will list questionnaire development, administration and analysis processes and illustrate what the results suggest regarding some basic learner characteristics and the anxious self.

9.2 Methods

9.2.1 Participants

The main sampling criterion for this questionnaire study was to access as much diversity as possible in terms of school type, school location, students' academic background and experience with English language. As a result, a total of 514 learners of English (mean age 18.6), all at an intermediate level, participated in the main

questionnaire study. Of these, 165 (32.1%) were males and 267 (51.9%) were females. There was missing gender information for 82 (16%) participants. Participants were selected from six educational institutions (three high schools and three universities) across Turkey (Figure 9).

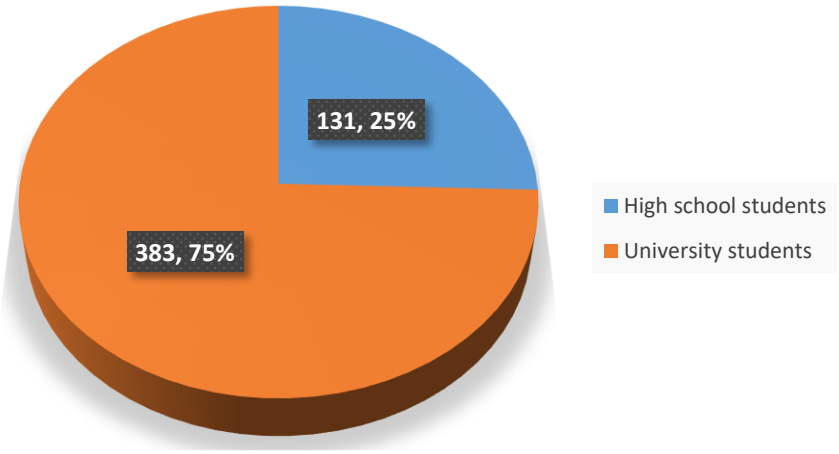


Figure 9 – Number of participants according to their education level

These schools were selected to represent a broad spectrum of the Turkish educational system. The participants were also divided into seven categories according to their classes or academic statuses:

1. High school - language studies (45 participants, 8.8%)
2. High school - other areas (etc. social sciences, mathematical sciences) (85 participants, 16.5%)
3. University preparatory year for English majors (113 participants, 22%)
4. University preparatory year for non-English majors (135 participants, 26.3%)
5. University English majors (53 participants, 10.3%)
6. University non-English majors (70 participants, 13.6%)
7. Postgraduate (13 participants, 2.5%)

9.2.2 Questionnaire development and administration

Item pool and questionnaire structure

When generating the item pool there were several aims. The first one was to measure students' level of language anxiety. The best-known and the most used scale has been a five-point Likert-scale type instrument developed by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986). For measuring students' general anxiety, the neuroticism section of John et al.'s (1991; 2008) classic Big Five Inventory was considered to provide an adequate measurement tool. However, what students suggested in the exploratory study went beyond the levels of general anxiety and language anxiety; the main concepts that emerged from the preliminary qualitative data as relevant to my study appeared to require a more focused task. Therefore, I generated a questionnaire item pool which would focus on three specific aspects of what students called the "anxious self" (the third and the main aim of the study):

- Fighting/Quitting dispositions
- Safe player actions
- L2 Stage Fright

I generated a total of 23 questionnaire items, and this item pool was carefully examined with the guidance of my supervisor in order to remove ambiguous or duplicated statements. As a result, the original pool was reduced to 15 items and these, combined with the 33-item FLCAS and 8-item neuroticism scale made up the 56 items of the complete questionnaire (see Appendix 2).

Piloting and administering the final version

The 56 items were mixed up in a random order and presented in a booklet format. In contrast to the questionnaire administered in the exploratory study containing

FLCAS and neuroticism items only, this instrument was administered in Turkish, the L1 of all the participants, for more precise responses (see Appendix 3). The translation process was quite straightforward: drawing on an adapted version of FLCAS in Turkish (Kunt, 1997) and with the assistance of a Turkish-English bilingual researcher and a teacher of Turkish language, all the items were first translated and then fine-tuned into Turkish.

Scale and Cronbach alpha	**Description and example items**
Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale 33 items (α =.93) Adapted from Horwitz et al. (1986)	'A distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process' (p. 128). The questionnaire reflects sub-components: communication apprehension, test-anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. E.g. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.
Neuroticism scale of the Big Five Inventory 8 items (α =.76) Adapted from John et al. (1991; 2008)	Tendency to experience negative emotions such as anxiety or depression, often referred as emotional instability. E.g. I am someone who is depressed, blue.
Fighting/quitting dispositions 5 items (α =.78)	Combative behaviours or resignation to failure in trying to overcome their anxiety. E.g. I feel too weak to overcome anxiety
Safe player actions 5 items (α =.72)	Safety-seeking behaviours, which are measures that an individual takes to circumvent a potentially negative event. E.g. I find myself avoiding speaking in language classes by some specific actions (e.g. sitting at the back, avoiding eye contact).
L2 stage fright 5 items (α =.78)	The fear-like emotion a person experience when communicating or presenting in L2 before an audience or in a situation where some other people are in a position observe. E.g. I tend to feel specific symptoms (e.g. trembling, blushing, heart pounding) when I am presenting in English before my classmates.

Table 3 - Scale characteristics

The pilot version of the questionnaire was administered to two groups of university students (N = 60). Besides filling out the questionnaire, the students were also asked to express their thoughts on any possible problematic items, clarity, wording, relevance or items' layout.

A reliability analysis of the questionnaire was carried out in order to measure the internal consistency of the scales and the Cronbach alpha coefficients to provide statistical suggestion for item deletion. Because the reliability of all the scales reached satisfactory Cronbach alpha values, none of the items were deleted and subsequently the questionnaire was successfully rolled out to the six different institutions in Turkey. Table 3 shows a summary of the scales indicating their Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients.

9.2.3 Data analysis

The questionnaire data of this study were entered into SPSS. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to establish the internal consistency of the scales. Then, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to explore the relationship between the language anxiety, general anxiety, fighting dispositions, safe player actions and L2 stage fright. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare all the five variables across gender. Lastly, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with S-N-K and L-S-D post-hoc tests were carried out to explore the difference in anxiety levels, fighting dispositions, safety-seeking behaviours and L2 stage fright levels among the six different class types.

9.3 Results and discussion

9.3.1 Scope, saliency and adaptations of FLA

To find out the extent to which intermediate-level learners of English in the Turkish context felt anxious in their language classes and in their L2 communication, first their FLCAS scores were computed.

	M	***SD***	***Actual range (possible range)***
FLCAS (based on item-rating)	2.89	.68	1.12-4.85 (1-5)
FLCAS (based on total score)	94.83	22.39	37-160 (33-165)

Table 4 - Descriptive statistics for total and mean FLA scores

Based on the mean FLA scores (Table 4), the participants, as a group, could be identified as slightly anxious; however, the wide range of responses suggested that this group was heterogeneous in terms of their anxiety levels. Therefore, the participants' individual scores were categorized as non-anxious (those with scores between 33 and 66), slightly anxious (those with scores between 67 and 99), considerably anxious (with scores between 100 and 132) and lastly, very anxious (if the scores are between 133 and 165) (Table 5).

Item ratings	**FLCAS total score**	**N (percentage)**
1-2 (non-anxious)	between 33-66	56 (10.9%)
2-3 (slightly anxious)	between 67-99	248 (48.2%)
3-4 (considerably anxious)	between 100-132	184 (35.8%)
4-5 (very anxious)	between 133-165	26 (5.1%)

Table 5 – Distribution of participants according to item-ratings

The results show that the total ratio of considerably anxious and very anxious Turkish learners of English was 40.9%, which once again highlights the prominence of language anxiety in this context. The participants' scores on the scales of

neuroticism, L2 stage fright, safe player actions and quitting dispositions are presented in Table 6.

	M	***SD***	***Actual range (possible range)***
Neuroticism	2.93	.76	1-5 (1-5)
L2 Stage Fright	3.14	.91	1-5 (1-5)
Safe player actions	2.81	.85	1-5 (1-5)
Quitter dispositions	2.64	.87	1-5 (1-5)

Table 6 – Mean scores of neuroticism, L2 stage fright, safe player actions and quitting dispositions

Measure	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	5	*M*	*SD*
1. FLA	-	.52*	.71*	.72*	.77*	2.89	.68
2. Neuroticism	.52*	-	.43*	.43*	.59*	2.93	.76
3. Stage fright	.71*	.43*	-	.57*	.64*	3.14	.91
4. Safe player actions	.72*	.43*	.57*	-	.59*	2.82	.85
5. Quitting dispositions	.77*	.59*	.64*	.59*	-	2.64	.87

*p<.001

Table 7 - Correlation matrix for all the measures

A correlation analysis of the variables (Table 7) yielded interesting results, confirming the earlier discussion regarding the existence and association of trait, situational as well as the dispositional levels of language anxiety. Although the literature suggests contradictory results about the relations of general anxiety and language anxiety (Dewaele, 2002, 2013; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989), this questionnaire showed that there was a strong positive correlation between the neuroticism and language anxiety variables. This indicates that the stronger someone's general anxiety tendency, the more likely he/she is to realise it in the language classroom setting; in other words, emotionally stable individuals are likely to suffer less from language anxiety. That the findings also suggest similar results for the L2 stage fright could be interpreted as an indication that stage fright constitutes an important adaptation and realization of language anxiety by reducing the efficiency of learner performances and by causing a great deal of uneasiness. Lastly,

according to the results, anxious learners were shown to be more inclined towards making sense of their anxious reactions in a negative trajectory which often causes them to play-safe or flee from the situation. Yet, as demonstrated in Figure 10, not all the considerably anxious and very anxious students are necessarily quitters.

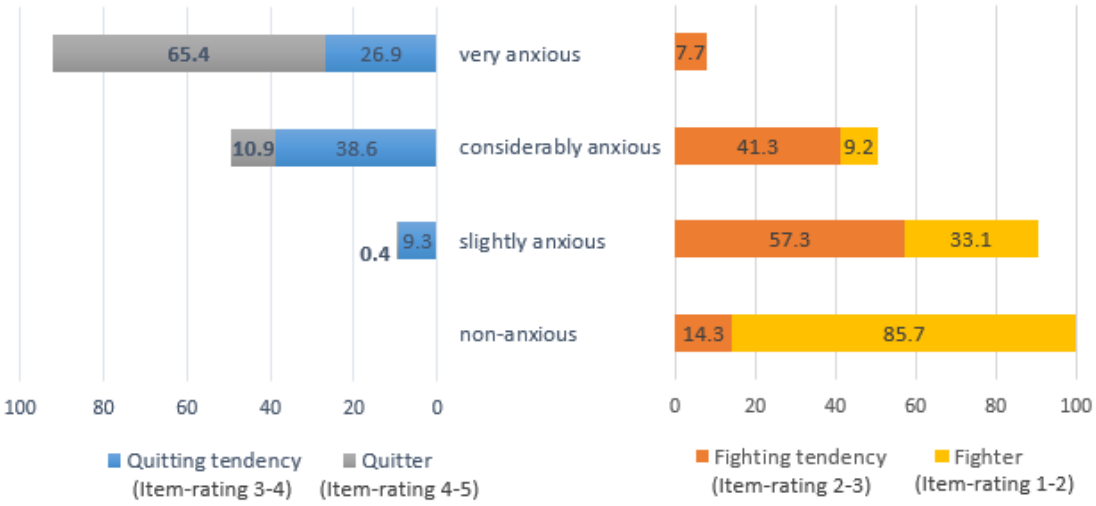


Figure 10 – Descriptive statistics regarding percentage of quitters and fighters in all anxiety levels according to their item-rating frequency

Although language anxiety was strongly correlated with the manifestation of quitter and "playing-it-safe" behaviours, there were a few instances of individual learners maintaining a neutral or even positive outlook towards anxiety, despite experiencing high levels of anxiety themselves. This could highlight the initial idea that learners' attempts to make sense of their anxious reactions might be shaped by the narrative level of the students' self-system and that it is not impossible for some learners to develop a disposition of adopting a combative behaviour against anxiety even if they are experiencing anxiety at a debilitating degree.

Lastly, the age factor has not revealed a significant relationship with the anxiety levels. In this context, age could also be seen as the length of exposure to L2, because all the participants were enrolled in the formal education system in Turkey

where the starting age of L2 studies is uniform. Let us take a closer look at the anxiety in different academic levels.

9.3.2 Anxiety and academic level

One way ANOVA results with post-hoc comparisons using SNK and LSD tests revealed significantly different levels of language anxiety among the six different academic levels [$F(6, 507) = 5.51$, $p < .001$] with a moderate effect size (eta squared .06). Students enrolling in language studies in high-school experienced much higher levels of language anxiety in comparison with the students studying other sciences in high school ($M = 3.28$, $SD = .64$; $M = 2.85$, $SD = .86$) Anxiety levels of high school students enrolling in language studies were even higher than university preparatory year students' although two of these groups study a foreign language (English) extensively ($M = 3.28$, $SD = .64$; $M = 2.82$, $SD = .56$.) Interestingly, university-level students who are English majors (in this dataset, English language and literature) indicated that their anxiety levels increased comparing to those in the preparatory year ($M = 3.09$, $SD = .69$) (Figure 11).

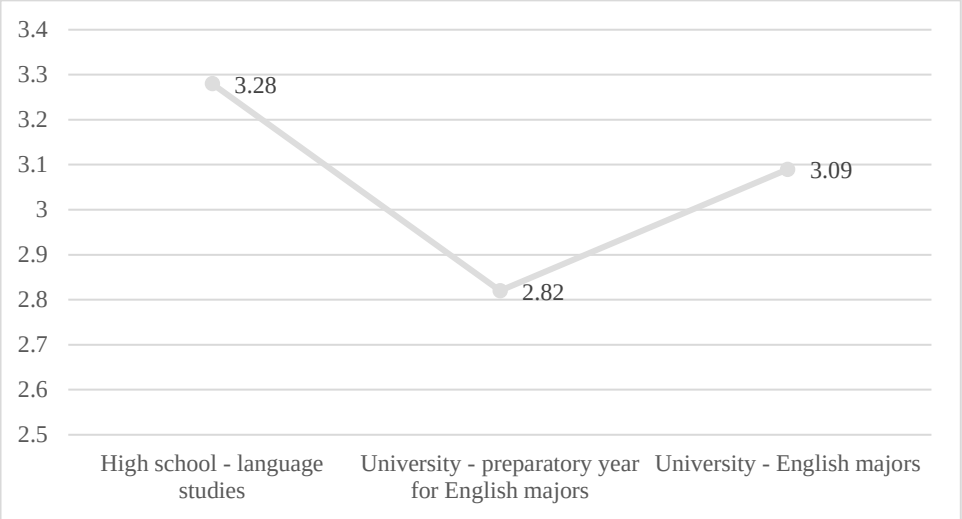


Figure 11 - Mean scores of language anxiety on a typical journey of a student willing to study foreign languages.

One eminent reason for such a diversion could be related to the exams that high school students have to take in order to attend the university. Students who have chosen to study languages in high school, could be learning a foreign language not primarily for communicative purposes but mainly as a medium which enables them to enter a university, and therefore they can be expected to worry about the consequences of failing (see next section). This finding is related to the fact that testing situations could mediate language anxiety and that test anxiety, therefore, is another clear adaptation of language anxiety.

On the other hand, what Figure 11 suggest is that once students successfully pass their exams and attend to a university they feel slightly more comfortable in terms of their anxiety. However, as they approach the end of their undergraduate studies, they again tend to experience slightly higher levels of anxiety, probably because towards the end of their studies, students are normally expected to excel in their areas so that they can find a good job. Therefore, the chronological fluctuation may be caused by a combination of various factors such as student expectations, fear of failing, course contents, type of instruction and text anxiety, but the exact nature of these influences can only be clarified by a further study.L2 stage fright was also found to be experienced differently in particular classes [$F(6, 507) = 3.93$, $p < .01$], as a result of SNK and LSD post hoc comparisons. As previously mentioned, L2 stage fright appears to be an inevitable part of the language anxiety mechanism, and in this study, it was also observed across different academic levels that the higher the level of language anxiety, the more likely it became for L2 stage fright to be experienced.

Similarly to the language anxiety levels reported above, high school language students were found to be experiencing significantly higher levels of L2 stage fright

than all other participants at varying academic levels, apart from the university students studying English majors (Table 8).

	M (SD)								
	1 (n=45)	***2 (n=85)***	***3 (n=113)***	***4 (n=135)***	***5 (n=53)***	***6 (n=70)***	***7 (n=13)***	***F (6, 507)***	***Effect size*****
L2 stage fright	3.55 (.71)	3.01 (1.07)	3.24 (.86)	2.99 (.87)	3.36 (.91)	3.12 (.92)	2.66 (.56)	3.93*	.04
Safe-player	2.82 (.81)	2.88 (1.01)	2.68 (.72)	2.63 (.85)	2.98 (.84)	3.21 (.77)	2.74 (.67)	4.70*	.05
Quitter	3.08 (.96)	2.66 (1.01)	2.65 (.75)	2.47 (.82)	2.83 (.97)	2.55 (.81)	2.22 (.47)	3.99*	.05

*P<.001

**Eta squared

(1) High school - language studies, (2) High school - other areas, (3) University preparatory year for English majors, (4) University preparatory year for non-English majors, (5) University English majors, (6) University non-English majors, (7) Postgraduate

Table 8 - Comparison of L2 stage fright level, quitter dısposition and safe-player actions across academic levels

These high school language class students start using English in a more formal manner for the first time during their high school courses. Before starting these courses, they had very rarely, if ever, given presentations in English. These factors, alongside some others, such as the fear of failure or fear of losing face (considering the characteristics of adolescence), might be contributing to their L2 stage fright levels.

Another point to mention is that university students studying in preparatory classes to prepare them for starting English majors experienced more stage fright than all other students studying in the preparatory class (Table 9). I should emphasize here that all students enrolling in the preparatory year study together in the same class regardless of which subject they are to study after the preparatory course. In the universities in which I administered the questionnaire, all preparatory year students take the same modules and share the same environment. In a way, it seems that language students in the preparatory year experience more uneasiness when they are

on stage performing in English. Again, some factors such as fear of losing face, public expectations or social comparison might be taking place here; however, further data would be required in order to investigate this issue. Stage fright will be particularly discussed in detail in Part 4, in which this topic will be investigated with further quantitative and qualitative data.

Results suggested that students' inclinations towards playing-safe and quitting easily were also manifested differently across the varying academic levels [$F(6, 507) = 4.70$, $p < .001$; $F(6, 507) = 3.99$, $p < .01$]. (Table 9).

The quitting tendency also comes into prominence particularly during high school. High school level language learners tend to be more likely to give up easily than those studying in the university preparatory year. As these students were also the most anxious ones, the results were as expected. However, even though the goal is to provoke the adoption of a more student-centric, communicative approach to language teaching in Turkey, there are still exam-focussed (as a result of the nation-wide focus on central examinations), mostly traditional approaches employed in many schools, including the high schools where the questionnaire was administered. As a result, it appears that the fact that students are not given sufficient opportunities to consult with their teachers about their psychological well-being and their individual development in language learning might be limiting the likelihood of the students developing tendencies towards adopting a fighting behaviour.

In terms of safe-player behaviours, university students studying non-English majors showed significantly more manifestations of safe-player behaviours when compared to most other groups, with the exception of university students studying English language and literature, on which further data would be required for a meaningful interpretation.

Lastly, the findings suggested that neuroticism was not a factor leading to a significant difference among diverse academic levels. This unsurprising result could be interpreted in light of the fact that anxiety, as a personality trait, could be encountered at any phase regardless of the academic level and people with a high level of trait anxiety could often experience general emotional impairment across a range of situations.

9.3.3 Anxiety and gender

Our dataset revealed that female learners scored higher on both language anxiety and neuroticism ranking scales (M = 3.01, SD = .71; M = 3.08, SD = .76) when compared to male learners (M = 3.37, SD = .65; M = 2.74, SD = .75) [t (430) = -4.14, p<.001; t (430) = -4.54, p<.001]. Out of 26 participants classified as very anxious, 20 were females. Female learners were also found to be suffering more from stage fright than males (M = 3.31, SD = .92; M = 2.94, SD = .90) (t (430) = -4.09, p<.001). The last two scales in the questionnaire, safe player actions and quitting dispositions, also showed that female and male learners' language anxiety also differed in dispositional levels; indeed, it was found that female learners were more likely to be safe-players or quitters (Table 9).

	M	*SD*	*d*	*t*	Effect size[a]
Safe player			430	-2.41*	.01
Male	2.71	.90			
Female	2.92	.83			
Quitter			430	-3.25**	.02
Male	2.48	.86			
Female	2.77	.90			

*p<.05
**p<.01
[a]Eta squared

Table 9 - Anxiety related gender difference at the dispositional level

In sum, female learners were found to be more anxious, and to experience more discomfort while giving presentations in English, which illustrated higher inclination towards developing a quitting or playing-safe disposition (Figure 12). That females were found to be more anxious than males might be explained by socio-cultural aspects of anxiety (MacIntyre, 1995; Yan & Horwitz, 2008), because in male dominant societies females have been reported to be more anxious than males and more reluctant to interact with others in learning a foreign language (Park & French, 2013). One possible reason why past research has shown different results could lie in the diverse socio-cultural contexts in which the studies had been carried out. Also it might be speculated that motivation, sincerity or interest could have a link to gender differences (ibid.). However, it should be kept in mind that gender and foreign language anxiety research always have offered conflicting findings and it needs careful consideration to handle the gender-related data. For example, some researchers found lower anxiety levels in female participants (Kitano, 2001) and some others found the way around (Donovan & MacIntyre, 2005). There was also a third category in which researchers found no difference between the two genders (Deweale et al., 2008; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004).

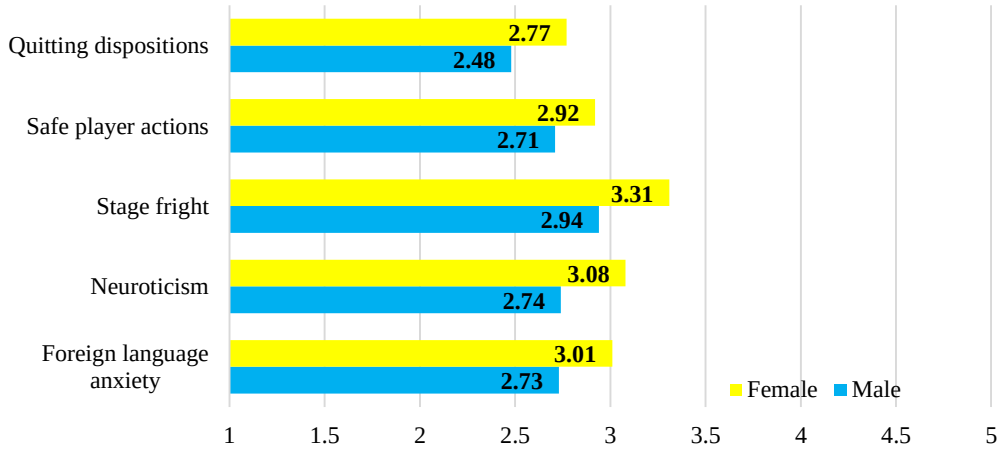


Figure 12 - Anxiety related gender difference in all scales

9.3.4 Sources of anxiety

A basic item-rating analysis provided a list which evidenced students' top concerns regarding language anxiety (Table 10). The phenomenon that students rated the most anxiety-triggering on the questionnaire was item 16 ('I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class'). This item suggests that fear of failure could mediate language anxiety to a large extent and it could also point to test anxiety. The second top rated phenomenon was shown in the item 3 (When I am on the stage talking in English, I get so nervous that I forget things I should say) and this item concerned L2 stage fright. Item 15 was the 3rd highest rated item (I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class), which addressed the issues of L2 stage fright and communication apprehension.

Item	***M***
16. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class	3.46
3. When I am on the stage talking in English, I get so nervous that I forget things I should say	3.46
15. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class	3.42

Table 10 - Top 3 items with highest mean scores recorded in the questionnaire (All participants)

These three top-rated items did not differ in terms of academic level but differed in terms of gender. Although the female learners' ratings were in parallel with the general trend, male participants demonstrated two other phenomena while describing anxiety related characteristics (see Table 11). As seen in the table, data from male participants also drew attention to the fact that fear of failing or test anxiety could play an important role in shaping their anxiety levels while restricting what they said in English to things they knew well, as a part of playing it safe. The last item on the list, on the other hand, suggested that the level of uneasiness caused by L2 stage

fright could sometimes be so high that individuals found it difficult to control their movements while performing on the stage before an audience.

Lastly, I should make it clear that the purpose of this section is not so much to demonstrate a cause and effect relationship as to point out how a number of factors could interact and contribute to language anxiety simultaneously.

Item	***M***
16. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class	3.19
54. Rather than trying to explain my thoughts freely, I tend to restrict what I say in English to things I know well	3.13
14. I find it difficult to control my movements when I am on the stage in language classes	3.12

Table 11 - Top 3Items with highest mean scores recorded in the questionnaire (Male participants)

9.4 Conclusion

This section presented the results pertaining to a 56-item scale adopting McAdams's framework as the guiding theoretical paradigm. The findings compliment the previous results obtained from the preliminary exploratory study, which confirmed that anxiety is not uniform and that it consists of multiple influential factors.

The results showed that there was a strong positive correlation across all variables: neuroticism, foreign language anxiety, L2 stage fright, safe player actions and quitting tendencies. The results also provided an insight into the ways in which learners made sense of their anxiety, by demonstrating the fighting, quitting or playing-safe tendencies of students. Learners were shown to be more inclined towards making sense of their anxious reactions in a negative and pessimistic manner, which often caused them to play it safe or to avoid the situation altogether.

Findings confirm that stage fright constitutes an important adaptation and realization of language anxiety, due to the fact that it reduces the efficiency of students' performances, and also causes a great deal of uneasiness.

In terms of gender difference, the dataset revealed that female learners scored higher on both language anxiety and neuroticism ranking scales when compared to male learners. Female learners were also shown to be experiencing more discomfort while giving a presentation in English, and they were also found to be more inclined towards developing a quitting or safe-playing disposition.

Moreover, the data suggested that students studying languages in high-school experienced higher levels of language anxiety when compared to students studying other subjects in high school and also university students in preparatory year. High school language students were also shown to be experiencing significantly higher levels of L2 stage fright than all other participants. Finally, there was no significant relationship established between age and anxiety levels.

10 Methods

10.1 Design

This intervention programme was designed to help learners to reduce their anxiety levels following a new approach which is based on the conceptualisation of anxiety in terms of an "anxious self". As explained in Part II, the fundamentals of this programme has links to the recent emphasis in SLA on the significance of the learner's self-concept, (Csizér & Magid, 2014), the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) and an influential recent theory of individual differences, the New Big Five model (McAdams, 2006; McAdams & Pals, 2006; see Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). The intervention study also drew on procedures developed for the visualisation aspect of the ideal self in motivational psychology (Dörnyei, 2009; Magid & Chan, 2012; Oyserman et al., 2002) as well as on systematic de-sensitization (Heimberg & Becker,2002; Telch et al., 2014) and applied relaxation (Hollon & Beck, 2013; Rygh & Sanderson, 2004). The programme involved a total of 18 activities consisting of eight visualisation and de-sensitisation, two relaxation, two confidence building and six content-based tasks. Table 12 presents a summary of the aims of the programme broken down by weeks.

Weeks	**Aims**
Week 1: Introduction	• To introduce an ice-breaker activity • To introduce the study and the researcher • To introduce ethical procedures • To ask participants to fill out the Anxious Self Scale • To ask each participant to choose a celebrity biography on Wikipedia and to give instructions regarding pre-test presentations to be conducted the following week

Week 2: Pre-test	• To carry out the performance pre-test by video-recording participants' presentations • To interview participants about their anxious selves and about their moment-to-moment feelings regarding the presentations
Week 3: Intervention Session 1 (120')	• To introduce visualisation • To provide a generic introduction which can be used to create a relaxed atmosphere conductive to visualisation • To introduce the students to the concept and image of different anxious selves
Week 4: Intervention Session 2 (120')	• To raise awareness of the anxious self-image • To compare different manifestations of anxiety • To provide more vivid and detailed descriptions of the anxiety triggers for a better systematic de-sensitization
Week 5: Intervention Session 3 (120')	• To eliminate the debilitating effects of anxiety through visualisation and systematic de-sensitization • To help individuals modify their anxious self-images in positive trajectory using a word-concept • To elicit students' preferred strategies in combating with anxiety
Week 6: Intervention Session 4 (120')	• To raise interest in the concept of self-guides • To get students to visualise in general terms what their improved anxious self would be • To generate a discussion about which parts of learners' vision of their improved anxious selves are achievable/feasible
Week 7: Intervention Session 5 (120')	• To identify steps to build a coping self

	• To help individuals build a concrete improved anxious self-image • To recognize the hard work that goes into achieving the improved anxious self • To ask participants to fill out the Anxious Self Scale • To give instructions regarding post-test presentations to be conducted the following week
Week 8: Post-test	• To carry out the performance post-test by video-recording participants' presentations • To interview participants about their anxious selves, about their moment-to-moment feelings regarding the presentations and about the sessions in general in a joint session

Table 12 - Intervention weeks at a glance

Seeking for a convenient environment to carry out the intervention programme led me to a private language school in Turkey through personal links. Private language schools in Turkey are very common not only for adult learners who would like to learn a foreign language for scratch but also for young learners who would like to build on and practice their language skills alongside their formal education in the state school system. The private institution where I conducted the study was appropriate for several reasons such as the availability of potential students, flexibility in producing a timetable and arranging the context and, finally, the support from the manager due to his welcoming academic studies at all times.

With the coordination with the school manager, we were able to select some potential classes who might be willing to participate in my study. Among 4 classes available at that time, 2 of them were found the most suitable for my study (hence Class 1 and Class 2) as they were all intermediate level English speakers and they all volunteered to participate in the programme. Class 1 consisted of 22 students while

Class 2 had 8 students. For the Class 2, as a part of their on-going language learning programme, a weekly 2-hour slot was allocated for me to conduct the intervention. However, considering that the allocated 2-hours in each week would not be enough to cover all the activities in Class 1, as their population was larger, I was allowed to add an extra 1-hour session in each week. As a result, a total of 15 hour-intervention programme was designed for Class 1, and the programme was expected to last for 10 hours for Class 2. I should highlight here that these hours were only for the 5-week intervention and additional three weeks with no time limit were allocated for me to carry out an introductory session and for the students to present and participate in the questionnaire and interview parts.

As explained in the *Instruments* section, the programme involved a three-step pre- and post-test design. First, students were asked to fill in the Anxious Self Scale for Language Learners. Then, they were asked to give a five-minute presentation about a celebrity of their choice (given a one-week preparation time) and the presentations were recorded on a camera. Lastly, each participant was interviewed for 10 to 20 minutes after their presentations. This three-level assessment procedure was followed in both before and after the intervention.

10.2 Participants

In a demanding study like this, which covers a two-month period with various kinds of tasks, the most important characteristics required from the participants is that they should commit to participating in the whole programme without missing a class. That was my first criterion for selecting participants. Second, the students needed to be at least intermediate level speakers of English to exclude cases when anxiety was caused purely by limited language proficiency. Fortunately and quite remarkably, nobody skipped a session in either class and all the students were able to benefit from

the study from the very first day. The intervention programme was embedded in the language teaching curriculum of the language school; therefore, the classes that I taught were naturally formed on-going classes. A total of 30 intermediate-level Turkish learners of English participated in the intervention programme (10 males, 20 females – the imbalance between female and male participants occurred as a result of the fact that the classes were already formed, on-going classes) and they were either high school students or university students from various majors (see Table 13). Their individual-level anxiety-related characteristics will be described in Chapter 11.

Class 1	**Class 2**
22 students (5 males, 17 females)	8 students (5 males, 3 females)
Mean age 16,1	Mean age 19,4
High school students	Undergraduate students
Intermediate level	Intermediate level

Table 13 - Participants' profiles

10.3 Instruments

10.3.1 Anxious Self Scale for Language Learners

For the purpose of quantitative assessment, I used the combined questionnaire employed in Study 2 (Chapter 9) – please see Part II for details.

10.3.2 Weekly well-being scale

The intervention study consisted of 5 different weekly sessions, each with interrelated but distinct aims and approaches. As there was no control group used, it was important for the sake of consistency to include another measurement type (i.e. a practical rating scale) in the study as well as the questionnaire. This was also carried out for the purposes of collecting evaluative feedback on the weekly content, as well as for recording students' reactions to the intervention. These considerations resulted in forming a practical scale which could be used at the end of each week's classes

(see Appendix 4). This scale was adapted from Dörnyei and Murphey's (2003) quick emotional temperature scale and it included four 6-point semantic differential scale items to be able to measure participants' overall well-being levels (nervous-relaxed, comfortable-uneasy, confident-shy and willing to use the L2-reluctant to use the L2) (α =.76).

10.3.3 L2 Stage Fright Rating Scale

In order to evaluate the students' pre-test and post-test performances (video recorded presentations) objectively I used an adapted version of the 5-point Likert-type Social Performance Rating Scale (Fydrich et al., 1998) (see Appendix 5). The scale consisted of 2 complimentary key items one focussing on positive (control) and the other one on negative (discomfort) manifestations, as well as 4 further items concerning specific symptoms of unease, such as gaze, vocal quality, length and speech flow (α =.95).

Discomfort and control are broad overall variables (high-inference variables) to make the scale more accurate, but one can also zoom in on the four more specific and more observable symptoms (low-inference variables). All the 6 items are interrelated and they represent salient dimensions of L2 Stage Fright, so in this study their composite score is used. The observation was straightforward as the scale also included an anchor section (see Appendix 6) which was also modified so as to serve better for L2 related stage fright.

10.4 Procedure and the structure of the programme

10.4.1 Pilot phase

The pilot phase of the study was conducted four months prior to the main study, at the same school where the main study was carried out. After a face-to-face meeting

with one of the classes, the students volunteered to participate in my study and we moved on with the first week, the informative session. The pilot class consisted of 8 students (5 males, 3 females) learning English at an intermediate level. The students were from different backgrounds, with one being medical doctor, one being research assistant, one being undergraduate student, and four being high school students. At the beginning the activities were all conducted in L2, English. However, it was noted that most of the time the students had problems in the productive skills, especially in writing, and therefore, after the second week, the students were asked to perform some of the writing tasks in their L1, Turkish. The pilot phase lasted for 5 weeks, similar to the main study, and was successfully completed without any major issues.

10.4.2 Main intervention study

Info session and ethical procedures

This very first contact with students started with a famous ice breaker activity (Activity 1) to get to know the class better and to establish a sincere environment. In this activity I asked participants to stand up and move around the classroom to learn about their friends so as to fill in the handouts.

Breaking the ice			
First name	**Age**	**Profession / Course**	**Most memorable year in your life**

Activity 1 – Breaking the ice

Then I introduced myself and my study in detail; yet, I did not offer any theoretical information or any hints regarding anxiety and the anxious self here. After answering questions and receiving the students' informed consents, I asked students to fill out

the anxious self scales. Finally, I introduced the task for the following week's pre-test: choosing a celebrity's biography on Wikipedia and presenting that biography orally in the classroom. I also told them that each presentation would last for 5 minutes and that they will be video-recorded for feedback.

Pre-test session

Each student presented his/her topic on the stage for 5 minutes, with observing and the video camera on. After each presentation, the audience gave feedback on the parts that they liked the most and what they thought could have been better. I also asked questions regarding the presenters' emotional states and how they felt before, during and after the presentations. All the conversations (just as all the other sessions) were recorded for a more detailed analysis later on. At the same time, I kept a research journal, continuously making notes, especially the timings of the instances where students struggled, made a mistake, recovered, appeared to feel bad or smiled during their presentations so that I would ask in the subsequent interviews what happened and how they felt at those times.

After everybody gave a presentation, we had a general discussion and I asked the students about the problems they experienced and how they coped with them. As a next step, I conducted individual retrospective interviews with every student, each lasting for approximately 12 minutes. For the large group, each student picked an allocated time-slot as I did not want them to wait for a long time. Each interview started with flashbacks from the video-recorded presentations and I gave them feedback regarding their language use. The semi-structured interview questions focussed on three aspects: first, students' general anxiety tendencies (e.g. To what extent does anxiety occur in different walks of your life?); second, characteristic adaptations of anxiety (e.g. Does it – the feeling – only happen at one specific

moment? Do you remember an extreme one?); third, the anxious self and students' narrative manifestations (e.g. What's your general view of being anxious in language situations? Is it easy or difficult to deal with?). Each interview was recorded on a password-protected laptop computer.

Intervention session 1

Bard's song

The session started with small discussion about how music can relax people. Then I introduced the "Bard's song" by Blind Guardian (see Activity 2 below) in order to encourage participants to dream about their future and follow their heart. Participants closed their eyes, listened to the music and imagined the content. I finished the activity by asking the participants about their opinions.

Bard's Song
Now you all know the bards and their songs
When hours have gone by, I'll close my eyes
In a world far away we may meet again
But now hear my song about the dawn of the night
Let's sing the bards' song
Tomorrow will take us away far from home
No one will ever know our names but the bards' songs will remain
Tomorrow will take it away the fear of today
It will be gone due to our magic songs
There's only one song left in my mind
Tales of a brave man who lived far from here
Now the bards' songs are over and it's time to leave
No one should ask you for the name of the one
Who tells the story
Tomorrow will take us away far from home
No one will ever know our names but the bards' songs will remain
Tomorrow all will be known and you're not alone
So don't be afraid of the dark and cold
'Cause the bards' songs will remain they all will remain
In my thoughts and in my dreams they're always in my mind
These songs of hobbits, dwarves, and men, and elves
Come close your eyes you can see them, too

Activity 2 - Bard's Song

Chill

Next, I introduced the students to three relaxation techniques that they could use to clear their minds, get rid of stress and prepare for study (adapted from Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013, p. 166; see Activity 3). As with the first activity, I first played calming music, nature sounds with violin in the background, and asked the students to close their eyes and relax. I asked them to let anything or nothing come into their minds as they listened. I stopped the music after 3 minutes and I moved on with the second activity: I asked the students to think about a nice place and imagine the scene as I dictated the visualisation script. Having done that, the students were asked to empty their minds and sit comfortably with eyes-closed position while I dictated the meditation script.

Visualisation script

Imagine you are in your favourite place. It is a place that means a lot to you and where you feel comfortable and relaxed. It could be a place that is cosy and secure... like sitting by the fireside at home, curled up in a comfy chair... it could be a place that is quiet and calm... like being in a clearing in the centre of a forest with tall trees overhead and sunlight through the leaves... perhaps you can hear birdsong and hear the splashing of a stream ... it could be a place that inspires you ... like being on top of a mountain on a clear day with a beautiful view in front of you... or on a white sand beach with blue waves crashing on the shore... choose a place and imagine you are there... How do you feel?

Meditation script

Sit on the floor and find a comfortable position... start to relax... start from your head... let it feel heavy... very heavy... and let it drop... when your head feels heavy, continue down to your shoulders... drop your shoulders and relax... as you start to relax breathe deeply in and out... let your body and your legs sink into the ground... now you are totally relaxed... continue relaxing... feeling as if your body is sinking into the ground... now begin to focus on your breathing... breathe in and out... in and out... concentrate on your breathing... empty your mind... just focus on your breathing ... in and out... think about nothing but your breathing... in... and out... when you think about something else come back to breathing... you feel peaceful and calm...

.

Activity 3 - Chill

Future alternatives

This last activity of Session 1 aimed to provide the students with examples of different improved anxious selves. To be able to do that, the students were first introduced to the concept of self-images and the anxious-self briefly, then they were divided into three groups and were given a text in each on which different anxious self portraits were stated (adapted from Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013; see Activity 4).

My successful tourist self

It was 7 years ago when I went abroad for the first time. I have been to 10 different countries since then. I like exploring different cultures. The first thing I do when I visit a new country is to have a nice food right after leaving the airport. I also feel very excited when I am in a country where people speak in a different language. Therefore, I can't wait to discover city centres to meet new people. I do not hesitate to communicate in English even though I am not an advanced learner. Normally I have city maps wherever I go but I intentionally do not use the maps much, instead, I ask for directions in order to know the citizens better. I have got friends all over the world and I often chat with many of them on Skype. On the other hand, I keep a travel journal so as to jot down the details about my trips. When I turn the pages, I feel that I miss travelling.

My test taker self

I can't remember how many tests I have taken in English so far. I am not a hard-working student but I am aware of my responsibilities. I start going through my notes 2-3 days before an exam. I start thinking of some questions which are likely to be asked. When the exam morning comes I do not eat much. On my way to exam I listen to motivating music and I start thinking of the things I should do to have fun after the exam. I feel a bit excited right before I see the questions but it makes me read the questions more carefully. I am normally very relaxed until the exam finishes. If there is a question for which I do not know the answer, I leave it blank and I have a look at once again it at the end.

My presenter self

At the beginning, presenting a topic before a group was a challenging task for me. I had to be prepared for many days before giving a speech. I did not know where to stand or how to introduce the concepts. I was quite insecure. As the time went by, I noticed that it was actually the topic which was on focus, not myself. Also I was receiving some useful feedback that improved my work. Now I enjoy giving a presentation. When I start talking I feel like I am the best. I also like that people see me that way. I am very relaxed and I do not even look at my notes. Of course, I sometimes get stuck when I have to think about a word or an explanation but that is quite natural. I just find a way to get around it such as, changing the topic or explaining it in another way or simply saying that I can't remember.

Activity 4 - Future alternatives

The students were asked to work individually to choose a title for the text (my successful tourist self, my test taker self, my presenter self) and then compare their answers with their group. Later on in the activity, the students made brief notes to summarize their texts. They then took turns to read the texts aloud, acting as though they were the writers, and discussed their improved anxious selves with the rest of the group. The students discussed which parts of visions were most like their own. The session ended with a general group discussion and, while filling out the weekly well-being scale, students commented on the activities of the day.

Intervention session 2

A dreadful workshop

The students were asked to close their eyes and a visualisation script which aimed to provide an example of not overcoming anxiety was dictated. At the end of the activity, the participants were asked how they felt.

Script

Close your eyes and imagine that you have been invited to a 1-week international workshop in England. When you arrive at the lobby, you see that many other participants are there. You would like to greet them and get into conversation but then you hear their English and you feel that it is better than yours. Finally, one of them comes and asks your name. It's the first time you talk to a native speaker and you mispronounce some of the words when you speak. Imagine how you feel in this situation. What happens to your body? Can you see your face? Is your skin hot?

Then you go back to your room. You would like to practice for tomorrow's session because you are expected to give a presentation about Turkey. You can't sleep well because all you think about is that presentation. When time comes you move towards the stage and you see dozens of people staring at you. You introduce yourself. Please try to hear your own voice? How is it? Does it tremble? Do you speak fast? Is your tone clear? Try to see your body. How do you look? What do you wear?

Then you start with the first slides. As you move along you regret that you did not practice English more. You wish you had been more self-confident. You wish that the presentation was over in no time. Imagine how this would feel for a moment. Now try to think of everything you can do to make sure this kind of an experience will not happen to you. You realise that there is so much to do and so much to learn so that you will be successful in the future. With this understanding, I want you to open your eyes and come back to this room.

Activity 5 – A dreadful workshop

My anxious self

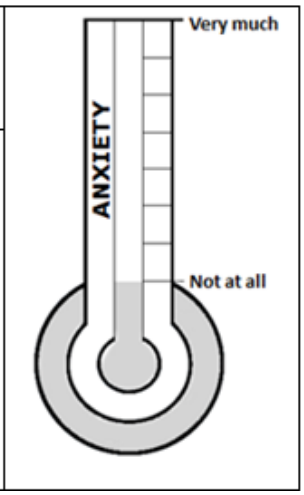
The activity was prefaced by explaining that language anxiety was common and that it was important to acknowledge its existence as this would serve as the first step to alleviate its effects. The students were then asked to write a concise description of their anxious selves by writing about a typical anxiety-causing situation. Once they had finished these, the papers were collected and the students were invited to read about other students' anxious selves. Taking turns, everyone read aloud a description of the anxious self of another classmate, presenting as if it was theirs. The activity ended by reinforcing the idea that by sharing their concerns with others, people could realize that they were not the only ones feeling discomfort at certain times in language learning environments (adapted from Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014).

Who is who?

Aiming to raise awareness of the anxious self-image, the anxious self statements from the previous activity were collected and numbered. Then the learners were asked to mimic their own anxious self, and while doing so, they were asked to freeze like a statue, holding their positions (adapted from Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014). The students' photographs were taken and they were all transferred onto a computer in order to show the photographs in the classroom on a projection screen. The participants were asked to focus their attention on each photo and describe different aspects of it (e.g. facial expression, posture). The participants were then asked to match the photos with the numbered statements on the wall. The activity was debriefed by acknowledging that when learners felt anxious they were not alone, and that sharing thoughts and pulling together as a team would be necessary for optimal learning conditions.

Creating anxiety hierarchy

The students were asked to list scenarios associated with language learning which cause them varying levels of anxiety. To facilitate this process of prioritization, the students were given index sheets (adapted from Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014) on which they listed anxiety triggers with vivid and detailed descriptions. The students were also instructed to rate the items by reflecting how badly it would feel to be in that situation for the requirement of a gradual anxiety progression. Lastly, the session ended with a general group discussion and students commented on the activities of the day.

Where?	What brought it on?	Symptoms	More descriptors (adjectives or adverbs)	

Activity 6 – Creating anxiety hierarchy

Intervention session 3

Positive qualities

The starting activity of Session 3 aimed to modify attitudes towards anxiety through the implementation of a word-concept activity, as well as to help individuals develop a stronger and more positive anxious self-image. Prior to leading the activity, I had written 8 positive evocative words (courage, confidence, calmness, optimism, enthusiasm, stability, happiness, determination) on small cards and brought these into the classroom (adapted from Arnold et al., 2007; Fugitt, 1983). Holding a card

towards the class, I asked the students to say one word or phrase that described the word. I repeated the same procedure for each word. Following this, I asked students to close their eyes, and I then proceeded to read a script for each word which would make them visualise the positive word integrated in their lives.

Script
See yourself as having this quality in your life ... How would you feel?... What would you do that would be different from now? ... How would you relate to other people? .... How might your life change?... See your face, your body, the way you move ... See an image of yourself having this quality fully developed in you ... Enjoy this image for a minute.... When you are ready, bring your attention back to this room.

Activity 7 – Positive qualities

Strategy mapping

In this activity, students' written statements from the "my anxious self" activity were used once again. After placing the learners in groups, they were asked to designate a "recorder" and a "reporter" in each group. Following that, the "my anxious self" texts were distributed to the groups randomly and students were invited to brainstorm strategies that might be used to cope with the anxiety conveyed in the papers. The students were also encouraged to talk about what they brainstormed together. Feedback was taken at the end of the activity.

Systematic de-sensitization

This activity was prefaced with the explanation that de-sensitization would occur when, through repeated practice, learners could imagine their anxiety triggers vividly and realistically in detail while remaining in a completely relaxed state. I asked the learners to get comfortable, and then utilized the meditation technique I introduced at the very beginning of the programme. Participants were asked to read the anxiety-triggering situations listed on anxiety hierarchy charts, beginning from the least anxiety-provoking one, and imagined each situation for a minute or two. Having established a relaxed state after a number of visualisations, de-sensitization continued

with the help of visualisation scripts. After an analysis of the students' anxiety hierarchy activity papers, it appeared that the first three situations that triggered anxiety more than others were similar to those suggested by Horwitz et al.'s (1986) study, and were also similar to those found to be sources of anxiety in the quantitative study completed. These were communication apprehension (or a related term, fear of negative evaluation), test anxiety, and stage fright. Before the class, I arranged 3 counter scripts (Activities 8 and 9) for de-sensitization through imagery (adapted by Fugitt, 1983; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014) and these scripts were dictated aloud to the students. The session ended with a whole group discussion regarding the effectiveness of the activities. Just before students left, I asked them to fill in the weekly well-being scale as they did after each week's classes.

My test taker self

Using that creative part of your mind, imagine or visualize yourself sitting at your desk with the test in front of you, or somewhere else where you usually take a test, school or wherever... Feel the paper in front of you, feel the pen. How do you hold the pen? See the questions... All written in English... Are there paragraphs? Vocabulary questions or is it a writing exam?

Now see yourself sitting there feeling very comfortable. Your body feels just right. It feels rested and ready to work. It has lots of energy. The part of your body that gets scared during a test is comfortable and relaxed. See your body in perfect harmony. Your lungs, heart, stomach . . . all the parts of the body are healthy and feeling good.

Now see your emotions in perfect harmony. You feel calm and peaceful. All feelings of being scared or anxious are gone. You feel calm and peaceful. You feel confident, very capable. You feel good because you know you are able to do the work. You feel comfortable with yourself. See yourself sitting there in complete harmony with self-confidence and understanding.

Now see your mind working in complete harmony. That part of your mind that knows how to deal with questions in English is alert. You know how to summarize a text, how to read, how to match the vocabulary items, or how to see the points in all the questions. Tell that part of you that likes get worried, shut up!. See yourself sitting there, at your desk, working on the test, feeling comfortable and knowing how to do it. You are capable. See yourself smiling, feeling good.

Continue sitting there and just experience that feeling of harmony, of being capable, relaxed and alert. Contact the Wise Part within you, and know what is right for you. . . When you are ready, in your own time, slowly return your thoughts to the room and open your eyes.

Activity 8 - My test taker self script

My successful communicator self

Relax and observe your breathing for a few moments. Breathe deeply and slowly. Imagine yourself looking very far away. In the distance you see someone. You move closer and recognise yourself a few years from now. You are with a group of people about your age and you are speaking English to them. You are very excited about what you are saying and everyone is listening to you with enthusiasm. Several people make comments and you understand them perfectly and enjoy being able to communicate with them in English about things all of you are interested in. You are very confident and you do not make mistakes when you talk. You make jokes and everyone laughs. You are not worried at all.The group goes over to a coffee shop and you all enter and sit down. When the waiter asks in English what you want, you answer and he smiles as he writes down your order. Everyone in the group wants to know your opinion about something very important to all of you. You explain your ideas very clearly and everyone listens to you. You speak fluently without hesitating. You are very calm. Your voice does not tremble when you talk. You are not worried about making mistakes. When it is time to leave the coffee shop, you ask the waiter for your bill and you pay. Your friends want to see you again at the weekend to take a trip some place you really want to visit. As you leave, you agree on a time to meet them, and say goodbye. Now you walk toward a building where you work. In your job, you use English a lot. You enjoy what you are doing and are very successful and you are able to communicate well in English with people from many countries. You are at ease during your conversations. Stay with this feeling of confidence in your abilities for a moment. Now when you are ready, open your eyes and bring your attention back to this room, keeping with you the feeling of being able to communicate well in English

My successful tourist self

Relax and observe your breathing for a few moments. Breathe deeply and slowly. Imagine yourself one of the airports in İstanbul. You hold your passport and flight ticket.. You slowly go to gate and take your seat on the plane. Where do you sit? İs it a window seat? Feel the clouds… The flight takes around 10 hours and you see beautiful Canada down there. You take your backpack and leave the airport. Once you are in Toronto, you see that everything is written in English and French. Perhaps you do not know French but your English is excellent. You take a taxi and on the way to downtown you are chatting with the taxi driver. He is from Mexico and he gives you beautiful tips about the town. Then you get into a coffee shop. Hear the crowd in the coffee shop. Hear their English, it is lovely Canadian accent. You feel like you are one of them. You go and grab a coffee and then rest a little bit.It is time for a sightseeing now. You take a bus to Niagara Falls, the bus is full of young people all students from different parts of the world. You make many friends. You are by the falls now. Imagine the water splashing. Imagine the cold breeze. You take a walk with your friends. You are very self-confident. You talk about almost anything. They are all amazed the way you talk. You do not make mistakes, even you do, you just change the word and go on. You use your mimics and gestures perfectly. You are not scared at all. You are so lively that Some Canadian friends invite you to an NBA game that night. You are at the basketball centre and support the team and cheering with the other fans. You had a great day, With a smile, you go to your hotel and try to sleep dreaming about what happened that day.. Now slowly open your eyes and come back to classroom

Activity 9 - My successful communicator self and My successful tourist self scripts

Intervention session 4

Imagination from illustrations

In this activity students were shown photographs of 4 different people (1 having a conversation, 1 presenting a topic before an audience, 1 talking on the phone, and 1 travelling while holding a map). One feature that the people depicted had in common was that they were all happy and enjoying what they were doing, and as all the students commented, they were all speaking in English. After each photograph had been presented, students were asked some guiding questions, such as "Who is this person?", "Which language does he/she speak?", "Is he/she confident? Why?" This activity was intended to familiarise students with the concept and image of a generally improved anxious self.

The magic ring

The learners were asked to sit comfortably and close their eyes. With soft music playing in the background, the visualisation script (Activity 10) was dictated (adapted from Arnold et al., 2007).

Script 1

You are strolling down a street in an old part of a very old city... It is a foggy winter night and you are all alone. You are enjoying this walk a lot, the interesting and somewhat mysterious old buildings, the smell of smoke from the fires burning in fireplaces, the cold air, the silence of the night... Suddenly you see something shining on the ground ... You bend down and pick it up ... it is a golden ring. You take it and rub it against your sleeve. Even at night it shines very brightly. You try it on ... it fits you perfectly and a strange sensation spreads throughout your body. It is wonderful, and you feel like the most powerful person in the world. You remember you haven't had dinner and you are very hungry ... you feel you would like a piece of chocolate cake and suddenly there it is ... in your hand. At that moment, you realise that all your dreams can come true.

What would you do with this magnificent power?

Think carefully about it, consider the world situation, your own life, and the lives of others you know, and remember that you can do everything - whatever you want. Decide on what you would like to do with this power, picture it in your mind.

Activity 10 – The magic ring

Afterwards, the participants were asked what they would do if they possessed such power. Following that, they were asked what would they change in terms of their language learning and language skills, and if it was difficult to do that. After taking feedback, the scene was set and the last script used in the de-sensitization activity was dictated once again. A small discussion regarding the visualisation was established before students were given feedback.

My improved anxious self

After leading the students through the steps of relaxation and the breathing exercises, they were asked to close their eyes, while soft music played in the background. To get the students to visualise in general terms what their improved anxious selves would be like, the questions from the script were asked, allowing sufficient time between each question for learners to imagine themselves in the dictated scenario (Activity 11) (adapted from Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013).

Script

Imagine yourself in the future. You have studied English ... and now you can speak it well. You are very confident.

Imagine yourself... how old are you?... what do you look like now?... where are you living?... what is your house like?... who lives with you?... what job are you doing?... why do you enjoy it?... what makes you happy about your life?...

How is English useful to you now?... what can you do in English?... do you use it in your work?... do you use it to study?... do you have (L2) friends? ... do you use it when you travel as a tourist?...

Imagine a situation where you talk in English: doing business, talking to native speakers, giving a presentation, booking a hotel room in England on the phone... now imagine yourself in that situation... where are you? Imagine that you are very calm while talking in English. ... Are you in an office, at a meeting, on the phone, in a conference centre, in the foreign country?... in a café?... in a shop?... in the street?... at a station? ... choose one... where are you?... what can you see around you? ... how many people are there?... what do they look like?... what are they wearing?... Imagine you talk to them in English. They all look at you, they all listen to you. You are very good at English. You smile when you talk. Your pronunciation is very clear. How do people react to you? Do they like your speech? what are you talking about?... what kind of things can you say?... how do you feel talking in English? Imagine that moment for a while.. Now slowly open your eyes and come back to classroom.

Activity 11 – My improved anxious self script

After this dictation had been read out, the students were asked to write up their visualisations. Common themes were noted, and the students were given feedback.

Reality consensus

In order to generate a discussion about which parts of learners' visions of their improved anxious selves were achievable and feasible, students were given ranking sheets (Appendix 7) and asked to complete them individually according to the descriptions (adapted from Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013). Learners were put in pairs so that they could compare their answers. Later on, each pair reported their ideas to the class and they were given feedback. Lastly, students filled in the weekly anxiety scale and we had a group discussion.

Intervention session 5

Imagining my improved anxious self

In this activity, two randomly selected "my improved self" activity papers from the previous session were used as scripts for dictation. Students were then asked to visualise their improved anxious self-images in order to identify and discuss the steps they could take to build a strong self-image. The activity ended with feedback.

Who would have believed it?

The students were asked to write a composition by putting a "positive spin" (adapted from Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014) on the negative events that caused anxiety to arise in their past language learning histories, showing how it contained the foundations of spectacular future success. Once the students had finished writing, the papers were collected and distributed back again randomly. This time the students were asked to find and mark the positive spin. The students were given feedback at the end of the activity.

Letter from my improved anxious self

In their imagination, the students were asked to imagine a point in the future at which they had succeeded in improving their anxious selves. After that, they were asked to think back to the past and imagine the journey that was taken to reach their improved anxious selves. From this retrospective point of view, students were asked to write a thank you letter from the future to their present self to express gratitude for all the hard work, patience, courage and helpful dispositions that helped them on their way (adapted from Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013). Once the students had finished their letters, these were collected, numbered, and pinned up around the walls. "Find someone who" worksheets (Activity 8) were distributed and students walked around the classroom in order to read and identify the letters. The activity finished with feedback and students were given the final weekly anxiety rating scale worksheet.

Find someone who…	**Name**
Worked hard on overcoming shyness and tried to speak more in class	
Increased their L2 skills	
Does not worry about making mistakes as they are a part of language learning progress	
Understands that anxiety is common, and that acknowledging its existence is one of the first ways to alleviate its effects	
Relies on various relaxation techniques	

Activity 12 – Find someone who

Post-test session

This procedure was the same as the one carried out in the pre-test session. Each student presented his/her topic on the stage for 5 minutes while the rest of the class observed and while being recorded by video camera. The students presented the same topic. After each presentation, other students commented on the parts that they enjoyed the most and what they thought could be improved. This time they also

compared the first and second (pre and post-test) performances. After everybody had presented, we had a general discussion, and I asked the students the differences for the second round of presentations in terms of their anxiety control. Again, I conducted individual retrospective interviews with every student, each lasting for approximately 12 minutes. Each interview started with flashbacks from the two video-recorded presentations and I gave them feedback regarding their improvements. In addition to the 3 aspects of the questions I mentioned in the pre-test interview structure, the questions also included students' views about their own personal improvement, the course content, factors causing change, the tendency to deal with anxiety and, last but not least, changes in their personal views on their anxious self-images.

10.5 Data analysis

The data collected for the main intervention programme section of my thesis included both quantitative and qualitative components, as well as a performance-based observation.

The first quantitative measure concerned the Anxious Self Scale. The questionnaire data was coded in SPSS, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to establish the internal consistency of the scales. Then, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to explore the relationship between language anxiety, general anxiety, fighting dispositions, safe player actions and L2 stage fright elements. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare all the five variables across gender and across pre and post-test conditions in order to measure the effectiveness of the programme.

The second quantitative scale, the weekly anxiety scale was also coded in SPSS and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to establish the internal

consistency of the scales. Afterwards, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to explore the consistency between the pre- and post-test scores retrieved from the main questionnaire and the weekly anxiety scale. One-way ANOVA with S-N-K and L-S-D post hoc tests was carried out to explore students' improvements over five intervention weeks. As the weekly questionnaire also included a qualitative component based on short written statements, these sentences were transcribed and were submitted to thematic coding analysis. During this stage, I took notes for general patterns in these first readings and then I carried out a second phase of thematic coding by identifying the sentences that had the same theoretical or thematic idea, which I then labelled using the same code (Gibbs, 2007).

The interviews and the in-sessional sound recordings were transcribed, translated into English, and analysed through latent content analysis to elicit general themes and patterns concerning the anxious self, following the same approach applied in the exploratory study. First, relevant extracts were highlighted in the transcripts and they were assigned codes. Then, these codes were examined and broader themes were established amongst them based on the research aims and pre/post test situations. Following this, an analysis guide which included the categories of the coding themes was developed to identify the relevant qualitative data to present for the study. The interviews were conducted in participants' native language, Turkish, for a deeper elicitation of students' feelings and evaluations. Interview audio files were slowed down using a transcription software and they were Listened to a couple of times to reduce the loss of meaning.

Last but not least, each of the performance tests, the five-minute pre- and post-test presentations were watched twice and the L2 Stage Fright Rating Scale was filled in for each presenter according to the anchors provided. After becoming

familiarized with the anchors and with the scale, another researcher (rater) filled in the scales for each person, and to test the consistency of both ratings, a reliability analysis of the scale was carried out.

Part IV: Intervention

Surveying the scene by investigating the deep mechanisms of language anxiety – both qualitatively and quantitatively – provided first the insight and then the necessary evidence that reframing anxiety as the anxious self might offer a useful way to link anxiety research to other areas of SLA where the importance of the self-concept has been recognised as well as to clinical psychology, which has long employed relaxation, guided-imagery and systematic de-sensitization in shaping an individual's self-concept. The results also suggested that helping learners to produce constructive narratives about their anxious selves could offer a way to re-process learners' anxiety-related experiences positively and, by doing so, dealing with some of the harmful effects of anxiety.

To build upon the findings of the first two studies, Part IV of this thesis reports on a 5-week intervention study to reduce learners' anxiety levels, which has taken all the above mentioned concerns into account. First, I will describe the methods and procedures employed in this complex programme and then present the findings chronologically to illustrate the process of how anxiety diminished. This part also presents leaners' narratives before and after the programme and highlights the effect of the programme on stage fright levels. The findings obtained in Part III and Part IV will be summarized in the conclusion chapter with their implications.

11 Overall characterisation of the programme

The intervention programme yielded success almost on all counts. Regardless of what aspects of students' performance were taken as a criterion measure, there is improvement that can be directly attributed to the intervention. Focussing only on the pre- and post-comparison results would simplify the study; therefore, this chapter takes a different kind of approach and presents the results in an incremental measure according to the progression of the program. Still it might be useful to look at first some initial broad measures to set the scene here. For this reason, I have chosen some important quantitative and qualitative indicators of the overall success of the intervention. The data that will be shown in this chapter gives a rough appraisal of the intervention which will then be elaborated on in the next few sections.

11.1 Pre-intervention characteristics

Based on the total and mean FLA scores (Table 14), the participants in the intervention could be regarded as slightly anxious; yet, the standard deviations indicated that there was a wide range of ratings, similar to the general pattern obtained in the previous questionnaire study.

	M	***SD***	***Actual range (possible range)***
FLCAS (based on item-rating)	2.29	.75	1-4.03 (1-5)
FLCAS (based on total score)	94.83	24.6	33-133 (33-165)

Table 14 – Descriptive statistics for total and mean FLA scores of the learners participated in the intervention programme

The implementation of the same categorization method used in Part III suggested that, out of 30 students, 2 were very anxious and 6 were considerably anxious (Table 15).

Item ratings	FLCAS total score	N (percentage)
1-2 (non-anxious)	between 33-66	4 (13.3%)
2-3 (slightly anxious)	between 67-99	18 (60%)
3-4 (considerably anxious)	between 100-132	6 (20%)
4-5 (very anxious)	between 133-165	2 (6.7%)

Table 15 - Distribution of learners in the intervention programme according to FLA item-ratings

When it comes to evaluating the pre-intervention anxiety levels and fighting tendencies of the students who participated in the programme, it would be convenient here to make use of the characteristics of these individuals uncovered by the Anxious Self Scale, which can help to interpret the qualitative data to be presented in the following chapter as well as later sections (see Table 16). It should be noted once again that the language anxiety and reaction categories was based on the descriptive approach employed in Chapter 9.3.

Participant (Code)	Gender	Age	FLA Category	Reaction
St1	Female	16	Considerably anxious	Fighting tendency
St2	Male	17	Slightly anxious	Fighting tendency
St3	Female	16	Slightly anxious	Fighter
St4	Female	16	Slightly anxious	Fighting tendency
St5	Female	16	Slightly anxious	Fighting tendency
St6	Male	16	Slightly anxious	Fighter
St7	Female	16	Slightly anxious	Quitting tendency
St8	Female	16	Slightly anxious	Fighting tendency
St9	Male	16	Slightly anxious	Fighter
St10	Female	16	Slightly anxious	Fighting tendency
St11	Female	16	Slightly anxious	Fighting tendency
St12	Female	16	Considerably anxious	Quitting tendency
St13	Male	16	Non-anxious	Fighter
St14	Female	16	Non-anxious	Fighter
St15	Female	17	Very anxious	Quitter
St16	Female	16	Slightly anxious	Fighting tendency
St17	Female	16	Slightly anxious	Quitting tendency
St18	Male	16	Very anxious	Quitting tendency
St19	Female	16	Slightly anxious	Fighter
St20	Female	16	Slightly anxious	Fighting tendency
St21	Female	16	Considerably anxious	Fighter
St22	Female	16	Slightly anxious	Quitting tendency

St23	Female	19	Considerably anxious	Quitting tendency
St24	Male	19	Considerably anxious	Quitting tendency
St25	Male	20	Considerably anxious	Fighting tendency
St26	Male	18	Non-anxious	Fighter
St27	Male	18	Slightly anxious	Fighter
St28	Male	20	Slightly anxious	Fighting tendency
St29	Female	21	Non-anxious	Fighter
St30	Female	20	Slightly anxious	Fighter

Table 16 – Characteristics of learners involved in the intervention programme

Anxiety as a dispositional trait

Before the intervention, students generally represented a common profile with some identical characteristics, which are willingness to learn a foreign language, having certain language-related career goals in the future but lacking comprehensive knowledge of what anxiety is and how it can be minimized:

> I like English. I have ambitious goals but I don't count on my speaking skills as I am nervous while speaking in English. I would like to improve myself but I do not know how. (St10, pre-intervention interview, hence pre)
>
> I hear this word (anxiety) very often. I've never thought about it before to be fair. (St4, pre)

A few learners viewed anxiety as a personality trait, that is, these learners have expressed that there is a tendency in them to experience symptoms of anxiety on a recurring basis as shown in the following three extracts:

> As I am an extremely emotional person, anxiety has a direct effect on me. My mood can change easily, I can be sad but I can be happy all of a sudden. For example, challenging homework in English makes me anxious and I can argue with my parents because of my nervousness. (St20, pre)
>
> Anxiety corresponds to half of my life. (St18, pre)
>
> I get anxious very easily, even because of a simple thing, such as making a plan and starting to worry instantly if the plan will work or not. (St10, pre)

Furthermore, two of the learners suggested that anxiety happened due to lack self-confidence and social skills just as Clément's (1980) proposal that self-confidence with the foreign language is the antithesis of language anxiety:

> I am a social person so such things do not happen. (St3, pre)
>
> For me, anxiety happens from lack of self-confidence. Getting scared of being disgraced. (St16, pre)

In Chapter 9, it was documented that anxious learners often experienced one or more troublesome symptoms such as having a mental block, high heart rate, stomach pain, feeling hot, trembling voice, blushing, shaking hands or legs, muscle stiffness, or even fainting. In addition to these, the interview data elicited from the participants offered that timing and duration of the symptoms could vary from one person to another. One typical example of this concerns the symptoms experienced during exam weeks:

> Especially exam weeks are a nightmare for me. I can feel my heartbeats and I am often short of breath throughout the week. (St11, pre)
>
> During the exam weeks I become so unhappy that people, even my family, can hardly recognize me. (St30, pre)
>
> My uneasiness begins a couple of hours before an exam. I feel like I know nothing. This usually disappears when the exam starts. (St1, pre)

While St11 and St30 felt uneasiness all the time the exam weeks, St1 reported that she only experienced discomfort a couple of hours before a particular exam. Apart from the exams, another illustration of the varied timing and duration of the symptoms could be found in the students' statements regarding the presentation situation:

> At that moment for example (before presenting) I was sitting on my chair and there was nothing wrong. I was greatly relaxed. When I went there (to the stage), my heart was as if it was [stutters] going to go out of its place.

> I was so nervous that I could not prevent my hands from shaking. I was still nervous when I finished my presentation and returned back to my seat. (St2, pre)
>
> I tend to feel slightly anxious before stepping on the stage. Before presenting I often practice in my mind how I should start. After spending few seconds on the stage I do not experience any nervousness but joy. (St30, pre)

These examples indicate that some individuals tend to experience anxiety symptoms for relatively longer periods than some others. The data showed no link between the duration of the symptoms and the severity of their anxiety; however, as we shall see later in this chapter, this issue might be related to some strategies that students developed themselves to deal with anxiety.

Common adaptations of anxiety

It has been documented in previous chapters that some individuals realise anxiety in certain situations as it reduces the efficiency of their performance causing a great deal of uneasiness. The qualitative data elicited before the intervention provided a more profound knowledge of various situations contributing to anxiety arousal. As suggested in *Part* III, language anxiety is an interplay of multiple factors and it simply cannot be limited to a combination of a few fears; however, qualitative interviews with 30 participants demonstrate that the most common adaptations of language anxiety broadly reflect what Horwitz et al. (1986) call as "useful conceptual building blocks" (communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety) (p. 128). This will be also be highlighted in *Chapter* 14 when presenting students' responses on "Creating Anxiety Hierarchy" activity worksheets.

Test anxiety

Students reported several times that they suffered from test anxiety as they named it as one of the most anxiety provoking situations for them:

> (Anxiety is) an inevitable part of exam weeks for me. (St11, pre)
>
> Even though I study hard for my English exams I cannot perform the way I want. I usually have low marks. I have difficulty in understanding the phases or questions I read during an exam. (St18, pre).

As seen in St18's statement above, some students suffering from anxiety in test situations are likely to experience mental blocks which makes it difficult to comprehend the questions in an exam. On the other hand, when questioning why students experience such an anxiety in test situations it was found that students' worries regarding the possibility of not attending to a university played a key role as the university entrance exams mainly contained grammar-based questions and as students treated grammar subjects as a slightly diverse component of the language learning which was almost like "learning grammar for the exam and learning speaking for life". As St5 reports, such a grammar anxiety not only leads the learners to develop and perform negative attitudes towards grammar but also makes them feel that they are going to fail in an exam even though they answer all the questions in it:

> It does not matter how much I study…I do not know why it happens but I do not like grammar. That makes me stressed and I think I will fail in the exams. I don't usually make too many mistakes in grammar exams but it feels like as if every answer I write is false… While speaking in English I know that I make mistakes but I don't have anxiety. Since grammar is mostly related to exams, it really forces me. I think I have the fear of not answering the grammar questions correctly in the university entrance exams. (St5, pre).

This negative attitude causes learners sometimes not to do their homework, to make them feel unenthusiastic while doing the homework and, more importantly, to make them think that they will never be successful in grammar.

> I try to do my grammar homework but it takes too much time and makes me very tired. Generally, I do the homework patchily. I think I can never be good at grammar. (St5, pre)

Test anxiety discussed here mainly concerns written examinations. Thus, I should note here that the only reason reported for this adaptation of anxiety is not only derived from the uneasiness experienced while answering grammar questions or the worry of failing in the university exams. Qualitative interviews suggest that certain elements of the writing tasks themselves, e.g. the requirement of making a complex sentences or phrases in a limited time, could also be related to the anxiety increase. One of the students suffering from writing anxiety, St7, states that she feels nervous during writing tasks and she finds it difficult to produce a paragraph in a given time:

> Generally it is not with speaking tasks but with writing tasks... For example, teacher sets the time and says that we have to write a paragraph in 2 minutes. At that time I cannot even not write a sentence...
>
> *Why is that?*
>
> I don‘t know. Although I know all of the rules I get confused with the tenses and verb forms. It is annoying for me to organize and build a paragraph. (St7, pre)

In former studies (e.g. Dewaele, 2017; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002) it was documented that perfectionism and language anxiety were closely related. In addition to these findings, an interview with a considerably anxious female student, St12, pointed out that test anxiety, as an adaptation of anxiety, could also be linked to the perfectionism:

> In the exams I must be perfect and I must perform very well but I am not perfect and that makes me anxious. (St12, pre)

According to what another student reports, if perfectionist learners cannot perform up to their intended levels these learners may think that they will lose face. As a result, they start to employ some certain strategies, often safety seeking behaviours, to handle potential anxiety-provoking situations.

> I have fear of making mistakes. I would like everything to be perfect about me. I think I may appear as someone looking stupid to them if my friends watch me making a mistake. I tend to wait till the last moment to answer a question in the class and this answer is usually something that I am very sure of. (St18, pre)

The extract above also highlights one of the other core elements of language anxiety, fear of negative evaluation so it is useful to take a more detailed look at it here.

Fear of negative evaluation

Fear of negative evaluation is a broad term, which shares some similar features with test anxiety. The main difference is that it may occur not only in test-taking situations but also in any social situation including speaking in a foreign language class:

> My body temperature started to rise and I felt very inept.
>
> *What made you feel like that?*
>
> Worrying about what others might think about me, what if they knew the correct pronunciation and I didn't… (St6, pre)

Especially after Horwitz et al.'s (1986) perception of fear of negative evaluation as being one of the conceptual building blocks for describing foreign language anxiety, it has often been one of the most mentioned concepts in the language anxiety literature. As seen in the interview extract above, fear of negative evaluation comes forward as one of the quick explanations by the learners to in an attempt resolve their reservations. Learners express that their fear of negative evaluation generally occurs due to apprehension about their classmates' opinions and expectation that these opinions are mainly negative. For example, St20 reports that fear of negative evaluation hindered her performance in the presentation task before the intervention:

> You know it has only been one or two months since the term began. I did not want my friends to think badly of me. I was a bit nervous during the presentation because of that. (St20, pre)

On the other hand, based on what St18 and St17 express below, it may be deducted that, for a learner studying in a language classroom, fear of negative evaluation specifically arises from apprehension about the learners in the same classroom with whom less social interaction established:

> I feel comfortable talking in English to only a few friends but with others I don't as I do not spend much time with them. I think I might be misunderstood by them. (St18, pre)

> I don't have anxiety about tests. I experience anxiety when I'm required to interact with my classmates or my teacher. I don't really know my classmates well. I just came to this class this year and being around a large number of unfamiliar people creates is stressing for me. Plus, like I said before, I feel that my classmates' comprehension of English language is far superior than mine. (St17, pre)

St4 notes that familiarity also concern teachers. Even though ice-breaker activities were integrated in the beginning of the programme and I tried to establish a good rapport with the students, they were asked to give a 5-minute presentation under my watch just a week after students get to know me. It can be argued that the first moments with a teacher of English are also regarded by students as a potential source of fear of negative evaluation. For example, delivering a good presentation St4 said:

> I was around familiar people, except you [laughs]. Even if I felt embarrassed, it wouldn't bother me much because I know them. (St4, pre)

Moreover, the qualitative data give hints regarding that fear of negative evaluation may steer learners to use words or structures which are not risky to use and one of the learners states that such a safety seeking behaviour sometimes leads her to further confusion as she filters what she should say during speaking activities:

> I am frightened of making mistakes so I never take risks. This actually makes the situation worse sometimes as I filter what I say and it makes me more confused. (St20, pre)

Communication apprehension

Interviews conducted with learners before the intervention helped to characterise another common adaptation of anxiety which concerns the anxiety about communicating with people: The findings shows that this type of anxiety could often occur in speaking activities in foreign language classes mainly due to students' inability to express themselves in the foreign language:

> I make some sentences in my mind and get ready to speak, but when I stand up I can't put these sentences into words. I keep making inverted sentences. (St12, pre)
>
> Normally I do not feel anxious while speaking with friends but if the teacher asks me to talk, I feel anxious because I think "what if I cannot express myself". Probably nothing happens when I cannot express myself but still I cannot help thinking that. (St12, pre)

For some learners, the presence of a teacher as an authority could be characterised as one of the factors involved in communication apprehension. The following two extracts offer a typical representation of how students become nervous when they are not sure of meeting their teachers' demands especially in speaking activities:

> I feel nervous whenever I feel that I cannot meet my teachers' expectations when I talk. (St8, pre)
>
> I would always like to show my knowledge to my teacher and speak well to him. That is not easy maybe that is because he is older or he is very demanding. (St12, pre)

In the light of the qualitative data, although considerable effort has been invested in shifting the English language education in Turkey towards communicative and student-centred approaches, some teachers of English might still be adopting traditional methods to establish discipline in an attempt to make students perform well in the university entrance exams. On the flip side, such a manner eventually oppresses the students and paves the way for continuous nervousness:

> Our teacher of English last year put me off the English classes. I was actually eager to learn English at the beginning of the term but whenever I discussed on a question or a topic during the lessons he always warned me and accused me of talking too much. I found myself not participating in the activities since then. (St20, pre)

> In fact, I don't get nervous very often when I talk. I'm generally relaxed but teacher's facial impressions are also important for me. If I feel that teacher is not happy with my pronunciation or the sentences I make then I try to be very careful. As I try to be careful, I get nervous continuously and as I get nervous, I make mistakes continuously. (St23, pre).

Moving to some other factors directing students to communication apprehension, the data suggested 3 notions: *fear of making mistakes*, *speaking without preparation* and *gaze.* Fear of making mistakes appears to have a close relationship with fear of negative evaluation. According to students' expressions, fear of making mistakes operates in two ways. First, students are worried about reaction of a teacher after a mistake, second, they are worried about how others in the same class will interpret that reaction (St16). In addition, interviews suggested that perfectionist learners are more likely to experience fear of making mistakes because of their zero tolerance on mistakes (St13):

> For example, teacher asks me to talk about my daily routine. I know what to say but what the people in the class will do when they hear the reaction that the teacher will give preoccupies my mind. I feel nervous and I start to scramble words sentences or simply words aren't enough. What I mean by not enough is that I can't remember any. (St16, pre)

> When my teacher picks me I don't want to mispronounce the things I am about to say. I would like my English to be excellent and I would like my teacher to hear me pronounce everything correctly. (St13, pre)

Students also comment on error correction in the classroom upon making a mistake. Although learners try to make themselves believe in the rationale of error correction and welcome them they provide examples suggesting that error correction, especially over pronunciation mistakes, causes distraction and uneasiness:

> When I make a mistake and my teacher corrects me, I get annoyed. A lot. (St4, pre)
>
> Pronunciation…When I mispronounce a word, the teacher will correct it. I know it is normal but I feel very bad about it. (St19, pre)
>
> Their correcting me all the time, maybe. To tell the truth, I feel uncomfortable by this. And their overreacting when I make a mistake. (St23, pre)

Trying to explain their communication apprehension, participants verbalised that another notion causing discomfort related to communication apprehension is speaking without preparation. Similar to the written examinations, expectation for students to produce a speech in a given time (e.g. oral quizzes, or sudden question-answer situations) were found to be disturbing for language learners:

> Whatever happening instantaneously in the English classes makes me nervous. Oral quizzes, for example. (St10, pre)
>
> When teachers ask immediate questions, when they expect me to answer in a short time and when they are staring at me... (St18, pre)

When students talked about the feelings they experienced during speaking activities in English classes, they mentioned about the word "gaze" several times. Two of the participants stated that as soon as they feel the gaze there occurs a significant decrease in their performances:

> I raise my hand to gain a hearing in the classroom. Then, right after I begin speaking I notice that the teacher and the others are staring at me and I feel tension. (St20, pre)
>
> My anxiety occurs when there is eye contact with others in mutual conversations in English. As I feel that others look at me I start to wonder what they are thinking or what they are going to do. (St18, pre)

Communication apprehension was shown to be appear more in one-on-one conversations which showed the effect of gaze in different perspective. St8 reported that she was worried about making mistakes while talking to her friends in English.

On the other hand, St16 expressed that facial expression of her teacher of English looked different in one-on-one conversations as they directly stared at each other and she found this kind of a dialogue scary:

> When I talk in English in a group, for example in the class, anxiety doesn't happen but in private talks I get stressful.
> *What do you mean by private talks?*
> The times I talk to one of my friends from the class alone and stuff. If I mispronounce a word or make a mistake I feel bad. (St8, pre)
>
> I do not get scared of face to face dialogs but I should say that when he asks a question his facial expression becomes different and it is scary. (St16, pre)

Finally, it is worth mentioning here again that L2 stage fright constitutes a crucial part in language anxiety alongside communication apprehension. As L2 stage fright will be explained in Chapter 12, the data suggesting the scope of L2 stage fright will be presented later in that chapter.

11.2 Overall evaluation

Comparing the pre- and post-test scores, paired samples t-tests revealed that the participants showed significantly lower levels of language anxiety, neuroticism, L2 stage fright, safe-player actions and quitting tendency at the end of the intervention programme (Table 17). These improvements were also reflected in various comments and in the interview extracts from the learners.

By interpreting the results given in Table 17, it is actually surprising to see a significant drop in neuroticism. Further research, especially a delayed post-test, would be required to substantiate this finding. Here it is worth mentioning that, after such a decrease in participants' Neuroticism levels, the results might bring the issue of positive bias. Participants appreciated my role in the classroom as a researcher and as a mentor. However, this study involved multiple measures of different types and

these were all piloted beforehand. As we shall see later, all the verbal, verbal and performance data obtained from the students and reported in this project yielded lower levels of anxiety in almost on all counts.

Many students stated that the programme contributed to them in multiple ways. As being the primary aim, one of the most important contribution of the programme was introducing learners to develop strategies so that they would survive in anxiety-provoking situations without experiencing any debilitating effects:

> I think I am a confident person but now I also know how to cope with my anxiety. (St1, weekly scale 5)
>
> I think the main contribution of this session to me is that I can manage to be calm in tense situations now. Also, facing with the reality…such as (a balance between) our imaginations, emotions and capabilities. (St2, weekly scale 3)
>
> I can honestly express that I have been able to realise the improvement in myself. I learned how to deal with that feeling called "anxiety". Thanks a lot! (St7, weekly scale 5)

	M	***SD***	***d***	***t***	**Effect size[a]**
Language anxiety			29	11.57*	.82
Before the intervention	2.64	.72			
After the intervention	1.94	.58			
Neuroticism			29	5.16*	.48
Before the intervention	3.04	1.05			
After the intervention	2.47	.78			
L2 stage fright			29	10.87*	.80
Before the intervention	3.37	1.09			
After the intervention	2.11	.82			
Safe-player actions			29	3.11**	.25
Before the intervention	2.31	.84			
After the intervention	1.95	.69			
Quitting tendency			29	7.68*	.67
Before the intervention	2.45	.98			
After the intervention	1.53	.53			

*p<.001
**p<.01
[a]Eta squared

Table 17 – Paired sample t-test comparison of pre- and post-programme language anxiety, trait anxiety, L2 stage fright, safe-player actions and quitting tendency scores

As some learners put, the programme did not completely eliminate the anxiety-related symptoms but reduced their detrimental effects and gave learners insight that the severity of these symptoms could be minimized.

> I can't say it (anxiety) completely disappeared but still I am more self-confident. I realize that if I work on it, I will overcome. (St1, post-intervention interview, hence post)
>
> I'm not too nervous during presentations anymore. I mean, I'm not 100% anxiety-free but these activities helped me to realise anxiety and to keep it under control. (St4, post)

The design of the intervention followed a gradual process and one of the first steps was to help learners become aware of their own as well as others' anxiety tendencies. The results revealed that the programme provided learners with opportunities to familiarize with their anxious selves and build strategies to improve them:

> I am very pleased with this course. It thought us our personality and helped us discover it thoroughly. We learned what we could do to improve ourselves. (St10, post)

With self-discovery tasks and with peer/group discussions after imagery tasks, the programme produced a medium in which learners were encouraged to get to know themselves better and, at the same time they were aimed to find out that other people were also suffered from anxiety:

> I figured out that I need to respect myself more, set aside time for the development and to be conscious about it. I also understood that the mistakes that I made were not unique to myself and that anyone can face the same problems as I do. (St2, post)

Another noteworthy contribution of the intervention was on students' self-confidence levels. Interview data suggested that the programme allowed participants to believe that could improve their anxious selves and enabled them not to give up easily:

> This course gives me confidence. I have started to say: "This (overcoming anxiety) is not as difficult as it seems". (St3, weekly scale 5)
>
> Firstly we learned to trust in ourselves and not to give up. I was afraid of speaking in English classes before this course but now I can tell the things in my mind instantaneously no matter what the question is about. (St29, post)

While helping to build self-confidence, the data also confirmed that students were able to utilize the lessons learned during the intervention in their daily lives (e.g. "My self-confidence increased that is for sure. Nothing will impossible if I work on it. I also found out that imagination was amazing. I have made it a must-have part of my life") (St12, Post). Also, it was found that the increase in self-confidence levels was not only uniquely related to language learning but also to general shyness or timidness. In the following extracts, St11 highlights the benefit of the programme in terms of reducing shyness, and St2, a person with a stutter, expresses that he feels the programme has made him more comfortable with his speech disorder in general:

> If I had attended a programme like that before, I would have been much more enterprising. (St11, post)
>
> I think there is a massive difference (in self-confidence levels between pre and post programme). I am not as hesitant as before. I am now chatting with my friends more often. I do not know if it is because I feel so but I think I am more comfortable with my speech (disorder). My friends and my sister say that I am better. I also feel that I am better and braver. (St2, post)

Apart from the psychological effects stated till now, the results also highlighted that some learners found this programme as an opportunity to improve their listening, speaking and vocabulary skills:

> We are extremely bored with grammar and reading. That the course particularly included speaking and listening activities made it different for us and we quite liked it. (St5, post)

> It contributes to me in many aspects and I love it. In daily conversations I sometimes find myself talking in English on the issues which I have to talk in Turkish. (St30, weekly scale 3)
>
> I believe this activities also improve my vocabulary knowledge and my daily conversation skills in English. (St30, weekly scale 4)
>
> I would never like this programme to come to an end. We would be more relaxed and we would improve our speaking skills at the same time. (St16, post)

As the participants were mostly high-school students, there was an emphasis in teaching them grammar and making them practice writing so that they would be successful in the university entrance exams. The results confirm that these students were bored with tasks that primarily required focusing on these two areas and they were keen to practice English for communicative purposes. On the other hand, one student viewed the programme not only as a confidence-building training but also as a supportive environment for dealing with some problems derived from the puberty: "I wish this programme, which helped us to re-gain our confidence, lasted longer. Then, I would be able to get over this puberty process more smoothly" (St14, post).

Students' attitudes towards the intervention

Students reported that they wished they had attended such a programme before and that it would enhance their language learning and lower their unease if they had a class with similar contents to the programme every week or if the intervention programme lasted longer:

> The programme really had an impact on us. I can hear the same from my friends. If it lasted throughout the year instead of 2 months, more things would change. (St14, post)

Attending to this programme made students happy as one student stated: "Lessons were very beneficial this week. I simply feel happy when I attend your classes" (St8,

weekly scale 2). As we shall see later, this could be related to the relaxing nature of the programme as it included visualisation, meditation, and confidence-building tasks:

> I have been very eager to participate in these sessions. I feel like I am dropping my worries when I am in this class. I feel refreshed both physically and mentally. (St20, weekly scale 5)

Moreover, not only did students enjoy the programme, they also found themselves participating in English classes in the school more than before:

> I think it (the intervention) was nice, pleasant and enjoyable. It contributed to us a lot. For example, I have become more and more self-confident after each week. I also started to participate in the classes in school (St2, post).

Students' positive attitudes towards the intervention programme were also reflected in the drop-out rate as none of the participants skipped a class. In fact, two more students wanted to join after the 3rd week of the programme as they heard about it from their friends. These are unambiguous indications that students were all thoroughly involved in the project and that there was an overall positive view towards the programme.

11.3 Three-phase developmental pattern

The weekly well-being scale was a rough measure which would not stand up against serious psychometric criteria but it has been useful to monitor some basic major trends as a quick way to putting our finger on them. It offered a very helpful approach to show students' development throughout the intervention programme and it suggested that this development could be separated in three distinct phases.

One way ANOVA results showed that there was a significant effect of the intervention on students' well-being levels for the 5 intervention sessions [$F(4,145) = 6.81$, $p<.001$]. Post hoc comparisons using SNK and LSD tests indicated that the mean well-being score for the second week ($M = 4.73$, $SD = .84$) was significantly higher than the first week ($M = 4.34$, $SD = .85$). The second, third ($M = 4.83$, $SD = .74$) and the fourth ($M = 4.93$, $SD = .67$) weeks did not significantly differ; however, there was a significant improvement when it came to the final week ($M = 5.32$, $SD = .57$)

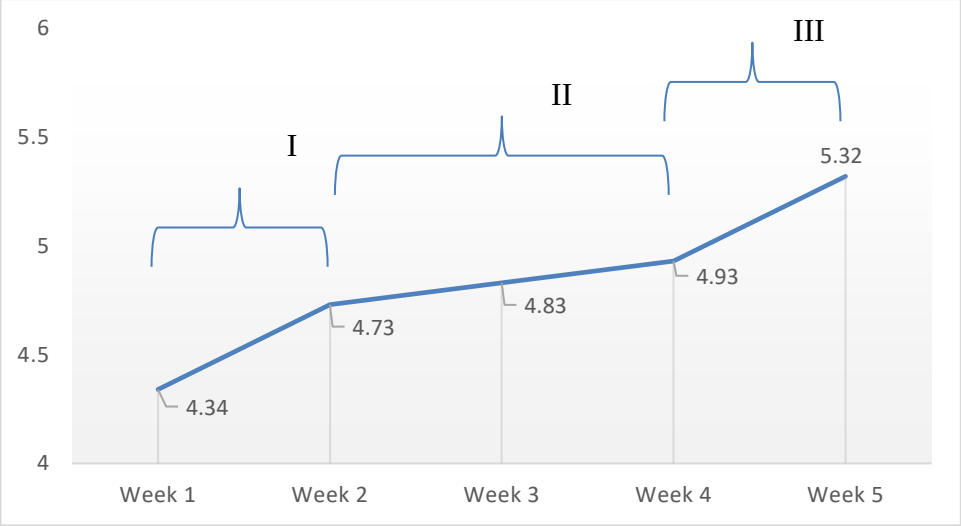


Figure 13 – Weekly well-being scores throughout the intervention and a three-phase improvement

Both the ANOVA results and the plotted trend shown in Figure 13 highlight a three-phase improvement in learners' well-being levels. Going back to the design phase of this intervention, the purpose was to gradually diminish learner anxiety levels by, first, introducing some-well known relaxation methods and introducing the students to the concept and image of different anxious selves; second, comparing different manifestations of anxiety and building strategies to minimize the effects of anxiety through visualisation and systematic de-sensitization; third, helping individuals build a concrete improved anxious self-image. The weekly well-being data coincide with

these primary guides of the research design as well as with my personal experience, my journal notes and the students' verbal statements:

> In fact, I didn't think the programme would work for me at first but later I started to like it as the weeks passed and noticed that the activities actually helped. (St4, post)
>
> I can say that my nervousness decreased more in comparison to the first or second week. I am determined to reduce it more. (St7, post)

Learners' gradual improvement could also be observed in their answers given in the open-ended part in the weekly well-being scale:

> I was reluctant to present in English when you asked for the first time. I actually tried to avoid. Then as your sessions went on I realised that I could not go on like that and I had to get over it. I was still uneasy but I was also willing to do something. (St15, weekly scale 2)
>
> I am still anxious but I think I am trying to improve and getting better. (St18, weekly scale 3)
>
> I am thinking back to the first session of this course and I can feel that there is a difference in a good way. I am not anxious and shy that much anymore. (St8, weekly scale 5)

In the light of these results, the outcome of the intervention will be presented in an incremental, three-phase sequence according to the progression of the programme. Considering the aims as well as the feedback from the students, these three phases may be broadly categorized as *introductory stage, anxiety processing stage and reduced anxiety stage.* The three phases will be discussed separately in the next few chapters.

12 Introductory stage

12.1 Effect of relaxation methods

The first intervention session started with the introduction of several relaxation methods as a potential way to relieve somatic symptoms of language anxiety and as a medium to prepare students for the guided-imagery tasks for the latter sessions. In the first relaxation task students were asked to close their eyes and focus on natural sounds (e.g. sound of waves, birds and breeze) with soft, calming music. Both students' comments on the session and their feedback elicited in the weekly well-being scale after the first week showed that some students found the focus-on-music method beneficial to relax themselves. According to what St11 and St20 express, playing calming music and asking students to focus on it at the beginning of a class allowed them to focus on the other activities in the classroom better and helped them to forget about negative thoughts which potentially hindered their performances:

> Focussing on natural sounds purifies my mind and it has a calming effect. (St11, post)
>
> In fact, I am afraid to use English in the classes but after your activity in which you asked us to leave ourselves to music I felt courageous enough to initiate a speech in English. It helped me not to think over my mistakes for a moment (St20, weekly scale 1).

Similarly, as St7 mentioned, asking students to focus on calming music before imagination tasks helped students to clear their minds, thus allowing them to be more actively involved in the imagination tasks:

> One can think of almost anything in mind unless focusses particularly on something. I think focussing on music was efficient for us to concentrate during the imagination activities. (St7, post)

Following the calming music activity, students were introduced visualisation methods: they were asked to imagine a nice place of their preference while the visualisation script was dictated. The students' reaction over this introductory visualisation task was quite important as it was the first time in their lives that they had been part of such a task and because the visualisation technique formed the basis of the systematic de-sensitization tasks in the intervention programme. The activity was completed with success and students expressed that they were fascinated with the outcomes of the visualisation method. As shown in the extracts below, students expressed that visualising their favourite places helped them to become happier and, therefore, more relaxed. It might also be concluded from the data that the increase in students' willingness to communicate and levels of happiness in language learning might have a strong link to foreign language anxiety even though this study does not measure the effects of joy and happiness experienced in language classes on language anxiety directly:

> I heard of this (visualisation) technique but I had never tried it before this programme. I just saw it on TV. I have heard that it makes people relaxed and I think now that they do actually relax people. (St21, intervention session 1)
>
> …I was like my dreams came true. I was very calm and happy when I opened my eyes after you asked us to imagine for the first time. (St6, post)
>
> I liked the visualisation method the most because it took me to my childhood memories and they were very beautiful, like real. (St5, post)

After the visualisation task, students were introduced the meditation task as a relaxation method. This task was slightly modified during the application and students were asked to perform according to the meditation script while sitting on their chairs instead of sitting on the ground due to the limited space in the classroom. The meditation script contained an intensive breath-control exercise, and students

reported that this exercise brought relief to them by eliminating any anxiety-related thoughts by the end of the task:

> I have started to use breath exercises very often. Before I start to talk in English I breathe deeply several times and try to focus on my breath. It helps to gain my confidence and makes it easier to start a sentence. (St2, post)

> Meditation and focussing on my breath… I used them several times. For example, before my second presentation. I also use them at home by myself whenever I feel uneasiness. (St16, post)

As inferred from the above statements, students reported that they began utilizing relaxation methods as a daily habit by the end of the intervention; yet, one student explained after the activity that she had difficulty in embracing the breathing exercises ('I liked the visualisation activity but I could not steep myself in meditation. it seemed a little odd to me to deeply focus on our breath that we normally perform as a reflex', St5, intervention session 1). Apart from that, the qualitative data revealed no preferential difference between the three relaxation methods introduced and participants expressed that they could make use of the relaxation methods in language classes as well as in different walks of life:

> I think I will try to use all of these techniques whenever I am angry or I am sad. They seem to be useful. (St23, intervention session 1)

> For the first time in my life I feel relaxed when I am learning English because you introduced us some effective methods to show how we could feel comfortable. The relaxation methods you introduced definitely work. (St29, post)

Lastly, one of the most salient findings regarding the introduction of relaxation methods in language classes has been the fact that applying these methods minimized the somatic symptoms of language anxiety:

> During meditation activity and also in the visualisation one I felt that my heart rate was lowering. I somehow felt more relaxed. (St25, intervention session 1)

> …Last week there was a grammar practice session and teacher asked each student in the class one by one to answer a grammar question reflected on the board. When my turn was close, I started to feel slightly hot. Then, I closed my eyes and listened to my breathing for a couple of seconds until teacher called my name. That was very refreshing. When I focussed on my breath I really forgot about every concern in my mind and I went to the board with confidence like nothing happened. (St20, post)

12.2 Introducing the self-concept

Another activity presented in the introductory stage called "Future alternatives", was aimed to introduce the self concept and provide examples of different improved anxious selves. After reading "My successful tourist self" script, one of the students expressed that she was able to build a relationship between the self presented in the text and her own. This reaction was promising in terms of learners' starting to believe that improving the anxious self was not impossible:

> I like this tourist self script. I feel the same way. A few things need to change in my life though, for example: I need to improve my English a bit more and I need to earn money. I do not think it is not achievable. (St4, intervention session 1)

On the other hand, while designing the intervention programme my initial concern was that students might not fully comprehend what "self-concept" was; therefore, I introduced it with some photos of myself explaining my own "guitar player self", "research student self" and "tourist self". At the end of the session in the first week of intervention, students seemed interested to learn about the self concept, as reflected in one students' post-intervention interview.

> You told us that we had different "selves". It really impressed me. I used to view myself in one form but it was normal that acted differently in different circumstances. (St21, post)

12.3 Role modelling

The qualitative data obtained from the pre- and post-intervention interviews revealed that students saw me as a role model for them starting from my very first contact in the informative session before the intervention. Students clearly expressed that my academic background and way of speaking to them provided an inspiration for them:

> Did you know that your life is almost everyone's aspiration in the class? (St4, pre)
> I would like to be like you. I would like to be sure of myself. I would like to be confident, successful, footloose and fancy free. I want to be in that place that you and a few of my other teachers already wished and succeeded (St7, pre)

No doubt, the fact that I conducted the intervention study in a language school in my hometown and that my early school background was similar to many others' could have an effect on their viewing me as a role model:

> I don't know how to express but my self-confidence has increased since I met you. Where you started and where you are now…Your life gives me inspiration (St12, post).

Post intervention interviews suggested that some participants observed the way I talked in English and they found it motivating (E.g. "You looked very comfortable when you came in the classroom and I wanted to be like you. I feel much better about self-confidence now and I would like to be like you in the future", St21, post; "I elaborated on you and on your speech. The more I observed the more I became motivated", St3, post). On the other hand, St29 highlighted one drawback of the presence of a role model in the classroom as she felt nervous while she was trying to make an impression.

> (During the presentation) I always thought about whether I was doing fine or not. I was worried about my pronunciation and my talk. There was a person who was very good at English watching me so I was very nervous and I tried to put some extra effort to make an impression. (St29, pre)

13 Anxiety processing stage

13.1 Getting to know oneself and neutralizing anxiety

The three-week period referred to as the anxiety processing stage within the three-phase developmental pattern consisted of various activities focussing on normalizing anxiety and de-sensitizing anxiety with the help of guided imagery. This stage started with a visualisation activity called “A dreadful workshop”, which was introduced for learners to recall their anxious states vividly so that they could write a concise description of their anxious selves as a follow-up activity. The participants were fully focussed on listening to the script and it was noticeable in their’ mimics that they felt discomfort. The feedback elicited after the dictation confirmed this observation. Many students experienced headache, heart palpitations or sweating as if they had faced anxiety in real life:

> I have a headache now. (St30, intervention session 2)
>
> I can feel my heartbeats. (St7, intervention session 2)
>
> Amazing! My hands are sweating as if I was actually there. I would never want to be in such a situation. (St22, intervention session 2)

Although the negative imagery activity caused participants to experience a considerable deal of anxiety, the majority of the students reported in the post-intervention interviews that they could make use of imagining a feared situation as they believed that they could be prepared for worst-case scenarios by doing this:

> I liked the idea of imagining a miserable situation and taking measures so as not to encounter it in real life. I think I will often apply it in my life. (St14, post)

> I think this kind of (negative) imagination is beneficial as it prepares us for the worst situation. (St6, post)

Because “A dreadful workshop” was a semi-controlled activity, students were able to experience and also self-observe how they feel in a potentially anxiety-provoking situation. At the end of the week, students expressed that such an experience also contributed to discovering the behaviours they manifested under tension, which allowed for familiarizing with themselves as well as with anxiety better:

> This week, I have explored what makes me anxious and, through imagination, how I can foresee the things which might make me anxious. (St14, weekly scale 2)
>
> This was an important week for me. I discovered my behaviours in the situations when I feel anxious. Also, things could turn out to be different than we dream of so we should be prepared for the negative outcomes as well. (St7, weekly scale 2)
>
> We learned to prepare ourselves for a bad experience and also what makes us anxious. These gave us a chance to know ourselves better. (St10, weekly scale 2)
>
> This activity made me think of some actions in order not to experience a bad situation in the future. (St13, weekly scale 2)

After explaining that language anxiety was common and that the first step to alleviate its detrimental effects was to acknowledge its existence, the participants were asked to write a concise description of their anxious selves by creating a typical situation. All of the participants, even the non-anxious ones, expressed that they were displeased with anxiety and anxiety abased them by lowering their performance in English. For example, one of the non-anxious students reported that she felt relaxed on most occasions, but she might experience slight nervousness while speaking to foreigners:

> I like English. It is entertaining for me to talk in English in the classroom, in school or when I am around friends but I experience anxiety in circumstances which requires me to talk to a foreigner. I cannot talk to a person with ease even though the person is not British or American. When I am asked a question, I know what to say. I make sentences in my

> mind but I cannot transfer those sentences into actual words. I do not like this at all and I would like to talk to all people in English without hesitation. I think it might because we do not have many foreigners in our city and I feel guilty when I am unable to help when I see one. I am sure I will fix this problem in the future. (St14, "My anxious self" worksheet)

St14, expressed with confidence her belief that her discomfort of speaking to foreigners would change for the better, but not all of the students were so positive in the early stages of the intervention. St23's written statement indicated that she experienced uneasiness in test-taking situations (her tests are all in English as she studies English Language and Literature) and in one-to-one talks in English to anyone who was better than her in terms of language skills or was higher in status (e.g., English language instructor, head of the department at the university, etc.). The level of her uneasiness was so high that she believed that she would never get over her anxiety and that it became a part of her character:

> I can feel that my anxious self is activated in exam terms. I cannot sleep at night and I cannot eat anything at these times until exams are over. Another thing that makes me anxious is talking to people who are on higher positions. For example, the instructors and the professors teaching at my university... I can never be relaxed when talking to them. Anxiety makes me careless and forgetful. Also talking to an audience makes me nervous. Before all of this situations I usually think that I will perform poorly and I always blame myself for not being prepared well although I study hard. I do not know how to deal with this and I think this is my personality. I do not know what I am going to do with my anxiety in the future when I graduate. (St23, "My anxious self" worksheet)

At the end of "My anxious self" task, students expressed positive views towards writing about their anxious selves and reported that they had never thought about their anxiety so deeply previously, while some others said that they had never written about themselves before:

> I had never pondered on myself so much before. (St16, intervention session 2)

> I think it might help writing about our anxious situations. It was my first time doing it. Writing about our anxiety helps us to better recognize what makes us anxious. I have always been wondering why I become anxious. (St21, intervention session 2)
>
> That we wrote about our anxious selves helped me discover the areas that I was never aware of. (St10, post)

One of the male students had already mentioned improving the anxious self in the second intervention session, before the concept of improving the anxious self actually was introduced:

> While writing about my anxious self I noticed that I can actually improve my anxious self. That stuck in my head. Can it be possible? (St13, intervention session 2)

As it also became apparent from the comments written to accompany the weekly well-being scales, participants explained that they started to investigate the feelings of nervousness they encountered in certain situations, and they also expressed that the second intervention session helped them to be decisive in their approaches to getting to know themselves better:

> It might sound weird but I think I started to investigate myself and I find it somehow relaxing. (St2, weekly scale 2)
>
> This week's course helped me to know myself better. Before then, I actually knew that it would be a good idea write about myself but I did not try. I found the writing activity very useful. I am still nervous in the English classes but not as much as I was before. (St15, weekly scale 2)

Another activity that was reported to be contributing to students' discovery of what triggered their anxiety was "Creating Anxiety Hierarchy". The charts used in the activity showed that the anxiety-provoking scenario that was most frequently associated with learners' language learning concerned speaking in English in the presence of others, regardless of the environment or location (Table 18).

Example 1	
Where?	On the phone
What brought it on?	When I talk to a stranger in English
Symptoms	Get hot
More descriptors	Hate it
Rating	5
Suggestions	You should relax, try to understand what he/she says. Perhaps he/she is anxious, too!
Example 2	
Where?	In a shopping mall
What brought it on?	I talked to a foreigner. He knew English well. He asked me a question and he had to wait quite a long time for me to produce a meaningful sentence and respond to him
Symptoms	First I was jabbering then I could not talk I used non-verbal signs instead.
More descriptors	I felt poor
Rating	6
Suggestions	That is quite normal because you are not a native speaker. We are all humans and we can make mistakes. Practice more.
Example 3	
Where?	When I first started coming to this language school.
What brought it on?	Joining in a new group and introducing myself in English.
Symptoms	Heart palpitations
More descriptors	Stressful
Rating	5
Suggestions	Nobody is different than you, we are all the same. Talk to others straightaway.

Table 18 – Creating anxiety hierarchy (communication apprehension)

The first example shows that individuals might experience anxiety while speaking in a foreign language on the phone while the second draws attention to the feeling of apprehension associated with talking to native-speakers or foreigners. Both situations caused students to experience higher levels of discomfort, as shown in the ratings. Lastly, the anxiety described in the third example occurred while the participant was talking to an unfamiliar group of people, and manifested itself in one of the more common symptoms of anxiety: an increased heart rate. One of the most remarkable

findings reported in this table emerged from the suggestions of students themselves for the situations described. The suggestions showed that students began to develop optimistic attitudes towards anxiety by verbalizing its normality and expressing that anxiety is a common feeling that almost anyone can experience. That being said, in the context of situations involving communication, presenting in English was one of the other common triggers that students described. (Table 19)

Example 1	
Where?	School
What brought it on?	Presenting on the stage in English
Symptoms	Shaking hands, forgetting parts of speech. I was ice cold
More descriptors	Shameful, I was afraid to have lower marks
Rating	7
Suggestions	Practice before the presentation, imagine about the features of the place to give the presentation and prepare accordingly. Imagine that this place is somewhere that you feel the most comfortable, or imagine you are all alone in there.
Example 2	
Where?	Conference
What brought it on?	First time, repeating words during a presentation
Symptoms	Coughing sweating
More descriptors	Very angry, silly
Rating	6
Suggestions	Drink water, practice several times before the presentation, focus on other things
Example 3	
Where?	Any place where other people focus on me when I use foreign language
What brought it on?	Gaze
Symptoms	Trembling and blushing, stopping
More descriptors	Embarrassing
Rating	6
Suggestions	You should try to control your feelings. Everybody can make a mistake anytime.

Table 19 - Creating anxiety hierarchy (L2 stage fright)

In the first example, one student described how forgetting parts of the speech during a presentation brought about shame, and showed that the main reason for her anxiety was worrying about receiving a low grade. While the second example accounts for the anxiety felt during a conference presentation, the third one clearly demonstrates that learners of English could almost feel anxious in any place where they sense the gaze from of around them. At the time of this activity students were not fully aware of actively employing imagery-based strategies to deal with anxiety; however, the comments from participants on Example 1 show that a few students had already started utilizing lessons and drawing conclusions from what had been learned in the first intervention session, that is, making use of visualisation as a relaxation method. Some other student responses describe the anxiety-provoking nature of being spontaneously called upon in the classroom with no warning or chance for preparation. Two examples shown in Table 20 highlight that students in English classes do not enjoy traditional "stand up and answer" situations, as these are often associated with confusion, fear of negative evaluation and fear of losing face.

Example 1	
Where?	Classroom
What brought it on?	Teacher called my name to answer a question. I was not able to answer. I thought everyone might think that I was a lazy student.
Symptoms	I got confused. I forgot words.
More descriptors	Too difficult
Rating	6
Suggestions	Think about your sentence carefully, think about the teacher in a funny way and tell your answer. Give a basic answer
Example 2	
Where?	Classroom
What brought it on?	Teacher asked me a question without preparation. I was afraid that others would think I was not capable.
Symptoms	Sweating, feeling thrilled
More descriptors	-
Rating	6

Suggestions	You don't have to know everything. Do not push yourself too hard. Try to explain your ideas in a different way.

Table 20 - Creating anxiety hierarchy (fear of negative evaluation)

Test anxiety was another category that was highlighted by students in the charts. Example 1 shown in Table 21 presents a typical example of test anxiety, whereas the learner suggestion in Example 2 shows that students' past negative experiences could turn into permanent and repetitive negative feelings if they are unable to structure those experiences into constructive narratives.

Example 1	
Where?	School
What brought it on?	The first few minutes in my recent English exam
Symptoms	Inability to understand the questions
More descriptors	Felt like I was stupid and others were all good.
Rating	7
Suggestions	You should calm down and start with questions you know well
Example 2	
Where?	Exam centre
What brought it on?	My unsuccessful background from the past and limited time in a writing exam
Symptoms	I forgot the things I knew
More descriptors	Horrible, crying
Rating	6
Suggestions	If you study hard you can make it. Past is past and you have a chance to override. You will have more exams in the future

Table 21 - Creating anxiety hierarchy (test anxiety)

There was not a strict division between the factors reported in the charts activity in terms of their ratings, and students' comments suggested evidence for similar adaptations of language anxiety that were discussed in Chapter 12. On the other hand, one situation reported in the charts showed that one learner found "Who is who?" activity disturbing (Table 22). For this activity, each student was asked to mimic his/her own anxious self and while they were doing that, they were asked to

freeze like a statue, holding their positions. The purpose was to ask participants to match the photos with the numbered anxious self statements on the wall. However, this specific activity was cancelled, as many students complained about the activity and said that they would not feel comfortable looking at their photos while others were also looking at them.

Where?	In this class
What brought it on?	You took photos of us and I did not like how I looked
Symptoms	Blushing
More descriptors	Ashamed. I did not want to look at it
Rating	5
Suggestions	This is not a big deal. Our photos were taken, too! We were all funny.

Table 22 - Creating anxiety hierarchy (an anxiety-triggering activity in the programme)

All in all, at the end of the week students reported that they were able to investigate their feelings of anxiety more closely, and also that they had learned about others' anxieties, which was expressed as being reassuring by one of the participants (St5). In other words, participants started to become familiar with the concept of anxiety and discovered that many people suffer from anxiety, each with their own unique perspective:

> I realized that I did not know what made me anxious. I started to observe my anxiety now. I started to recognize it. (St19, post)
>
> It was good to see what almost everyone can be anxious in various circumstances. The course helped me to discover some potential solutions for these circumstances. (St8, weekly scale 2)
>
> It relieved to learn that other people also experience the problems that I experience myself. (St5, weekly scale 2)
>
> It was a good week. I found out my friends' anxious states and I felt thankful. (St12, weekly scale 2)

Post-intervention interviews confirmed first that the activities designed to encourage participants to discover their anxious selves in the programme allowed the learners to perceive anxiety as a normal, common feeling (E.g. “I have found out that anxiety is quite common so I will not be worried about having it anymore”, St19, post) and second that the activities helped them to diagnose anxiety triggers in certain situations by providing them with the opportunity to explore themselves as well as the others:

> I have been questioning my personality and my feelings recently to find out how I often react in inconvenient situations in the language classes. (St11, post)
>
> I think I know myself better now after this course. Until two months ago there was times I hesitated to talk in English but now there are not. (St2, post)
>
> This programme had a huge effect on reminding me of my capabilities and of the things I could succeed. I have noticed that I should not be worried about my anxiety and if I become planned and well-organised I can be successful in English and I can beat my anxiety at the same time. (St12, post)

St12’s statement cited above also shows that the process of identifying anxious tendencies, verbalising them and working on them with others could positively affect self-confidence levels. Not only the highly anxious students, but also some non-anxious or slightly anxious students came to realise the importance and value of accepting and normalising anxiety as a commonly experienced phenomenon, as shown in the following extracts:

> I do not consider myself as anxious learner but even if I was anxious I would welcome it quite normally first of all. (St16, post)
>
> Everybody can make a mistake while talking in English and I am one of them. I believe that everybody should accept me with my mistakes as I am. I cannot change within a minute but I can be better. I can help my friends correcting their mistake and I also appreciate their help. (St20, post)

13.2 Systematic de-sensitization

Systematic de-sensitization activity was prefaced by explaining that it was one of the most well-known treatment methods in psychology, and de-sensitization would occur when learners could imagine their anxiety triggers vividly and realistically while remaining completely relaxed. It was also explained that through repeated practice it might lead to a reduction in anxiety levels. The qualitative findings revealed that learners were impressed with the way systematic de-sensitization worked. For instance, St2 made use of the logic of systematic de-sensitization to begin to overcome his communication apprehension:

> I conditioned myself and set a goal for me after we did the de-sensitization activity in the class. It was like that: "I will raise my hand and force myself to talk in a speaking activity once in English class this week but next week I will do it twice and the three times the week after". I now think that I sometimes speak more than enough and I am very happy with this. (St2, post)

At the end of dictating each de-sensitization script, almost all the participants had smiles on their faces and their feedback was positive. For example, when the dictation of the script for countering test anxiety was over, students reported that they felt calm in the imagery-based test-taking situation, and they found it easy to answer the questions in the test:

> The test was really easy. I wasn't anxious at all. I was able to answer all the questions. (St25, intervention session 3)
>
> I haven't felt at ease during a test for a long time but this was different. I was quite confident during the test. I was calm. (St30, intervention session 3)

The qualitative data showed that systematic de-sensitization activities played a crucial role in the improvement of students recorded over five intervention weeks.

First of all, as St14 noted, these activities helped students to strengthen their beliefs regarding the power of guided-imagery and the advantage of the whole programme:

> This week made me believe the rationale of this study. I think we will improve a lot in remaining weeks. In this week I learned that we can actually prepare ourselves to cope with difficult situations with the help of imagination. (St14, weekly scale 3)

St7 and St18 stated that their initial ideas about anxiety had changed and that coping with anxiety was not as difficult as it had seemed in the first place, while St6 highlighted the possibility of developing strategies to cope with the debilitating effects of anxiety:

> Thanks to your sessions it now seems that it might be possible to control my behaviours. At least, this possibility makes me feel better as I am a very shy person with no self-confidence at all. (St18, weekly scale 3)
>
> I learned that I should not be afraid of some situations which initially appears to be difficult to experience from an external perspective. (St7, weekly scale 5)
>
> The important thing is to know how to control my behaviours when I am anxious rather than not being anxious at all. I think I should judge my experiences thoroughly. (St6, weekly scale 3)

On the other hand, interviews with St9 suggested that students came to realize the beneficial effects of systematic de-sensitization on anxiety in a short span of time and it served as an additional source of motivation for students.

> I learned to go over my anxiety and I was surprised to see that it actually worked. This activities helped me to say: “I should face with the situations I feel anxious about- but with tiny steps and slowly- then I can get over it”. (St9, post)

Finally, statements obtained from a non-anxious student’s weekly feedback suggested that language anxiety de-sensitization activities, even if not specifically

used to tackle anxiety, could also be used to deal with some other fears (e.g. fear of insects as suggested by St14).

> I learned to eliminate my fears by facing with them gradually. I did not actually need it in language learning but I am sure it will help me in many other issues. I can think of my fear of insects. I will start with not escaping from insects and trying to observe them from distance. (St14, weekly scale 3)

13.3 Building synergy

In earlier findings it was mentioned that learners tended to be more anxious in unfamiliar environments and the fear of negative evaluation was reported to occur more among individuals with less exposure to social interaction. From the beginning of the intervention almost all of the activities in the intervention programme included an element that required pair work or group work. In this sense the programme was collaborative and students were often asked to share their ideas with the class. Based on classroom observation, it is safe to say that most of the activities presented in the programme enhanced cooperation and friendship in the classroom. On the other hand, it should be noted that students' acclimatisation to myself, as a facilitator and as a researcher, day by day might have also contributed to the general synergy established in the class. This was also reflected in St8's feedback in week four:

> Because that I get used to you and the class more I can now join conversations in English without hesitation. I do not think over my mistakes as much as I used to do before. (St8, weekly scale 4)

Another student, St11, suggested that this programme helped the participants to improve in social contexts:

> I believe there is a change in social aspect. Before you came I was troubled with this class. The activities we did together with other friends in the class promoted my dialogue with them and I can feel the difference of this even in our other lessons. (St11, post)

If we recall an extract cited in Chapter 12 (‘I am a social person so such things do not happen’ St3 pre), we should once again highlight that socialising might play a key role in combating anxiety. In this respect, students’ overall improvement indicated that the activities taken part in during the intervention programme could encourage students to interact with others more and to share their feelings more openly, which in turn could shed light on the lower levels of anxiety that were recorded at the end of the intervention.

14 Reduced anxiety stage

14.1 Imagining improved anxious selves

The students' well-being index increased continuously as the weeks passed during the intervention and it peaked at the end of the programme. In "My improved anxious self" activity, students were asked to visualise their improved anxious selves by means of a semi-controlled script and then they were to write a general description of what their improved anxious self would be like. Following the completion of the task, students were asked to share their improved selves with their partners and discuss what was achievable. The feedback elicited from learners showed that visualising an improved self caused a positive influence on students and changed their moods for the better:

> I think this week was the best so far. It made my day! The visualisation activities were amazing! (St13, weekly scale 4)
>
> We learned the steps to take to trust ourselves and these were important. I think I can go to London someday! (happy smiley) (St4, weekly scale 4)

The findings indicate that visualising an improved anxious self, accompanied by systematic de-sensitization with guided-imagery and relaxation techniques, strengthens the students' belief that improving their anxious self is actually feasible, and thus increases their self-confidence. Participants mentioned several other examples that support this argument:

> Nothing seemed impossible. (St30, weekly scale 4)
>
> In reality, I felt that we are not as far from our dreams as we think. (St1, weekly 4)
>
> I think I learned how to keep my anxious self under control. (St3, weekly scale 4)

> I discovered that if I imagine myself in the position that I would like to be one day, I can be in that position in the future or I can even do better than that. It all depends on willing and the imagining. (St16, weekly scale 5)
>
> What I have in my pocket after this programme is mainly visualisation activities. When you asked us to visualise our improved anxious selves I imagined myself visiting the USA and ordering a food in a restaurant with confidence. I found out in the activity that it was achievable and I believe that I will definitely realize it in the future. (St14, post)

One of the highly anxious students, St1, expressed in her "Improved anxious self" activity worksheet that she would be able to get rid of her test anxiety in a few years but she also stated that she thought she would still find some communication situations, for example business meetings, anxiety triggering. However, St1 was able to cope with her anxiety by employing positive-self talk and meditation as well as by eliminating the thoughts of fear of making mistakes:

> I passed my university exam and graduated from the university. I am completely text-related anxiety free and I work in international relations department in a private company and I get along well with my colleagues. English is a part of my life and I make tens of phone calls in English everyday. I am feeling quite confident on the phone making conversations. Sometimes we have visitors from abroad and my manager wants me to attend meetings with them as an interpreter. In that moment I feel slightly anxious but I tell myself that everything is going to be alright and I take a deep breath several times to forget about my anxiety. I sometimes make mistakes while interpreting the conversations but that was normal and everyone in the meeting was also making some mistakes. I have a peaceful life. (St1, my improved anxious self worksheet)

Another worksheet from a student experiencing anxiety at a high level demonstrated that visualisation took an important part in his improved anxious self, which the student used as an effective strategy to rehearse a certain situation in his mind several times before it actually happened:

> I imagined myself as a 30 year old presenter working for a TV channel abroad. That is my only ambition. It was my first programme on TV and I felt very excited about it. I practiced my talk and posture in my mind with visualisation several days before the programme and I almost memorized

> all the content. When I first stepped onto the stage I interacted with the audience and it made me feel better. There was my determination in my mind rather than the concern of how I look. The more I spoke the better I felt. I sometimes entertained people by making jokes. I made a slip of the tongue but I was able to convert into something that people would laugh at. The life was good and I felt rewarded. (St18, my improved anxious self worksheet)

Taken the findings obtained from the two worksheets into account, it can be concluded that learners successfully completed the self-discovery stage in the first three weeks of the intervention and decided on a certain strategy which was the most suitable for them which not only helped them to reduce their anxiety levels at the last stage of the intervention but also increased their confidence and thus their fighting disposition.

The data also suggested that "Letter from my improved anxious self" activity also positively affected the students' increased well-being by reducing their anxiety states and strengthening their improved anxious self images. Students got genuinely engaged in the task and enjoyed the writing so much that some wanted to keep copies of the letter for themselves. Some participants asserted that the letter activity kept their motivation high and that they decided they would write letters to themselves from their improved anxious selves as a matter of routine (E.g. "I'm thinking of writing weekly letters to myself from my improved anxious self. It will remind me of my goals and make me work hard to achieve them", St4, post).

The examples below are the letters that St25 and St21 wrote to themselves. St25 starts with acknowledging his anxiety and then assures himself that he will get over it in time. The letter also underlines the de-sensitizing of anxiety through exposure as St25 suggests that one way to defeat anxiety is to incrementally reduce it by speaking in English often. Finally, the concluding sentence of St25 reveals that she enjoys positive visualisations:

> I am writing you this letter as a software engineer in 2030. I know you have anxiety about English and you think whether you will learn English and become successful in your field. Yes, you will become successful. Please be sure of that but do not allow this to make you too comfortable and feel sluggish. You have a long path ahead of you. Be confident and do not give up the fight. You may feel down sometimes but this should not change your goals. You now find writing in English easier and you prefer not to speak in English classes because of other people. Don't even think about it. You will talk in time but you should give yourself a chance. Do not hesitate making mistakes. I overcame my speaking problem by advancing on it more and more. And do not give up imagining about the good! (St25, letter from my improved anxious self worksheet)

Moving to the letter written by St21, the acknowledgement of the presence of anxiety is the first thing to notice. In her vision regarding her improved anxious self, St25 is a teacher of English and she encourages her past self to apply relaxation methods before exams and to visualise the improved anxious self with positive qualities in it:

> ... I know you had difficult times in English but I would like you to know that this is over. There will be a fresh phase in your life and you will be feeling better in English classes. You are worried about English exams – please don't. I am writing you this letter as a teacher of English. I am teaching English to children, which means that you will be teaching English to children in 10 years. I also would like to let you know that I own a dog and I am travelling a lot. I have many friends from all over the world and we often visit each other. Anyway, to be able to achieve all these you should practice and you should never lose your trust in yourself. You will pass all your exams in English and the university entrance exam, too! Do not forget to relax yourself before the exam and always think of good things about it. Do not hesitate to talk to foreigners. That is how I made my friends. (St21, letter from my improved anxious self worksheet)

14.2 Balanced expectations

Post-intervention interviews and feedback forms in the last two weeks of the intervention revealed another impact of the intervention programme regarding the students' career expectations. Students expressed that before the programme they

only had superficial career goals, but the programme helped them to think about their career goals thoroughly:

> … we generally thought about and imagined our goals. That was good, too. Now I can even visualise my goals. (St26, post)
>
> This course helped me to discover my future goals. I did not think them it in detail before. (St13, weekly scale 4)
>
> I now get that I have to study harder to be able to improve myself. (St5, weekly scale 4)

Students were directed to identify their concerns about English and their capabilities and then to visualise their improved anxious selves in the intervention; as a result, some students also found the programme as an opportunity to revise their goals. For example, St6 decided to change where he wanted to study and St13, owing to the imagination activities, came to realize that her pre-set career choice might be boring:

> I figured out that my beliefs were far from realistic. I don't set unrealistic goals anymore. I changed the university that I always wanted to attend. I had to face with that. (St6, post)
>
> I was thinking about being a teacher or a translator but now I don't want to be a teacher, it's boring, like the school life. I think being a translator is much better. (St13, post)

Some other students' post-test interview data revealed that they had enough potential to achieve higher goals than they imagined before the programme thanks to guided-imagery activities:

> I wanted to be a teacher of English language initially but I noticed that I could improve myself and achieve more. I started to think about the later phases in my career. I do not want to be an ordinary teacher. I would like to teach English abroad, travel and experience different cultures. (St2, post)
>
> I changed my career goals. My self-confidence has increased. Even though I was one of the best students in the class I did not have confidence in my English skills. I learned about other students' thoughts and I am more confident now. I felt that it was a must for me to become

> successful in the future. I aim to attend one of the best universities in Turkey and I believe I will do it. (St5, post)
>
> I still want to study in one of the best universities and teach in my high school after I graduate. None of these goals have changed but I can add more to the list now. I can write academic articles and even books about teaching English. (St4, post)
>
> I started to believe that I could go abroad and work in a European country. I did not consider it as an option before but you know when we imagined about the future and felt the future I think that helped to organize my mind. It was my first time deciding about the future. (St19, post)

14.3 Developing positive attitudes towards the L2

Developing positive attitudes towards English was one of the other effects observed in this programme. Interview data revealed that students found the activities joyful as they made them feel that they could speak in English:

> With this programme increased my willingness towards my language lessons. I started to be more actively involved in the language activities in my school. (St16, post)
>
> Your course was enjoyable. I liked all the tasks. (St8, post)
>
> *Do you think that the programme contributed to your thoughts about English language lessons?*
> Very much. I feel that I am capable of speaking about almost anything in English classes. (St2, post)
>
> This course helped me to be eager to speak more fluently and accurately like native speakers. I started to practice speaking by in front of a mirror at home. (St3, post)
>
> English lessons were sometimes boring. Now I am trying to catch some entertaining parts in each lesson. (St14, post)

St9, a non-anxious student, said that his attitudes towards English language classes had positively changed and he started to perceive these classes as an opportunity to observe and test his improvement:

> I was always comfortable in talking in English but to realize my development makes me more satisfied about joining in a conversation in English. I have become more conscious. (St9, post)

Lastly, two other students regarded the programme as a language practice workshop due to the communicative and cooperative nature of the tasks and the fact that I came from a university in the United Kingdom. It could also be said that students might be more interested in English because of the visualisation activities as visualisation made them feel like living abroad or they were talking to foreigners:

> I would like to be an interpreter so learning the culture of a foreign language is as important as learning its grammar. I have realized that imagination is perfect for this and I believe it is necessary. My eagerness to learn British culture has increased. (St5, post)

> My attitudes towards English has positively changed. The conversations with you and the examples you give… I used to practice English language one hour a day but now I do not want to stop practicing when I start. My desire to practice is not because of I am insufficient it is because I would like to achieve more. Sometimes I find myself waking up in the middle of the night and study vocabulary. (St12, post)

14.4 Optimism in the classroom

Almost every step in the intervention programme, except for the previously mentioned "Who is who" activity, received positive feedback from the participants and enhanced cooperation and friendship in the classroom. As a result, there was a general feel of optimism surrounding the research project. In addition, two specific tasks aimed to help individuals to adopt positive perspectives in their overall approach to interpreting their experiences. The first of these activities, "Positive qualities" helped students experience positive feelings:

> It was brilliant. Particularly, imagining about positive qualities. This week's classes also helped to think about the positive things in an experience. (St2, weekly scale 3)

> …your programme changed my pessimistic state. I cannot name one single activity but mainly imagination and thinking about positive concepts had effects on me. (St7, post)

Second, “Who would have believed it?” activity introduced in the last week of the programme not only helped students to build concrete improved anxious-self images but also showed them that interpreting the failures in their past language learning history positively might contain the foundations of spectacular future success:

> I will never think about negative things. I need to find the good sides in a bad experience. (St20, post)

One of the most anxious students in the programme, St15, wrote that she felt unhappy about changing her school to be able to study English as she constantly felt nervous in her new school due to her having hard time getting used to the class. She experienced fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension at a severe degree which caused her to feel weak and insecure. However, she pointed out that if she had not changed her school she would not have participated in the intervention programme which she was thankful for:

> I had to change my school in the beginning of this semester as the previous school of mine did not offer a class for language studies. I was already an anxious and shy person and when I stepped into a new classroom in a new school I became someone who barely talked. I always felt remorse for changing my school and choosing to study English because other people were all better than me. Everyday of mine in the school was a disaster. I felt so tired that I always thought of sleeping every time I got back home from school. I was in the classroom but my mind was not. I simply wanted to disappear from that class so that others could not see me. I felt totally weak and all I could wait for was the end of the semester. One day you came in the classroom and talked about a programme. I always have faith and I think your coming here has a meaning. You showed us the ways to know ourselves. If I did not change my school, I would not be here and I would perhaps feel sleepy, shy and anxious in all my life. Now I think I can fix the missing things in my life and I feel way better. (St15, who would have believed it? worksheet)

On the other hand, according to St21, one reason why she is now good at vocabulary knowledge is that her teacher in secondary school made her memorize too many vocabulary items. She expressed that she was very anxious back then because of the

teacher's harsh manners. However, after reinterpreting her experience in a constructive way she deduced that if she had not felt nervous in secondary school she would not have been able to make so much progress in expanding her vocabulary knowledge:

> When I was in secondary school, I had a terrible teacher. At least, that was what I thought at those times. I hated him because he asked us to memorize a lot of words in English for almost every lesson and he was really angry if we could not do it. He was often testing us with vocabulary quizzes and after one of those quizzes he told me that I disappointed him. I cried a lot that day. English was already difficult for me and he was so cruel that I felt very anxious before each English lessons with him. I has been two years now and I am one of the best students in vocabulary. In foreign language lessons, whenever I see a vocabulary test I feel happy. That was one of the reasons I chose to study languages in high school because my English was better than other subjects. If my teacher in secondary school did not force me to study I would not be good in English. (St21, who would have believed it? worksheet)

14.5 Increased self-confidence and inclination towards becoming a fighter

The findings reported so far have suggested that the intervention programme helped learners to be more enthusiastic, cooperative, optimistic, and determined in terms of their personal characteristics, and it has also helped them to become more self-aware, prepared, and motivated when dealing with anxiety. As a result, it can be argued that that the programme helped learners to gain self-confidence and to become more inclined towards adopting a fighting disposition against language anxiety as reported by many learners at the end of the intervention programme:

> *What was the main contribution of the programme to you?*
> Self-confidence, more self-confidence. (St14, post)
>
> The activities you asked us to do made me more decisive. (St2, post)

> I know my goals and I know I can do it. Why should not I? I am confident enough. (St5, weekly scale 5)
>
> I do not think there is anything that I cannot succeed if I work on it! (St12, weekly scale 5)
>
> This course helped us to build confidence. (St4, post)
>
> This week made me believe that I can overcome almost anything. I believe I will reach my goals no matter how long it takes. (St3, weekly scale 5)
>
> As I am more self-confident now. I am not feeling extremely nervous in English classes. As I told you at the beginning I was considering changing my course from languages to social sciences after my poor marks in the exams but now it isn't like this. I believe I can succeed if I study. I learned not to fall to the ground at the first failure. (St1, post)

At the end of the intervention, students stated that they were not afraid of making mistakes as much as they were before the intervention and that they regarded making mistakes as a part of their improvement. It was also recognised by the students that mistakes are made by anyone learning a foreign language:

> I am not afraid of making mistakes. When I do I will just laugh away… (St3, post)
>
> I am only thinking about positive consequences of making a mistake. Everybody can make one after all. (St10, post)
>
> I can now make mistakes with confidence. Of course by the condition that I will try to improve. (St6, weekly scale 5)

One crucial factor in the increase in participants' self-confidence levels was found to be the visualisation tasks:

> This course gives me confidence. I have started to say: "This (overcoming anxiety) is not as difficult as it seems". (St3, weekly scale 5)
>
> I stated to think that I might actually be successful in speaking in English. (St23, weekly scale 5)
>
> In reality, I felt that we are not as far from our dreams as we think. I noticed that as long as we trust ourselves, we could overcome the obstacles easier than we think. I am building my self-confidence more and more in this class. (St1, weekly scale 4)

Visualisation tasks served as an arena where learners could face nerve-wracking situations related to learning a foreign language and where they could then de-sensitize their anxiety through relaxation and rehearsal. Visualisation also strengthened the learners' improved anxious self-images and evoked constructive strategies:

> I did not know how to deal with my anxiety but now I have a plan in my mind. I can predict the stages that I need to go through... (St8, post)

Students also emphasised that they would continue to work on their improvement after the intervention:

> I will manage my anxiety by all means henceforward. (St2, post)
>
> I will continue to battle against anxiety after this (programme). It may sometimes be challenging and sometimes easy but I will overcome it. …You know we often imagined about our improved anxious selves. These made me believe that I could improve my anxious self not only in the imagination but also in reality. (St10, post)

Lastly, according to St17, the weekly well-being scale helped students to observe their positive progress tangibly, which also had a positive effect on their self-confidence levels:

> Actually by filling out this scale I can now notice that I am becoming more and more confident in speaking in English! (St17, weekly scale 4)

15 Combating stage fright

15.1 General characteristics of L2 stage fright

Previously reported quantitative results showed that L2 stage fright, a characteristic adaptation of language anxiety, was one of the situations that caused the most discomfort for language learners. An analysis of qualitative data collected from 30 language learners revealed that L2 stage fright could manifest itself in individuals in several ways through various symptoms. For instance, St2 experienced an increased heart rate and trembling hands, which made it difficult for him to control his posture, and St6 reported an elevated body temperature:

> … When I went there (to the stage), my heart was as if it was [stutters] going to go out of its place. I was so nervous that I could not prevent my hands from shaking…(St2, pre)
>
> My body temperature started to rise and I felt very inept. (St6, pre)

During the participants' presentations, it was observed that some individuals performed certain behavioural symptoms, such as staring at the ceiling, touching their hair or adjusting or smoothing their clothes, which they were not aware of until watching their performances in the interview sessions:

> I was looking at the ceiling because I think I was trying to remember my lines. I wanted to deliver a good presentation. (St9, pre)
>
> Indeed, I am twirling my hair all the time. I did not even realize what I was doing! (St30, pre)

As can be understood from its name, the essential reason why L2 stage fright is different from communication apprehension in L2 use lies in the *stage* factor, that is, where an audience listens to the individual attentively and inspects his/her performance visually:

Do you think that you have stage fright in L2?
Not when I'm in front of just a handful of people. But I would have stage fright if had to perform in front of a lot people. (St4, pre)

When I am talking while seated I only see a few friends and my teacher but when I am on the stage I see all the people and that is quite different. (St11, pre)

Participants clearly expressed that they felt the gaze of the audience very distinctly at the time of delivering their presentation, even though the duration of each presentation was not long. The following extracts show that this feeling of gaze causes shyness for some learners, while others find it difficult to describe:

Do you think that being on the stage is scary?
Yes, when all the eyes are on me… (St18, pre)

After all you are standing there in front of people and they are all staring at you. Of course when you talk when not on the stage people still listen to you but that is different. I don't know how to explain. It is different. (St20, pre)

I felt everyone was focussed on me and that I felt humiliated. (St24, pre)

It was also repeatedly stated by learners that the homogeneity of the audience had an effect on their levels of discomfort of L2 stage fright. Findings obtained in the pre-intervention interviews suggest that individuals feel slightly more comfortable when they had an on-going positive social interaction with the audience listening to them:

Somehow it depends on the people listening to me. I remember a presentation a couple of months ago I stood up and presented like a charm because the environment was so nice…(St8, pre)

The atmosphere is also important for me, too. If I am with my close friends, I may be more relaxed. (St23, pre)

Apart from the prominent role of the audience and the gaze factor, the findings also suggest that some of the other reasons for L2 stage are similar to most of the notions discussed earlier in explaining language anxiety. For example, as shown in the first extract below, St16 mentioned the fear of negative evaluation when asked to describe

how she felt when she made a pronunciation mistake and repeated word for a couple of times in her presentation. Following that, St17 puts the fear of losing face into words:

> When I was standing by the board on the stage I felt pressure as my friends were looking at me. The word that I could not pronounce was an easy one for me actually but when I got stuck a number of times I felt embarrassed there as I made a big mistake. (St16, pre)
>
> I was worried about my reputation because it could be damaged if I failed or put myself in an embarrassing situation. (St17, pre)

For the majority of students, especially in the participant group made entirely up of high-school pupils, their performance in the study was the first time they had had to stand on the stage and speak in English. Therefore, their lack of confidence in this situation could also be due to a lack of experience in public speaking. St19 was one of the students who mentioned this as a reason for his nervousness, while St10 felt pressure as her presentation was the first one to be heard in the class:

> It was my first time presenting on the stage in English therefore I was a bit nervous. (St19, pre)
>
> I was the first student to give the presentation. I was excited and nervous so in the beginning of my speech I was like a robot trying to finish as soon as possible. (St10, pre)

Data collected from two other students showed that they found presenting on the stage stressful because it was their first time talking in English in front of me, and they were trying to make an impression. As I found out later in the interview sessions, these two students were proficient in English language and both defined themselves as perfectionists, which affirms the link between perfectionism and L2 stage fright:

> …There was a person who was very good at English watching me so I was very nervous and I tried to put some extra effort to make an impression. (St29, pre).
>
> Actually, presenting in front of you affected me a little since you are professional. I wanted to perform well. (St3, pre)

St20 approached the issue of stage fright from a different perspective, reporting that he felt lonely on the stage. St20 stated that in ordinary conversations or group discussions he tended to feel comfortable as he could seek help from his classmates; however, he could not do this on the stage:

> In speaking activities we often talk in groups and everybody helps each other but on the stage it is only me and no one is there to help you (St20, pre).

As something that is specific to the context of this research, it should be mentioned that students' presentations were recorded on a video camera, and this might also cause an additional effect on their feelings of uneasiness:

> *Is talking on the stage scary for you?*
> If it happens in front of a camera, yes [laughs]. (St20, pre)
>
> I felt nervous as there was a camera recording me. (St19, post)

15.2 Effects of the programme on L2 stage fright

Based on paired samples t-test statistics, participants' post-intervention L2 stage fright scores were found to be significantly lower in comparison to the scores obtained before the intervention programme (M = 3.37, SD = 1.09; M = 2.11, SD = .82) [t (29) = 10.87, p<.001].

Additionally, the L2 Stage Fright Rating Scale provided similar results, suggesting that learners experienced significantly lower levels of discomfort and their speech was less disrupted in their second presentations which took place at the end of the intervention (M = 3.39, SD = .86; M = 2.67, SD = .71) [t (29) = 7.86, p<.001].

Furthermore, it was observed that almost every participant was well-prepared for the second presentation session and each participant adopted a happy, smiling attitude for the duration of his/her presentation. Qualitative data helps us to shed further light on how effective the intervention programme was on L2 stage fright levels. First of all, the programme affected students' attitudes towards presenting in English by encouraging them to consider the idea that the performance could actually be an enjoyable experience, despite their underlying beliefs that presentation in English was undesirable and stressful. This was reported at the beginning of the intervention:

> I was actually not willing to present in English at all (before the intervention). It was my first experience and I realized that it was not something very bad. It made me look professional. I am sure I will work on presentation more. (St5, post)

> I have become someone who is eager to make presentations in English. (St9, post)

Elaborating on the joy experienced in the second round of interviews, St14 stated that talking about a topic that she was knowledgeable in contributed to her fluency, and both the experience of language fluency and the fact that everybody was listening to her speech to learn about something new were highly positive:

> I was confident in my presentation because I talked about someone I knew very well. I felt joy at that moment. I was able to talk in English in front of others and they were listening to me. I enjoyed it very much! (St14, post)

Post programme interviews showed students beginning to recognise the idea that making mistakes is a part of improvement in learning a foreign language; therefore, it could be argued that the programme contributed to participants' maturity in terms of their learning processes. St29's extract presented below was a typical example of the participants' views on making mistakes:

> Before the first presentation I did not feel comfortable because it was going to be my first time presenting on the stage in this classroom while a teacher was going to watch me. When I went to the stage earlier (in the first presentation) I felt like it would have been the end of the world if I had made a mistake. I

> was comparing my performance to others'. However, I was not feeling that way in the second one. After this course I understood that making mistakes was quite natural and everyone should be evaluated individually. (St29, post)

The earlier argument that the fear of making mistakes and the fear of negative evaluation could be linked to increasing cooperation with other learners in the class and establishing good relationships with them was also suggested with regard to L2 stage fright by St18. He stated in his second presentation that he was not afraid of making mistakes because he had become the others enrolled in the programme:

> I still felt slightly nervous in the second presentation session but it was not that bad. I also got used to my friends. I was sure that they would not criticise me if I made a mistake. (St18, post)

During the analysis of the data, one of the most crucial factors was whether participants were able to implement what they had learned throughout the five-week programme. Performance observation and post-intervention interviews suggested that participants managed to handle their second presentations successfully by integrating the techniques and methods introduced in the programme. Many students reported that they practiced the presentation situation through visualisations several times in order to anticipate the obstacles that they might come up against and, later, and they employed visualisation again to experience how they would feel if they completed the presentation successfully. As a result, participants found the visualisation method to be effective in terms of dealing with anxiety and reducing L2 stage fright as shown in the following three extracts:

> I did not feel like studying hard for the second presentation. I was relaxed because I knew how it was going to be. I prepared myself in my mind with imagination and I knew that I would be anxious and I would not have any problems. (St8, post)

> I tried keep my head up to look at people's faces in the last presentation. I think the more we practice the better we perform and I practiced several times with imagination at home. I did not feel like a stranger when I went to the stage… (St11, post).

> Before coming here, I always visualised the stage on my mind. I visualised that I was doing fine and everybody was smiling at me. I felt that I was calm and did not care about other people's opinions. I think that was effective and I was very calm when I went there (to the stage). (St21, post)

Students' visualisations were so detailed that some even practiced establishing eye-contact and making use of intonation or gestures:

> I closed my eyes and imagined about myself being on the stage. I practiced the way I would show my medal (as she talked about a basketball player she brought a medal of hers to engage with the audience), where to raise my voice and where to look to keep my eye-contact. This made me more successful and more relieved I think. (St12, post)

As well as employing imagery strategies, the interviews with St10 and St11 in particular revealed that some individuals also applied relaxation methods introduced in the programme and positive self-talk. Both of these were found to be effective in lessening learners' nervousness before and at the time of presenting in English on the stage:

> In my second presentation I was at ease in terms of thought and preparation. I was self-confident… I focussed on my breathing on my way to the stage and it gave me enough confidence to start. (St10, post)

> When I visualised presentation situation before the actual presentation I felt excited. I then did meditation and helped me to calm down. I also tried to motivate myself with positive self-talks every night. I was assuring myself that everything would be good. I was fully concentrated when I was on the stage and did not experience any nervousness but I was still excited perhaps because I knew that my performance would be successful. (St11, post)

What is also encouraging is that the second presentation session offered evidence of the increase in some participants' fighting tendencies. For example, an individual with a stammer, St2, wanted to deliver his presentation again even though he completed one with success. He argued that he could perform even better and he was

given the chance to present for a second time. St2 delivered both presentations in a positive manner, without showing any disruptive symptoms, and later stated that he had made use of the visualisation technique:

> I realized that I could do better when I completed my presentation. It was like something inside me poked and made me to show that I was capable to perform better. I am glad I managed… I did not feel anxiety; in contrast, I felt really courageous. I practiced several times and I visualised that I would feel relaxed and that I would speak well. (St2, post)

It should also be noted here that one student suggested that a reason for the improvement of her performance in the second round of presentations was "practice effect", that is, the fact that she had already experienced a similar context in the first round of presentations:

> …the first presentation was my first time presenting in English on the stage but for the second one, I already had an experience coming from the first presentation…(St1, post)

15.3 Contribution of technical knowledge

Following the first round of interviews before the intervention session started, the participants as a group were given a fifteen-minute feedback as they were curious to receive comments on their performances. This highlighted some of the common errors in the presentations (e.g., reading the text from listener notes, not maintaining eye contact, standing still, talking with a low voice) as well as a discussion of the characteristics of a typically good presentation (e.g., engaging with the audience, using the space with short steps to sides, maintaining eye-contact by looking at certain people on the right and left sides, talking in a clear tone of voice, making use of gestures).

The qualitative data suggested that participants were motivated to find out about the feedback given and it also became clear that they tried to implement some

of these presentation techniques in their second presentations. The data also suggested that knowledge of technical information about public speaking might further broaden our understanding regarding L2 stage fright. According to St11, it was relaxing for her to find out how to deliver a good presentation as it constituted a helpful model and cleared up her confusion:

> To know about how to make a good presentation saved me to think about a good way. I think it makes a person confident to know about some tactics. (St11, post)

Several other students, such as St2 and St7, provided examples that demonstrated the effect of learning about a successful presentation on their self-confidence. Moreover, the data obtained from the interviews with St16 and St5 suggests that if presenters realise that the audience are enjoying the presentation, it not only relaxes them but also helps to reduce their fear of making mistakes:

> When I started to use the space I felt more and more confident, motivated and much more relaxed. (St2, post)
>
> In my presentation I tried to attract audience's attention by providing interesting information about the person I presented and I enjoyed a lot. (St7,post)
>
> In my first presentation I simply memorized a text and tried to vocalize it on the stage. In such circumstances I think people gets bored and it comes back to me in a form of negative energy… I tried to use my gestures and raised my voice I felt that people were happy and as they were happy, I felt more comfortable. (St16, post)
>
> As the audience looked eager to listen to me I became more motivated and that made me recover quicker when I made a pronunciation mistake towards the end of my speech. (St5, post)

Finally, several post-intervention interviews confirmed that students were able to combat L2 stage fright and that the programme helped them to improve their presentation skills:

I learned how to deal with my anxiety when talking on the stage. (St2, post)

I think I can now deliver a presentation in English almost everywhere and I am actually willing to do it. (St9, post)

I am now more confident when I am presenting something in English in the class. (St7, post)

16 Final evaluation and summary

The main finding of the five-week intervention programme is that the participants showed significantly lower levels of language anxiety, neuroticism, L2 stage fright, safety-seeking behaviours and quitting tendencies at the end of the intervention programme. The decrease was demonstrated by paired samples t-tests comparing pre-intervention and post-intervention scores, as well as qualitative data generated at various stages of the programme in different forms.

The findings confirmed that it was possible for learners to improve their anxious self- images through visualisation training, and this improvement could take place in a five-week period, resulting in increasing the learners' self-confidence levels and their fighting disposition combating anxiety. However, to be able to understand the explanation behind such a significant improvement, it is useful to recall the processes of the intervention programme from the beginning. The intervention study was designed to reduce anxiety by means of a newly developed approach that is based on the conceptualisation of anxiety in terms of an "anxious self". The intervention was the last study in a broader three-phase scheme, which started out with a preliminary qualitative study to survey the scene, and was then expanded and corroborated by means of a questionnaire survey. The intervention study followed procedures developed for the visualisation aspect of the ideal self in motivational psychology (Dörnyei, 2009; Magid & Chan, 2012; Oyserman et al., 2002) and also made use of systematic de-sensitization techniques (Heimberg & Becker, 2002; Telch et al., 2014) and the applied relaxation methods (Hollon & Beck, 2013; Rygh & Sanderson, 2004). Collectively, the programme included 18 activities in total, which were delivered in 10 sessions over a five–week period.

These activities included visualisation, de-sensitisation, relaxation, confidence-building and content-based tasks.

A wide range of data collection methods were employed in the study. The Anxious Self Scale for Language Learners was the main questionnaire administered both before and after the intervention in order to appraise the improvement on five aspects of anxiety; foreign language classroom anxiety, neuroticism, L2 stage fright, safe player actions, and fighting disposition. Additionally, for a more in-depth recording of the factors involved in the intervention, individual interviews, (narrative, retrospective and focus group) were conducted during pre- and post-intervention stages.

In order to observe the participants' well-being levels and to investigate the individual effect of the intervention sessions on students' overall improvement, an adapted form of Dörnyei and Murphey's (2003) short emotional temperature scale was administered in the programme on a weekly basis. This instrument contained four six-point semantic differential scale items: nervous-relaxed, comfortable-uneasy, confident-shy and willing to use the L2-reluctant to use the L2. The intervention also included a performance test: participants were asked to deliver a five-minute presentation of a personal life-story of a celebrity both at the pre-intervention and post-intervention stages. The underlying motive for asking the participants to deliver a presentation in English before and after the intervention was to investigate L2 stage fright and to observe whether participants would be able to deal with their stage fright more effectively by the end of the intervention. For this purpose, the L2 Stage Fright Rating Scale was developed and employed.

The intervention programme followed a gradual approach with three principles:

- Providing learners with the opportunity to discover their anxious tendencies and introducing two well-known relaxation methods of overcoming these tendencies, visualisation and meditation.
- Considering different manifestations of anxiety and helping to build strategies to minimize the effects of anxiety through visualisation and systematic de-sensitization.
- Helping individuals to build an improved anxious self-image.

The impact of this gradual approach was reflected in the five weekly well-being scales, as confirmed by conducting a one-way ANOVA with post-hoc comparisons using SNK and LSD tests. The results revealed a three-phase improvement in learners' well-being levels which could be broadly categorized as the *introductory stage*, the *anxiety processing stage and* the *reduced anxiety stage.*

The introductory stage involved primarily relaxation training, and one of the most salient findings of this programme was that relaxation methods could be applied in relieving the somatic symptoms of language anxiety; several students used visualisation, meditation, focussing-on-music or focussing-on-breathing techniques to deal with anxiety provoking situations as well as to deal with L2 stage fright before the post-intervention presentations.

During the anxiety-processing stage, learners were able to explore their own as well as others' anxiety tendencies more closely by writing about their anxious selves and listing their anxiety triggers on a chart. This allowed them to perceive anxiety as a normal, common phenomenon, which was reassuring for some learners. The scenarios that were the most anxiety-provoking (as described on the charts) concerned communication apprehension, test anxiety and stage fright. As a result, three visualisation scripts were prepared to help learners to de-sensitize these anxiety

adaptations listed on the charts. Students came to realize the beneficial effects of systematic de-sensitization on anxiety levels over a short span of time, and results showed that systematic de-sensitization through guided imagery helped participants to strengthen their beliefs regarding improving their anxious self-perceptions and helped them to establish states of relaxation in anxiety-provoking situations. Additionally, the fact that the tasks introduced in the programme enhanced cooperation and friendship in the classroom, and that participants started to become acclimatised to the researcher as well as to the tasks, also contributed to the generally improved synergy and well-being in the classroom.

Towards the end of the programme, when the overall level of well-being was at its highest, the findings showed that visualising an improved self positively influenced students' self-confidence levels and changed their moods for the better. According to the data, the programme allowed participants to believe that they could improve their anxious selves and enabled them not to give up easily. Significantly, the interview data collected at the end of the intervention revealed a further change brought about the intervention programme regarding the students' career expectations: as a result of "Reality consensus" activity, they started to think about their career goals more thoroughly, with some changing their future plans.

The results supported two important findings; first, that the actions of familiarising oneself with one's own personal anxiety tendencies, when combined with the usage of a guided visualisation activity whereby the concept of an "improved anxious self" is used, can increase self-confidence and transform individual attitudes towards anxiety from attitudes of powerlessness to attitudes of determination. Second, the results showed that the intervention programme also led

to an improvement in general language skills (listening, speaking and vocabulary) in several learners.

Finally, it was found in this study that L2 stage fright was a characteristic adaptation of language anxiety as being one of the most discomfort-generating situations for language learners. What made stage fright anxiety-provoking was shown to be primarily the presence of an audience and the gaze factor, while some other, secondary reasons being similar to factors involved in general language anxiety such as the fear of negative evaluation, the fear of making mistakes, or the fear of losing face. Paired samples t-test scores and the L2 Stage Fright Rating Scale scores provided converging results, indicating that learners experienced significantly lower levels of discomfort and that their speech was less disrupted in their second presentations performed at the end of the intervention. Thus, the intervention programme positively affected students' attitudes towards presenting in English and also helped them to handle their second presentations while experiencing lessened levels of discomfort. It transpired that some students employed visualisation strategies in preparation for their second presentations, while some several others applied relaxation methods and positive self-talk.

17 Conclusion

Having presented the three studies in the previous two parts, the main findings of these studies are recapitulated in this section. Following this, I focus on the implications of the findings, the limitations of the research and recommendations for further research.

17.1 Summary of main findings

17.1.1 Contribution to the field as a whole

The traditional paradigm in anxiety research was initially the state and the trait distinction (MacIntyre, 2017; Scovel, 1978). The trait refers to a general, inherited, overall anxiety (Spielberger et al., 1970) (E.g. if someone is very shy and barely talks to strangers). Whereas, state anxiety refers to a very specific situation, such as stage fright (Daly, 2009; McCroskey, 1977; MacIntyre, 1998), test anxiety (Young, 1986) and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986). There were basically two problems with this. First, as I read the literature it seemed that the research stalled around 2008 almost as if the paradigm had not inspired the further research and that researchers investigating foreign language anxiety were looking for a different angle. My second more specific concern was that when I thought about anxiety I could not quite see state and trait anxiety as two completely distinct aspects because I could see overlaps all the time on the two levels and yet there was no theoretical paradigm which would allow such overlaps (Horwitz, 2017; MacIntyre, 2017). Looking at the new personality paradigm by Dan McAdams (McAdams & Pals, 2006) suddenly I realised that this could even be combined with a new paradigm in motivational research which looked at the holistic person, the whole self of the person (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 2009a). This construct lends itself to developing strategies and

techniques to reduce anxiety and, as it is compatible with the self research in psychology, it allows us to import some of the most established intervention techniques in psychology: cognitive behavioural therapy (Beck, 1993; Wright, 2003), self-monitoring (Clark & Beck, 2010), systematic de-sensitization and worry exposure (Cahill & Foa, 2003; Hollon & Beck, 2013), applied relaxation (Rygh & Sanderson, 2004), psychoeducation (Hazlett-Stevens, 2008), mental imagery (Hall et al., 2006) and narrative therapy (McAdams, 1985; Seo et al., 2015). What happened was these techniques were reported to be applicable in the language classroom, students found them natural and appreciated them. Participants' positive response showed that anxiety as a self dimension could be a meaningful way of looking at anxiety.

17.1.2 Preliminary exploratory study

As anxiety is one of the most elusive concepts amongst individual difference characteristics, the study started out by collecting exploratory qualitative data from anxious learners in order to gain new insights from these individuals' perspectives. The interview data collected from participants selected according to snowball sampling method suggested that one way in which anxious learners made sense of the complex dispositions related to the language anxiety they experienced was by explaining it as a specific facet of their self-image, which was termed "the anxious self". The findings suggested that conceptualising the anxious self could prove to be a profitable approach, and the guiding theoretical paradigm chosen for the data analysis was McAdams's the New Big Five model (McAdams, 2006a, 2006b; McAdams & Pals, 2006), which suggested that language anxiety could be examined according to the three levels of this framework:

- The first level is associated with a primary tendency which is biologically or genetically related. The interview data elicited from the participants showed a clear indication that there was a tendency in some learners to experience symptoms of anxiety on a recurring basis, which resulted in a resigned disposition. The data also showed that dispositional traits were relatively consistent across different circumstances (e.g. feeling anxiety in different subjects at school).
- The second level, referred to as characteristic adaptations, concerns only specific aspects of a particular individual's social life, with some of the best-known adaptations being stage fright and test anxiety. The data also revealed that other archetypical adaptations that create anxiety for some learners might involve the fear of negative evaluation, certain content of the communication and heightened expectations.
- The third level is centred around narrative identity, and the interviews did indeed confirm that learners produced narratives to create cohesion in their experiences of anxiety so that these unified narratives could serve as guides to deal with the debilitating effects of anxiety. The interview data revealed three typical narrative themes adopted by the participants, representing three reaction styles; these have been termed "fighter", "quitter" and "safe player". Fighters were shown to be explicitly expressing that they would like to overcome their anxiety and adopt a combative attitude; quitters perceived their anxiety in an unconstructive manner, which caused them to be resigned to failure in trying to overcome their anxiety. Safe players, on the other hand, were found to be employing safety-seeking behaviours, such as not initiating speech, avoiding eye contact, sitting at the back

of the class or giving monosyllabic answers in order to steer clear of a potentially negative event.

One of the other remarkable findings of the preliminary exploratory study was the observation that when students were able to structure painful memories into constructive narratives, this caused a "redemptive" impact on their negative feelings. For example, some learners were shown to share their personal narratives with others and they seemed to be showing a fighting tendency. What the data suggested as a result was that helping learners to produce constructive narratives about their anxious selves might offer a way to allow learners to re-process their anxiety-related experiences positively, which could allow them to combat the detrimental effects of anxiety. In addition, the anxious self was shown to offer a way to link anxiety research to other areas of SLA which would make it possible to employ imagery-based strategies in shaping the anxious self.

17.1.3 Questionnaire study

The quantitative research instrument in this study, the Anxious-Self Scale for Language Learners, was designed to measure not only the students' level of neuroticism and language anxiety but also certain aspects that could help to conceptualise their anxious self, such as L2 stage fright, safe-player actions and quitting tendencies.

The results showed that there was a strong positive correlation across all variables of neuroticism, foreign language anxiety, L2 stage fright, safe player actions and quitting tendencies, which confirmed the multi-faceted nature of the core language anxiety component. The strong positive correlation between neuroticism and language anxiety indicated that the stronger individuals' general tendency towards anxiety, the more likely they are to realise it in the language classroom. Similar

results concerning L2 stage fright showed that this construct was an equally important adaptation and realization of language anxiety.

According to the results, anxious learners were more inclined towards making sense of their anxious reactions in a negative manner; however, it was also observed at the individual level, through descriptive statistics, that a few anxious learners might also perceive anxiety in a non-negative manner. This might be linked to these learners' attempts to make sense of their anxious reactions by shaping them at the narrative level of their self-system, thereby enabling them to develop a fighting disposition against anxiety. Qualitative data confirms that such "conscious resistance" did indeed take place, which is consistent with the conceptualising learner anxiety as the anxious self.

The results showed no significant relationship between the age factor and anxiety levels confirming what Dewaele and Shan Ip (2013) found. In this research context, the learners' age could also be referred to as their length of exposure to L2, as all participants were enrolled in the uniform Turkish National Education System. On the other hand, students studying foreign languages at high schools were found to be experiencing higher levels of language anxiety when compared to both students studying other subjects in high-school and students enrolled in university preparatory year programmes, although both groups were part of intensive foreign language programmes. It was suggested that one reason for this result could have been test anxiety, which possibly arose in high levels due to the nation-wide exams that high school students had to take in order to attend a university.

The findings revealed that female learners scored higher on both the language anxiety and neuroticism scales than male learners and they were also found to be experiencing more discomfort while delivering a presentation in English. As a result,

at the dispositional level, female learners were found to be more inclined towards developing a quitting or playing-safe disposition as compared to the male learners of English. As stated in Chapter 9, as the links between gender and foreign language anxiety research is sensitive it needs a follow-up study with a large sample size similar to Dewaele et al.'s (2016) Finally, the item-rating analysis revealed that the anxiety-triggering phenomena that most frequently caused anxiety levels to rise were test anxiety, L2 stage fright and communication apprehension, which were also linked to fear of failure or fear of negative evaluation.

17.1.4 Intervention study

The intervention study to reduce anxiety was based on the conceptualisation of anxiety in terms of an "anxious self", which had emerged from the previous exploratory studies. The five-week intervention programme involved 18 activities, and involved the visualisation aspect of the ideal self from the field of motivational psychology, as well as employing systematic de-sensitization and applied relaxation techniques. In this mixed methods study, a wide range of data collection methods were used. The Anxious Self Scale for Language Learners was the main instrument for the study, which was administered both before and after the programme for the purpose of appraising the changes in the levels of language anxiety, neuroticism, L2 stage fright, safe player actions and quitting tendencies experienced by participants. Additional pre and post-programme interviews provided a deeper understanding of the improvement from the learners' perspectives, while a six-item weekly well-being scale was employed to measure the contribution of each intervention session, accompanied by a rating scale to evaluate learners' levels of L2 stage fright based on observation. Conducted with 30 learners of English at an intermediate level enrolled

in a private language school in Turkey, the intervention programme yielded success almost on all counts.

The most promising finding was that the participants showed significantly lower levels of language anxiety, neuroticism, L2 stage fright, safe-player behaviours and quitting tendencies at the end of the intervention programme. The findings revealed that, from the early stages of the programme onwards, participants were going through a process of constant and gradual improvement. One of the most remarkable findings was that employing relaxation methods could be an effective way of relieving the somatic symptoms of language anxiety. The findings also showed that many students employed visualisation, meditation, music-specific and breathing-specific techniques to deal with some of the somatic symptoms of anxiety, which they had experienced throughout their lives in certain anxiety-triggering situations. Results also showed that many other students applied relaxation methods before their five-minute post-intervention presentations to deal with L2 stage fright. In addition, the data also indicated that the role modelling of teachers also carried out an important function, as it helped to increase learners' well-being in the language classroom.

According to the findings, there were three key elements of the study that allowed learners to perceive anxiety as a more common and normalised phenomenon, while also bringing about reported feelings of relief. These elements involved the learners' discovery of their anxious self-images; the investigation and discovery of their own as well as others' anxiety triggers; and writing about their own anxious self-images from a personal perspective.

Employing systematic de-sensitization activities revealed positive results in a short span of time, and the results suggested that systematic de-sensitization through

guided-imagery helped participants to establish relaxed states in anxiety-provoking situations. The intervention also included a "Visualising-a-negative-situation" activity. This activity evidenced that participants were able to make use of negative imagery to prepare themselves for anxiety-provoking situations and to pre-emptively foresee certain anxiety triggers. In addition, the levels of cooperation and friendship in the classroom generally increased, which suggested that the tasks themselves were contributing to the positive synergy and social well-being in the classroom. Student reports showed that visualisation training served as a useful approach for learners to improve their anxious self images, to increase their self-confidence and to be more inclined towards a fighting disposition in combating anxiety. The intervention programme enhanced learners' visions of their improved anxious selves, and as a result of their improved visions, learners' general goals in learning English and minimizing language anxiety became clearer and more specific.

The post-programme interviews also revealed that students' career expectations were balanced and they started to think about their career goals more thoroughly. At the end of the programme learners were found to me more motivated to learn English than before the intervention. The results also indicated that some learners found this programme was helpful in contributing to their overall listening, speaking and vocabulary skills in English.

Finally, it was demonstrated that L2 stage fright was a common adaptation of language anxiety, causing high levels of discomfort primarily due to the presence of an audience and the sense of gaze. The findings confirmed that learners experienced significantly lower levels of discomfort in their post-intervention presentations as a result of applying the anxiety-reducing techniques taught during the intervention: they employed visualisation strategies in order to be more prepared for the

presentations and used relaxation methods as well as positive self-talks. It was also shown that students displayed an increased tendency towards fighting anxiety as they were observed to recover more quickly upon making a mistake in their presentations.

17.2 Implications

The results obtained in the intervention study offer rich pedagogical implications since the findings confirm that the improvement of the anxious self is a real possibility. The development of an improved anxious self with a theoretically sound and empirically tested approach would be an important step forward in alleviating the detrimental effects of language anxiety and thus making foreign language learning more effective. Derived from the current five-week intervention programme, the following seven steps are proposed to help language learners build an improved anxious self:

i) Learning relaxation methods

Three simple, five-minute relaxation techniques not only helped to clear individuals' minds and focus more on their learning and performance, but also proved to be effective in combating the somatic symptoms of anxiety. The first technique consists of listening to calming music and focussing on the music while the eyes are closed. It is important in this technique for learners to let their minds wander freely as they listen to the music. The second technique is visualisation. Individuals are directed to imagine, with eyes closed, that they are in their favourite place. Their visualisation should be as vivid and detailed as possible and should involve a place or a situation that is inspiring. If an individual would like to apply the visualisation technique but finds it difficult to sustain the visualisation for a couple of minutes then it may be helpful to make use of pre-recorded guided visualisation scripts. The last technique found to be useful in terms of dealing with anxiety symptoms is meditation. While

performing meditation individuals should sit comfortably, and seek to empty their minds by focussing on their breathing for a couple of minutes.

ii) Exploring anxiety and mapping strategies

It was shown that the first steps towards dealing with anxiety directly began with acknowledging its existence. To be able to do this, learners should list some scenarios associated with foreign language learning that they know have generated varying levels of anxiety in them in the past. To facilitate the process, learners can also add vivid and detailed descriptions of each scenario. In addition, learners can write about their anxious selves as though writing a diary entry, including specific details of their anxiety levels and symptoms. Afterwards, learners should re-read the anxiety-provoking scenarios they have documented and should consider possible solutions for the situations listed. At this stage, learners could also consult others in order to gauge their opinions on dealing with anxiety-provoking situations. This whole process helps learners to get to know themselves better and to perceive anxiety as a common and more manageable feeling.

iii) Visualising anxiety-provoking situations and rehearsing coping strategies

Desensitization occurs when individuals can imagine their anxiety triggers as vividly and as realistically as possible while being in a state of complete relaxation through the application of relaxation techniques. Through repeated practice, learners begin to become more familiar with their anxiety triggers, and they can maintain this relaxed state under anxiety-creating situations.

iv) Observing the progress

The fourth step concerns learners' observation of their own progress in dealing with anxiety, as self-observation may have a relieving effect on learners. İndividuals can

make use of some broad measures, such as the weekly well-being scale employed in this study, or they can keep diary notes in which they record their endurance in anxiety-triggering situations.

v) Cooperating with others and sharing personal feelings

When individuals are able to share their personal narratives with others, they become more inclined towards demonstrating a fighting disposition when dealing with anxiety. On the other hand, a reluctance to share stories makes it more difficult for individuals to process their anxiety as they are more likely to feel alone in the experience of their anxious thoughts. As anxiety is a common problem for many language learners, a collaborative way to fight against anxiety in language classrooms would contribute to the general positive synergy and the well-being in the classroom.

vi) Adding positive qualities to the vision and positive spin to past experiences

If learners manage to restructure painful memories into constructive narratives, this can cause a redemptive impact on their negative feelings. Two methods were found to be helpful in this sense. The first one of these is the process of modifying attitudes through using word-concepts. That is, participants visualise having certain positive qualities in their language learning such as courage, confidence, calmness, happiness and determination. Second, leaners could write short paragraphs by putting a positive spin on the anxiety-related negative events in their past language learning history, indicating how it can lead to success, rather than failure, in the future.

vii) Visualising the improved anxious self and strengthening the vision

Improving the anxious self-image is the key to raising confidence in a foreign language. Learners can use their creativity to visualise in general terms what their

improved anxious self would be like, through repeated practice with soft music in the background. Before each visualisation, using one of the relaxation techniques is recommended, because it helps participants to focus on the vision. One essential issue that should be considered while imagining the improved anxious self is the feasibility of the visualised improved anxious self. Learners should make sure that the improved anxious selves that they conceptualise are achievable. Writing letters from the future, authored by the improved anxious self, can help learners to revise their strategies, to feel confident in their journey to success and to increase their belief that strengthening their improved anxious self-images is a real possibility.

17.3 Limitations

As the preliminary interview study and the questionnaire study served primarily exploratory purposes in surveying the scene, this limitation section concerns only the main study, the intervention programme. Firstly, it must be noted that the Turkish education context where this study was conducted displays two specific characteristics: the participants were all students, with the majority enrolled in high school, and almost all learners involved in the study joined private language schools for the purpose of being able to pass an exam in English – either the nation-wide university entrance exams or some other language exam. Only a few students choose to take English classes at a private institution for communicative purposes.

In the L2 stage fright aspect, if resources had allowed, a control group would have been employed in order to evaluate which aspect of the intervention contributed most to the increase in students' performances. Another limitation concerned the weekly well-being scale, as it was a rough measure that only helped to produce an overall appraisal (with the exception of the open-ended question it also contained).

A further limitation concerned the inconvenience of having 22 students in one classroom. Even though the synergy established in the classroom was promising and the intervention programme yielded effective results with those students, in terms of controlling the activities where real-time analysis is needed, the large class size could cause difficulties. For example, I was not able to apply “Find someone who” activity, which was the follow up part of “Letter from my anxious self” activity, and the interviews conducted with the participants in that class lasted slightly shorter when compared to the students in class 2 due to their respective sizes. Additionally, I had to exclude the instructions to “sit on the floor” in the meditation script due to the limited space and a lack of proper conditions to perform this action, and students were asked to perform the meditation activity while sitting on their chairs comfortably instead. On the other hand, the fact that the intervention worked in both a small-group and a large-group format evidences the robust nature of the activities applied.

The final limitation concerns data presentation. Because of the large number of components integrated into this mixed methods design, some inevitably received less attention than others. In addition, the time limitations inherent in a PhD research project did not allow me to go into as much depth in presenting the data as I would have wished. The data obtained will provide me with sufficient food for thought over the next few years.

17.4 Recommendations for further research

The study prompted a few possible research directions for investigating the full potential of integrating visualisation activities in improving the anxious self in order to alleviate the debilitating effects of anxiety. Firstly, given the saliency of the test anxiety experienced by the participants, further studies could add to our

knowledge of the effects of such intervention programmes on reducing test anxiety levels. A similar intervention study, taking into account changes in foreign language examination marks during the intervention, might help to further elucidate the issues of anxiety and achievement.

Secondly, despite the effects observed by the end of five weeks of interventions, several students reported in the interviews that they would have improved more if the intervention programme had been carried out over a longer period of time. A follow-up study investigating the effects of sustained intervention is clearly needed in this sense. In addition, specific programmes designed for learners of other languages besides English, as well as for working professionals, could give us new insights into the universal and transferrable features of language anxiety reduction programmes in general.

Thirdly, because the intervention study design enabled me to assess the effects of the intervention comparing the pre and post-intervention data, it would be interesting to have a control group that would be exposed to an intervention study that would omit dealing with improving the anxious self.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Informed Consent Form

Project title: Anxiety and L2 self-images: The Anxious Self

Brief description: This study aims to evaluate the experiences of students who have discomfort in language classrooms in order to minimize the negative ones. It focusses on the reasons and the symptoms of this kind of a discomfort as well as its changes over time. The information you provide will be confidential. The data you provide will be saved on a password protected computer and securely archived by the researcher for the required period of time (seven years from the date of publication of the results). Following this data will be destroyed.

YES □	NO □	I confirm that the purpose of the study has been explained and that I have understood it.
YES □	NO □	I have had the opportunity to ask questions and they have been successfully answered.
YES □	NO □	I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without consequence.
YES □	NO □	I understand that all data are anonymous and that there will not be any connection between the personal information provided and the data.
YES □	NO □	I understand that there are no known risks or hazards associated with participating in this study.
YES □	NO □	By handing over the questionnaire I consent to my questionnaire data to be used anonymously for research purposes.
YES □	NO □	I consent to my data being transcribed and wish to be referred to anonymously.
YES □	NO □	I consent to an audio/video file of my participation to be used, but would like identifying factors (e.g. my name to be removed) from any presentation of my data.
YES □	NO □	I confirm that I have read and understood the above information and that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Name and Signature:

Researcher's Signature:

Date:

Appendix 2 – The Anxious Self Scale for Language Learners (English)

LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN THE CLASSROOM

Dear language learners,

First, I am grateful to you for filling out this questionnaire. Language learning can sometimes be a challenging activity for some of you. This questionnaire aims to evaluate language learners' characteristics and dispositions towards some situations in the classroom in order to minimize learners' discomfort. Therefore, I kindly request you to read the items carefully and choose the answer which suits you the best.

The questionnaire is completely confidential and there are no right or wrong answers, so you can be as honest as you like! In fact, if you decide in the end that you would prefer not to participate in this survey, you will be free to opt out without any consequence.

Please check one box per row to indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements as shown in the example.

Example:

I feel that the privacy of my personal information is protected on Facebook.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☒ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
3. When I am on the stage talking in English, I get so nervous that I forget things I should say.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
4. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
5. I am someone who is depressed, blue.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
6. Even if I am well-prepared, I prefer not to volunteer my answers in language classes unless it is asked.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
7. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
8. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
9. I find myself withdrawing from activities in language classes when I am anxious.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
10. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
11. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
12. I am someone who is relaxed, handles stress well.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
13. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
14. I find it difficult to control my movements when I am on the stage in language classes.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
15. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
16. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
17. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
18. I often feel like not participating in the foreign language related tasks.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
19. I can be tense.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
20. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
21. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
22. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
23. I feel too weak to overcome anxiety.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
24. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
25. I worry a lot.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
26. It embarrasses me to speak in English when others watch me.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
27. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
28. I often feel like not going to my language class.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
29. I dislike taking risks by joining conversations in English classes.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
30. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
31. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
32. I am emotionally stable, not easily upset.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
33. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
34. I have a feeling that I will always be anxious while speaking in a foreign language.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
35. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
36. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
37. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
38. I think that being on the stage in English classes is difficult to deal with.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
39. I can be moody.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
40. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
41. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
42. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
43. I find myself avoiding speaking in language classes by some specific actions (e.g. sitting at the back, avoiding eye contact).	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
44. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
45. I remain calm in tense situations.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
46. I feel like I am resigned to anxiety.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
47. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
48. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
49. I tend to feel specific symptoms (e.g. trembling, blushing, heart pounding) when I am presenting in English before my classmates.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
50. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
51. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
52. I get nervous easily.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
53. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
54. Rather than trying to explain my thoughts freely, I tend to restrict what I say in English to things I know well.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
55. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
56. I believe that I will be able to deal with my anxiety.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

Thank you for filling out the questionnaire!

Could you please fill in this background information so that I can specify the profile?

Age:
Gender (Please circle): Male / Female
School:

Course:

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By submitting this questionnaire I agree that my answers, which I have given voluntarily, can be used anonymously for research purposes.

Appendix 3 – The Anxious Self Scale for Language Learners (Turkish)

SINIFTAKİ DİL ÖĞRENME TECRÜBESİ

Sevgili yabancı dil öğrencileri,

Öncelikle bu anketi doldurmanızdan ötürü teşekkür ederim. Dil öğrenme bazen bir kısmınız için zorlu bir eylem haline gelebiliyor. Bu anket, öğrencilerin rahatsızlıklarını en aza indirmek için onların özelliklerini ve sınıftaki bazı durumlara karşı tavırlarını değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu sebeple, maddeleri dikkatle okuyup size en uygun cevabı işaretlemenizi rica ederim.

Anket tamamen gizli tutulacaktır ve herhangi bir doğru ya da yanlış cevap bulunmamaktadır. O yüzden mümkün olduğunca dürüst cevaplar vermeniz büyük önem arz etmektedir. Öte yandan, anket bitiminde çalışmaya katılmamayı tercih etmeniz durumunda herhangi bir yaptırım olmaksızın katılımdan cayabilirsiniz.

Lütfen örnekte gösterildiği gibi aşağıdaki durumların her birine katılıp katılmadığınızı her satırda bir kutucuk işaretleyerek seçiniz.

Örnek:

Facebook'ta kişisel bilgilerimin gizliliğinin korunduğunu düşünüyorum	☐1	☐2	☒3	☐4	☐5

Not: Kaygı (anksiyete), bireylerce tecrübe edilen gerilim, sıkıntı veya korku durumlarını ifade eder. Nedeni tam olarak belli olmayan tedirginlik hali, veya Türkçe'de birbirinin yerine sık kullanılan tabiriyle' stres' olarak da algılanabilir.	**Kesinlikle katılmıyorum**	**Katılmıyorum**	**Ne katılıyorum ne de katılmıyorum**	**Katılıyorum**	**Kesinlikle katılıyorum**
1. İngilizce derslerinde konuşurken, hiçbir zaman kendimden yeterince emin olamıyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
2. İngilizce derslerinde hata yapmaktan endişe etmiyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
3. Sahnede (tahtada) ingilizce konuşurken o kadar gergin oluyorum ki söylemem gereken şeyleri unutuyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
4. İngilizce derslerinde konuşma sırasının bana geleceğini bildiğimde titriyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
5. Keyifsiz, morali bozuk biriyim.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
6. İyi hazırlanmış olsam bile, dil sınıflarında bana sorulmayana kadar bir soruya kalkıp cevap vermemeyi tercih ederim.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
7. İngilizce öğretmeninin söylediklerini anlamamak beni korkutur.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
8. Daha fazla İngilizce dersi almaktan asla rahatsız olmazdım.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
9. Kaygılı olduğumda kendimi dil derslerindeki aktivitelerden çektiğimi farkediyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
10. İngilizce dersleri sırasında kendimi dersle alakası olmayan şeyler düşünürken bulurum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
11. Sürekli olarak, diğer öğrencilerin dil konusunda benden daha iyi olduklarını düşünüyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
12. Rahat ve stresi iyi idare edebilen biriyim.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
13. Yabancı dil sınavlarında genellikle rahatımdır.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
14. Dil sınıflarında sahnedeyken hareketlerimi kontrol etmenin zor olduğunu düşünüyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne de katılmıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum
15. Yabancı dil derslerinde hazırlıksız olarak konuşmak zorunda kaldığımda paniğe kapılırım.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
16. İngilizce dersimden başarısız olduğumda olacaklar beni endişelendiriyor.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
17. Bazı insanların dil dersleri konusunda endişeli olmalarına anlam veremiyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
18. Çoğu zaman derslerde İngilizce kullanmamı gerektirecek aktivitelere katılmak içimden gelmez.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
19. Gergin olabilen biriyim.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
20. İngilizce derslerinde o kadar gerilirim ki bildiklerimi unuturum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
21. İngilizce derslerinde sorulara gönüllü olarak cevap vermekten çekiniyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
22. Anadili İngilizce olan insanlarla İngilizce konuşmak beni rahatsız etmez.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
23. Kaygı ile başa çıkmak için kendimi çok güçsüz hissediyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
24. Öğretmenin hatalar üzerinde yaptığı düzeltmeleri anlamamaktan huzursuz oluyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
25. Çok fazla endişe eden biriyim.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
26. Başkaları beni izlerken ingilizce konuştuğumda utanıyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
27. İngilizce derslerine iyi hazırlansam bile kaygılanıyorum	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
28. Çoğu zaman canım İngilizce derslerine gitmemeyi istiyor.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
29. İngilizce derslerinde karşılıklı konuşmalara katılarak risk almayı sevmem.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
30. İngilizce derslerinde konuşurken kendime güvenirim.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
31. Öğretmenin yaptığım her hatayı düzeltmeye girişecek olmasından korkuyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
32. Duygusal olarak dengeliyim, kolay kolay üzülmem.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
33. İngilizce derslerinde derse kaldırılacağımda kalbimin çok hızlı attığını hissedebiliyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
34. Öyle sanıyorum ki yabancı dilde konuşurken her zaman kaygılı olacağım.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
35. İngilizce sınavlarına ne kadar çok çalışırsam kafam o kadar çok karışıyor.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
36. İngilizce derslerine çok iyi bir şekilde hazırlık yapmak için üzerimde baskı hissetmiyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
37. Diğer öğrencilerin her zaman İngilizce'yi benden daha iyi konuştuklarını hissediyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne de katılmıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum
38. Bence ingilizce derslerinde sahnede olmak üstesinden gelmesi zor bir durumdur.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
39. Dakikası dakikasına uymayan biriyim.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
40. Diğer öğrencilerin önünde İngilizce konuşurken çok sıkılıyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
41. İngilizce dersleri çok çabuk ilerliyor ve ben geride kalmaktan endişeleniyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
42. İngilizce derslerinde, diğer derslere oranla daha gergin ve heyecanlı oluyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
43. Bazı belirli hareketlerle (arka sıralarda oturmak, öğretmenle göz temasından sakınmak, alçak sesle cevap vermek gibi) dil derslerinde konuşmaktan kaçındığımı farkediyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
44. İngilizce derslerinde konuşurken bildiklerimi karıştırıyor ve gergin oluyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
45. Gergin durumlarda sakinliğimi korurum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
46. Kaygıya teslim olmuş hissediyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
47. İngilizce derslerine giderken, kendimden çok eminim ve rahatım.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
48. Öğretmenin her söylediği kelimeyi anlamadığım zaman geriliyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
49. Sınıf arkadaşlarımın önünde İngilizce sunum yaparken bazı belirtileri (titreme, yüz kızarıklığı, kalp çarpıntısı gibi) hissetmeye meyilli oluyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
50. İngilizce konuşmak için bir sürü kuralları bilmemin gerekli olması beni rahatsız ediyor.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
51. İngilizce konuştuğum zaman diğer öğrencilerin bana gülmesinden çekiniyorum.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
52. Sinirlerim kolayca gerilir.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
53. Anadili İngilizce olan insanların yanında İngilizce konuşmak belki de beni daha çok rahatlatır.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
54. İngilizce konuşurken aklımdakileri serbestçe ifade etmeye çalışmak yerine konuşmalarımı sadece en iyi bildiğim konularla/yapılarla sınırlandırmayı tercih ediyorum	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
55. İngilizce öğretmeninin önceden hazırlıksız olduğum soruları sorması beni tedirgin eder.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
56. Kaygılı olma durumumun üstesinden gelebileceğimi düşünüyorum	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

Anketi doldurduğunuz için teşekkür ederim!

Son olarak, profili belirlemem için aşağıdaki gerekli bilgileri doldurabilir misiniz?

Yaşınız:
Cinsiyetiniz (Lütfen seçiniz): Kadın / Erkek
Okulunuz:

Bölümünüz ve Sınıfınız:

Erdi ŞİMŞEK
University of Nottingham

Bu anketi teslim etmekle gönlüllü olarak verdiğim cevaplarımın isimsiz bir şekilde bilimsel araştırma amaçlı kullanılmasına onay veriyorum.

Appendix 4 - Weekly well-being scale

Please put an 'X' in the slot on the continuum which best describes your feelings:

In language classes, I feel:

Nervous	|___|___|___|___|___|___|	Relaxed
Comfortable	|___|___|___|___|___|___|	Uneasy
Confident	|___|___|___|___|___|___|	Shy
Willing to use the L2	|___|___|___|___|___|___|	Reluctant to use the L2

Short question: How/how much has this week's class helped you?

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

Appendix 5 - L2 Stage Fright Rating Scale

L2 STAGE FRIGHT RATING SCALE	**Very High**	**High**	**Moderate**	**Low**	**Very Low**
1) Discomfort (Overall estimation of unease)					
2) Control (Overall estimation of coping)					

	Very Poor	**Poor**	**Fair**	**Good**	**Very Good**
3) Gaze					
4) Vocal Quality					
5) Length					
6) Speech Flow					

Appendix 6 - Anchors for the L2 Stage Fright Rating Scale

1. Discomfort

Very High: Complete rigidity of arms, legs or whole body. Constant leg movements or fidgeting with hands, hair or clothing. Extremely stiff face, sighing, blushing or constant facial tics. Frequent nervous throat clearing, swallowing, stuttering or voice trembling. Frequent inappropriate giggling or laughing.

High: Rigidity or fidgeting for majority of time. Difficulty standing still is somewhat disruptive to speech. Stiff face, sighing, blushing or frequent facial tics. Some nervous throat clearing, swallowing or voice trembling. Some inappropriate giggling or laughing.

Moderate: No rigidity. Slight movement of legs, fidgeting, throat clearing, or swallowing. Speaker shows only brief periods of discomfort. Focuses on the speech most of the time. There are no interruptions in the speech.

Low: No rigidity, nervous throat clearing, or swallowing. Minimal fidgeting that is not disruptive to performance. No notable signs of discomfort. Remains focused on the speech. At times may appear relaxed.

Very Low: Relaxed body posture and natural body movement. Speaker laughs and smiles at appropriate times. S/he shows effective gesturing (to be distinguished from fidgeting). Speaker focuses on the speech all the time, does not appear at all uncomfortable.

2. Control

Very Poor: Right after the start or after a few attempts to initiate the speech or upon a mistake (e.g. mispronunciation, forgetting parts of speech, jumbling words, repetition) speaker desires to flee situation by explicitly verbalising, crying or stopping.

Poor: Speaker shows signs of discomfort (by frequently looking around, sighing loudly, and pausing, blushing, hands shaking) after the majority of mistakes and hardly maintains speech causing interruptions.

Fair: The speaker shows signs of slight discomfort but is able to maintain the speech after making a mistake without causing interruptions in the speech.

Good: At times speaker may appear relaxed and at ease after making a mistake.

Very Good: Speaker does not appear at all uncomfortable by making a mistake, but at ease with enthusiasm (smiling or gesturing) in situation.

3. Gaze

Very Poor: Speaker completely avoids looking at the audience or stares continually.

Poor: Speaker avoids eye contact (or stares) for majority of time. Disruptive to performance.

Fair: Speaker frequently avoids eye contact (or stares). Gaze pattern is mildly disruptive to performance.

Good: Speaker occasionally avoids eye contact or tends to look too much (stares) while partner is speaking or during shifts of speech.

Very Good: Speaker keeps eye contact during speech, does not stare; shifts focus during pauses.

4. Vocal Quality

Very Poor: (a) Speaker speaks in a flat, monotonous voice; or (b) speaks at a low volume or mumbles; or (c) speaks overly loudly.

*Poor***:** (a) Speaker demonstrates no warmth, enthusiasm, or interest in verbal expression; or (b) volume somewhat low and speech somewhat unclear; or (c) speaks a little bit too loudly.

Fair: (a) Speaker shows some warmth in verbal expression but at most times sounds unenthusiastic or uninterested; and (b) speaks in appropriate volume; has clear voice quality.

Good: (a) Speaker shows moderate warmth and but inconsistent enthusiasm or interest. Could also be too `gushy' (seems forced); (b) speaks in appropriate volume; has clear voice quality

Very Good: (a,b,c) Speaker is warm and enthusiastic in verbal expression without sounding gushy.

5. Length

Very Poor: Speaker produce long sentences that s/he cannot finish utterly at all or without several repetitions.

Poor: Speaker makes mostly short statements with very long pauses or with a few repetitions; or speaks in long phrases.

Fair: Speaker mostly speaks one sentence at a time with occasional long pauses between sentences.

Good: Speaker mostly speaks in statements of one or two sentences without any major pauses, but there are other occasions where speech is short or excessive.

Very Good: At most times, speaker's utterances are two or more sentences long without pauses.

6. Speech Flow

Very Poor: (a) Excessive use of filler sounds (eg. “hm”, “er”, “uh”) during speech (b) Speaker makes few attempts to initiate the speech. (c) Even after looking at listener notes, speaker cannot maintain the speech. Speaker forgets the majority of the speech.

Poor: (a) Speaker uses filler sounds for majority of time. (b)Speaker tries to initiate the sentences but is only successful about half the time. (c)The speech does not flow smoothly, but is more like reading from listener notes than a speech. Speaker forgets factual information or some parts of the speech.

Fair: (a) Speaker frequently avoids filler sounds. (b,c) For the most part, the speaker is able to maintain the speech with little help from listener notes, although the speech stalls at times. Speaker provides little free information and may forget or jumble some words.

Good: (a) Speaker mostly speaks without using monosyllabic fillers (b,c) Speaker is able to maintain the speech with little help from the listener notes. The speech flows smoothly. No obvious deficits.

Very Good: (a,b,c) Speaker easily maintains the speech with no help from the listener notes. Speaker sounds very natural and shows genuine interest in the topic with warmth or enthusiasm.

Appendix 7 - Reality consensus

Number each statement:

- I can do this now.
- I will be able to do this by the end of this course.
- I would like to be able to do this in the future.
- I will probably not be able to do this.
- Not part of my improved anxious self.

Pick the suitable items from the lists below

My improved anxious self can ...

- speak English with perfect pronunciation
- speak fluently and without hesitating
- speak without voice trembling
- express my ideas confidently before an audience
- speak English with no mistakes
- make jokes in English
- remain calm in tense situations
- go shopping in English
- take tests in English without feeling tension
- understand the menu and order meals in a restaurant
- have conversations with British people about books and films
- have conversations about politics
- not worry about making mistakes
- be at ease during conversations with foreigners
- have simple personal and social conversations.

My improved anxious self is...

- lively
- witty
- serious
- playful
- talkative
- sociable
- happy
- confident
- relaxed