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PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE IN REDUCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE ANXIETY IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The aim of the paper is to outline some possible ways of psychological assistance in defining and reducing foreign language anxiety in university students. In this context the analysis focuses on a theoretical study of language anxiety in the psychological literature and states its role in learning foreign languages and studying in university in general, highlights and explains some reasons of language anxiety, analyses its peculiarities and effect on the efficacy of learning foreign languages. Moreover, we aim at defining some possible ways of detection, prevention, and reducing foreign language anxiety trying to analyse some existent in psychological literature methods and practical questionnaires. To do this, we divide some practical methods available in the scientific psychological literature into the questionnaires aimed at detecting and preventing language anxiety (“Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” (FLCAS), “Language Learners’ Anxiety and Motivation”, “The Anxiety Scale”, “Test Anxiety Scale”, “Fear of Negative Evaluation”, etc.) and questionnaires that help reduce language anxiety (“Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale”, “The Self-Regulated Foreign Language Learning Questionnaire”, “SWOT Analysis”, “Self-Regulation Questionnaire”, “Metacognitive Awareness Inventory”, “Promoting Student Metacognition about Learning”, etc.). We also mention impact of self-regulated learning and importance of playing activities (games) during efficient learning, specify the role of fossilization. Practical implication of the paper is to provide the results of the students of the International Relations Department (N = 153) who voluntarily answered the questions of the adapted and translated into Ukrainian version of the “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” (FLCAS). Our findings suggest that significant English language anxiety is experienced by many students. Finally, some implications for the next studies are proposed.

Key words: foreign language anxiety, self-regulated learning, university students, questionnaires.

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ПСИХОЛОГІЧНЕ СПРИЯННЯ ЗНИЖЕННЮ МОВНОЇ ТРИВОЖНОСТІ У СТУДЕНТІВ ПІД ЧАС ВИВЧЕННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

Мета статті – окреслити деякі можливі способи психологічної допомоги у визначенні та зниженні мовної тривожності у студентів під час вивчення іноземної мови (на прикладі англійської мови). У цьому контексті аналіз зосереджено на теоретичному дослідженні мовної тривожності в психологічній літературі та визначено її роль у вивченні іноземних мов та навчанні в університеті загалом, висвітлено та пояснено деякі причини мовної тривожності, проаналізовано її особливості та вплив на ефективність вивчення іноземних мов. Окрім того, ми прагнемо визначити деякі можливі способи виявлення, запобігання та зниження мовної тривожності, аналізуючи наявні у психологічній літературі методи та практичні опитувальники. Для цього ми розподіляємо практичні методи, доступні в науковій психологічній літературі, на опитувальники, спрямовані на виявлення мовної тривожності та запобігання їй (“Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” (FLCAS), “Language Learners’ Anxiety and Motivation”, “The Anxiety Scale”, “Test Anxiety Scale”, “Fear of Negative Evaluation”, etc.), та опитувальники, що сприяють зниженню мовної тривожності (“Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale”, “The Self-Regulated Foreign Language Learning Questionnaire”, “SWOT Analysis”, “Self-Regulation Questionnaire”, “Metacognitive Awareness Inventory”, “Promoting Student Metacognition about Learning”, etc.). Ми також розглядаємо вплив саморегульованого навчання та важливість ігрової діяльності під час ефективного навчання, уточнюємо роль фасилітації. Практичне значення статті полягає в наданні результатів студентів кафедри міжнародних відносин (N = 153), які добровільно відповіли на запитання адаптованої та перекладеної українською мовою версії “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” (FLCAS). Отримані дані свідчать про те, що багато студентів відчуває значну тривожність під час вивчення англійської мови. Також ми окреслюємо деякі напрямки майбутніх досліджень.

Ключові слова: мовна тривожність (під час вивчення іноземної мови), саморегульоване навчання, студенти, опитувальники.

Formulation of the problem. Foreign language acquisition is reaching a new dimension with the latest researches in linguistics and cognitive psychology which highlights the role of affective variables in language

learning. Since learning any foreign language is a systematic complex process that requires knowledge of language structures, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar, as well as relevant skills that are manifested in the ability to use these notions automatically, one of the specific problems of higher education is the phenomenon of language anxiety.

Many language learners suffer from anxiety and nervousness about their learning. During foreign language classes language anxiety may take place in specific situations and is manifested through a nervous state before oral speech, a sense of fear of evaluating others, and a fear of staying far behind others in learning.

An analysis of recent researches and publications. The problem of foreign language anxiety is still insufficiently studied in Ukrainian and foreign psychology. Authors are mainly focused on studying its negative consequences, identifying the causes and outlining possible ways to prevent it. Many attempts have been made aimed at studying anxiety factors in learning foreign languages and providing different ways how to cope with foreign language anxiety effectively [7; 8; 4; 12; 14; 2; 22]. Thus, in their analysis of language anxiety, Horwitz et al. [8] examine foreign language classroom anxiety scope and severity through developing the “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale”; Demir [4] highlights anxiety factors in learning English as a foreign language and also provides practical recommendations on how to decrease the debilitating anxiety and, correspondingly, make learning foreign (English) language more efficient; MacIntyre [12] examines language anxiety under the effects of academic, cognitive, social, and personal effects; the study of Chi-Fa Pak [14] looks at the relationship between language learners’ anxiety and motivation in speaking and mainstream classrooms, etc. There is still the necessity to continue studying language anxiety also in scope of providing some more practical recommendations for university students, as well as for foreign language teachers.

Thus, **the aim of the paper** was to outline some possible ways of psychological assistance in defining and reducing foreign language anxiety in university students. In this context we tried to do a theoretical analysis of language anxiety in the psychological literature, to state its role in learning foreign languages and studying in university in general, to highlight and explain some reasons of language anxiety, to analyse its peculiarities and effect on the efficacy of learning foreign languages. Moreover, we aimed at defining some possible ways of its detection, prevention, and reducing highlighting some existent in psychological literature methods and practical questionnaires. We also mentioned impact of self-regulated learning and importance of playing activities during efficient learning, the role of fossilization. Our practical implication was to provide the results of the students of the International Relations Department who voluntarily answered the questions of the adapted and translated into Ukrainian version of the “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” (FLCAS).

Presentation of the main material. Language anxiety (or xenoglossophobia) is defined in psychological literature as the feeling of tension, fear and apprehension of communicating in a foreign language that is associated with such foreign language contexts as speaking, listening, and learning. It occupies one of the leading places among the factors that significantly affect language learning. This concept is often understood as a critical reaction to the acquisition of any foreign language. The authors of the questionnaire “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” (FLCAS) Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) define foreign language anxiety (FLA) as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” [8].

Thus, anxiety is being regarded as one of the most significant and widespread emotions both in the context of learning any foreign language and as a central construct in theories of personality. Anxiety is a combination of external (situations that occur) and internal factors (e. g., self-esteem, doubts, worries about “what others will say”, etc.). The combination of these factors becomes apparent when a person is faced with circumstances that he or she cannot overcome.

There are three types of anxiety that scientific literature usually differentiates:

1) anxiety as a character trait inherent in the personality (trait anxiety). This is an innate, long-term and relatively stable personal characteristic, in which individuals are anxious in any situation in general. Individuals with high levels of anxiety of this type are characterized by general nervousness and low levels of emotional stability. Those with low anxiety, on the other hand, are more emotionally stable and calm [7];

2) anxiety in certain conditions (state anxiety) is a temporary manifestation of anxiety, a short-term emotional state of excitement that varies in intensity and time. In other words, it is a temporary concern that arises in response to a particular anxiety-provoking stimulus that causes that concern (such as an important test, or the need to communicate in a foreign language, etc.) [7]. Oxford [13] notes that the state anxiety decreases with time, when the individual who learns a foreign language reaches a certain level of self-esteem in mastering the language;

3) situational anxiety (or situation-specific anxiety). Horwitz et al. [8] proposed that this anxiety which they called ‘Foreign Language Anxiety’ was responsible for students’ negative emotional reactions to language learning. According to the authors, situation-specific anxiety stems from the inherent inauthenticity associated with immature second language communicative abilities. Such anxiety is stable for some time and is caused by a certain type of situation or event (anxiety before going on stage or to the classboard, in front of the audience, test

anxiety, etc.). Each of these situations belong to a specific context (speaking or exam, etc.), but situations may differ from each other, and therefore one person may be nervous, while another may remain calm [7].

Young (1991) categorizes foreign language anxiety in such a way: facilitating (motivates the learner to 'fight' the new learning task; gears the learner emotionally for approach behavior) vs. debilitating anxiety (motivates the learner to 'flee' the new learning task; stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behavior) and state (refers to an unpleasant emotional condition or temporary state) vs. trait anxiety (refers to a stable propensity to be anxious) [24].

Since language anxiety concerns the assessment of performance in the educational and social context, scholars usually highlight its three components:

1) communication apprehension. This is a type of shyness characterized as a fear of, or anxiety about communicating with people. It refers to an individual's level of anxiety in communication with others. It is anticipated by those who expect to have troubles in communication with others to likely be in real difficulty to control the situation [8];

2) test anxiety. It is defined as the type of performance anxiety resulting from a fear of failure in language learning (a fear of evaluation). It refers to the experience of anxiety in foreign language class that students normally face in exams and is viewed as a sensitive situation where students are expected to succeed or to fail [8];

3) fear of negative evaluation. It is the apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations. This component of anxiety is somewhat different from test anxiety in which fear of negative evaluation may occur in any social evaluation rather than is restricted in academic situations [8].

In general, factors of language anxiety studied nowadays can be divided into personal, as well as organizational and pedagogical ones [2; 12]. Young (1991) [24] classifies sources of language anxiety into six categories: personal and interpersonal, learner beliefs, teacher beliefs, teacher-learner interactions, classroom procedures, and language testing. The division is caused by the influence of educational realities, cognitive, social, and personal effects.

Thus, personal factors include: personal anxiety; experiences during interpersonal communication; fear of receiving a negative assessment (generated mostly by a high level of public self-awareness, such as tendency to pay attention to how others perceive you); tension; test anxiety; shyness; low self-esteem; social anxiety, etc.

Organizational and pedagogical factors are: linguistic difficulties (insufficient vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, insufficient understanding of grammar constructions and sentence structures, etc.); complication of educational material; too fast pace of presentation of material by teachers when there is no opportunity and enough time to learn new vocabulary and grammatical constructions; survey techniques that require quick response, or focus on the form rather than the content of the message; false belief that there is a single method of learning a language, and if it is found, the learning process will not require much effort; the need to speak in a foreign language during classroom activities (fear of "failure" in front of others in the group); public correction of mistakes by a teacher, which can lead to a persistent "error-fear" (fear of making mistakes); negative influence of the teacher's personality, as well as of the classmates, parents, administration, etc.; competitive, but not cooperative nature of classes, unusual or unfriendly atmosphere, lack of control over the situation; no reward for success, but a negative assessment in case of failure instead; students' infeasible beliefs about their aptitudes such as expecting to master a language in a short period of time (especially based on the experience of others); presence of native speakers in the classes at early stages of study when students do not have a sufficient amount of necessary material; intolerance to uncertainties; differences in the mechanisms of construction of oral expressions in native and foreign languages, etc. [2].

According to the data available in the psychological literature [4], the causes of language anxiety can be grouped by low, medium, and high levels accordingly.

Thus, among the causes of low anxiety there are: exercises to match the beginning and the ending of a phrase and to fill in the blanks (missing letters in a word or missing words in a sentence) (to assess vocabulary and grammar skills); multiple choice exercises (to assess vocabulary and grammar skills, also reading and listening comprehension); ordinary or modified true/false tasks (to assess vocabulary and grammar skills).

The causes of average anxiety might include: short answers (to assess reading and listening comprehension, as well as writing skills); oral dialogue between two or three participants (to assess speaking skills); writing a short paragraph (to assess writing skills); oral presentation with slides (to assess speaking skills).

The causes of high anxiety might be: oral interview (teacher-student) (to assess listening and speaking skills); prepared monologue without visual support (to assess speaking skills); essay writing (to assess writing skills, including lexical and grammatical components), etc.

Language anxiety can lead to [4]: negative attitude towards learning in general and learning a foreign language in particular, as well as the appropriate attitude towards a teacher and some classmates; feeling bad (physical fear – trembling, blushing, having a fast pulse, unpleasant feeling under knees, etc.); avoidance of participation in performance (missing classes, not doing home and classwork, even at the price of getting a bad grade); pauses,

hesitations, making more mistakes than normally when performing tasks, low assessment; low self-esteem; low concentration; problems with discipline, etc. In general, these and other manifestations of language anxiety can be grouped by factors of physical, linguistic, behavioral, and cognitive activities of students.

If to compare higher education students who are characterized by language anxiety, and those who do not experience it (good learners), we can get the following generalizations: anxious learner is reluctant to take risks; relies mainly on memory; is reluctant to hypothesize; is disorganized and inefficient in recalling of learned items; feels apprehension and self-doubt; is frustrated; whereas good learner is willing to take risks; is tolerant of ambiguities; possesses good cognitive strategies of guessing and inferring; shows good strategies of monitoring, categorizing, and synthesizing; shows positive attitude [20].

Very often language anxiety while learning a foreign language can lead to fossilization, i.e., a state when a student eventually stops in his or her learning (the term was coined by Selinker in 1972). The phenomenon of fossilization is an ever-existing phenomenon in foreign language teaching and learning. It is usually experienced by a student who has reached a certain stage of learning where success is minimal and then he/she stabilizes at this level without any further development. Among the reasons of fossilization supported by language anxiety are the reluctance to develop because a student is convinced that he/she has learned enough, as well as when the material becomes increasingly difficult and incomprehensible, and therefore uninteresting. The main threat is that even the help provided by a teacher is not effective – a student (or anyone who learns foreign language) returns again to a state of fossilization after a certain period of time.

Numerous studies prove that it is very difficult and almost impossible to overcome language anxiety while learning any foreign language, as well as its total elimination may not be a realistic aim. However, it brings hope that this problem can be fought with.

Among the most frequently mentioned in the scientific psychological literature possible ways to reduce language anxiety one can identify relaxed friendly atmosphere in a group during a foreign language class, cooperative learning (collaborative learning), self-promotion of higher education, recording progress in special journals, enough time to complete tasks, permission to use native language during classes in parallel with a foreign one, the use of body language (facial expressions and gestures) by both students and teachers, the role of feedback, etc.

Strategies to reduce foreign language anxiety can be applied not only during classroom activities, but also in natural conditions (out-of-class activities) [22]. Consequently, they can be divided into three groups: 1) strategies directed to students, 2) strategies directed to both teachers and students, and 3) strategies directed to teachers:

1) awareness that making mistakes is normal. In order to learn to communicate in a foreign language, you should move step by step, trying to gradually improve. Nothing can be learned based on theory alone. Mistakes are an integral part of learning a foreign language and are made by all participants in the learning process, and the biggest mistake is not correcting mistakes (“If you deny yourself to speak, think of all mistakes you will never make!”); replacement of negative thoughts with positive ones. Learning a foreign language cannot be free of errors, so an effective way to reduce language anxiety is not to avoid mistakes, but to detect and correct them. You can even write down your feelings when making a mistake. You should also try to think about failures on the positive side. For example, instead of “I have been learning English for two years now and I still make a huge number of mistakes. I’m a loser!” it is necessary to try to produce the following thoughts: “I have been studying English for two years and I do have understood my counterpart during communication. Of course, there were mistakes, but I was able to communicate successfully!”. Or the statement “He laughed and corrected my mistake. What a humiliation! Now the whole world will know how stupid I am!” should be replaced by “My mistake made him laugh. Next time, I’ll know what correct verb form to use. That’s what just one conversation means!”; participation in a support group, discussion with other students of higher education fear of oral communication in a foreign language; attempts to use a foreign language as much as possible not only in classroom communication; good preparation for foreign language classes; use of body language to express yourself and your opinions; attempts to use simple words at first during oral speech; replacement of the teaching methods with more effective ones (these could be a textbook-only withdrawal and watching TV/Internet programs/movies in the language being studied, with subtitles, listening to music, translating poems and prose with constant use of vocabulary, etc.). One can also communicate with acquaintances and friends through social networks on the Internet; the courage to start speaking a foreign language. The most difficult thing is just to start such communication;

2) practicing communication in a foreign language in a friendly environment; not focusing excessive attention on accuracy and correctness when speaking; enough time. If there is language anxiety, you need to practice listening, reading and writing enough to gain confidence instead of speaking; lack of pressure from others; trying to avoid comparing yourself with others, except only with yourself (your achievements in the past), because learning a foreign language can not be a competition; use of language games; performing relaxation exercises; formation of a sense of cultural differences between native language and the language being studied; to reduce anxiety, teachers should also use special training sessions, where they can directly discuss with students their

anxiety, create conditions for relaxation, deep breathing, meditation, relaxing music, and practice some other encouraging statements;

3) good mood; energy; creating favorable learning conditions; constant encouragement to learn a foreign language in different ways; if possible, the organization of work in small groups; use of various pedagogical strategies and methods; constant self-improvement and advanced training, etc.

But before anything else, teachers should first acknowledge the existence of foreign language anxiety and detect those students who are especially anxious in foreign language classes. Moreover, it is vitally important to create opportunities for students to discuss anxiety and let them know that they are not alone in their struggle against language anxiety, and that it is a widespread phenomenon in foreign language learning process.

Teachers should also familiarize their students with self-regulated learning strategies, as foreign language classroom anxiety and such strategies are important factors that influence language learning process in both negative and positive ways. Self-regulated learning is our ability to understand and control the learning process in general and the learning of a foreign language in particular and therefore an important factor in reducing language anxiety. To do this, it is necessary to set goals, to choose strategies to achieve the goals, to apply these strategies in practice, as well as to monitor and control progress towards the goals, and, consequently, to develop motivation to learn. And this can also be regarded as one of the primary tasks of university teachers – to teach students to effectively self-regulate their foreign language learning as acquainting students with the existing strategies of self-regulated learning can not only improve learning, but also reduce the level of foreign language anxiety [16; 23, etc.].

There are five strategies aimed to cope with language anxiety that are proposed by some of the authors [10, etc.]: preparation (indicates the correlation between language incapability/deficit and language anxiety), resignation (may relate to the defense mechanism concept), positive thinking (tends to focus on learners' personal emotions and basically shows that the anxious learners have levels of cognition equal to the confident learners), peer-seeking (may be a good solution, especially if the students can share their experiences and strategies with their learning partners), and relaxation (may be effective way to reduce tension).

Since anxiety has been highlighted as vital factor affecting foreign language learning, it is fundamental to identify students who are anxious in a foreign language class. Thus, numerous scientists [8; 14; 22; 24; 21; 9, etc.] have developed questionnaires to measure the amount of anxiety that students may experience in learning any foreign language.

The practical methods available in the scientific psychological literature, which are usually presented in the form of questionnaires, can be divided into the following groups [1]:

1) questionnaires aimed at detecting and preventing language anxiety (“Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” (FLCAS), “Language Learners’ Anxiety and Motivation”, “The Anxiety Scale”, “Test Anxiety Scale”, “Fear of Negative Evaluation”, etc.);

2) questionnaires that help reduce language anxiety (“Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale”, “The Self-Regulated Foreign Language Learning Questionnaire”, “SWOT Analysis”, “Self-Regulation Questionnaire”, “Metacognitive Awareness Inventory”, “Promoting Student Metacognition about Learning”, etc.).

Thus, one of the most universal methods of detecting language anxiety and outlining its impact directly during the study of any foreign language is the questionnaire “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) that aims to examine the scope and severity of foreign language anxiety [8]. The questionnaire contains 33 items on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’ with a ‘neutral’ option. It was designed to investigate students’ language anxiety concerning communication apprehension (learners’ shyness resulting from anxiety while using a foreign language to communicate), test anxiety (language learners’ fear of failure or poor performance), and fear of negative evaluation (apprehension, avoidance, and expectation of detrimental evaluation by others).

The questionnaire “Language Learners’ Anxiety and Motivation” was developed by Chi-Fa Pak (2014) for detecting language anxiety in scope of its motivational component [14]. The questionnaire is aiming to measure language learners’ motivational orientation by assessing the level of task orientation, ego orientation, work avoidance, and ego avoidance in speaking English/foreign language during class; as well as to focus on reasons for anxiety in public speaking.

Another noteworthy finding is the questionnaire “The Anxiety Scale” (originally “The Anxiety Scale for Spoken Englishes as a Lingua Franca”, adapted by the author of the study) (Wilang & Singhasiri, 2017) the aim of which is to examine out-of-class anxiety provoking situations [22]. With the help of the questionnaire “Test Anxiety Scale” (Sarason, 1980) it is possible to measure the level of test anxiety [15]. One should also take into account “Fear of Negative Evaluation” questionnaire (Watson & Friend, 1969) that helps measure person’s confidence with other people [21].

The questionnaire “Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale” (Deyuan He, 2017) aims to measure and reduce students’ foreign language speaking anxiety [6]. “The Self-Regulated Foreign Language Learning

Questionnaire” (adapted by the author of the study from “The Self-Regulated Online Learning Questionnaire”) (Jansen et al., 2016) is aimed to measure all aspects of self-regulated foreign language learning [9].

A noteworthy finding can be the “SWOT Analysis” (or “SWOT Matrix”) that aims to help a student identify his/her strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to foreign language learning process. It is designed for use in the preliminary stages of a decision-making process [18].

The aim of “Self-Regulation Questionnaire” (Brown, Miller, & Lawendowski, 1999) is to assess such self-regulatory processes as receiving relevant information, evaluating information by comparing it to norms, triggering change, searching for options, formulating a plan, implementing the plan, assessing the plan’s effectiveness, etc. through self-report [3]. Such questionnaire as “Metacognitive Awareness Inventory” (Schraw & Dennison, 1994) that is used to measure (assess) metacognitive awareness can also effectively serve as an additional one in the process of reducing English/foreign language anxiety [17].

Learning to effectively use the components of metacognition – planning, monitoring and evaluation – to understand exactly how students think is an important step towards the development of higher education as a subject of analytical thinking. Therefore, we also suggest paying attention to the methodology “Promoting Student Metacognition about Learning” (adapted by the author of the study from the work by Tanner, 2012). The aim is to teach students to use metacognition to understand how they are thinking about English/foreign language learning [19; 1].

Moreover, there is a lot of evidence in the scientific literature on the effectiveness of the use of playing activities in the educational process in general, as well as in higher education in particular. The effectiveness of games in learning any foreign language can be aimed not only at the effectiveness of learning the material, but also can help reduce language anxiety in higher education. However, there is no unanimity of the authors on a single classification of games in selected areas. Thus, Hadfield (1999, etc.) [5] offers a classification by the type of linguistic and communicative games. Examples of such games are: games to group (to set and arrange in order the submitted information); games to fill in the blanks (missed information); guessing games (the game “Sharades”); search games; games to connect the written information and its corresponding graphic image; role-playing games, etc.

Another classification for using games at different stages of learning a foreign language was proposed in 1979 by Lee and others [11]. These are structural games (practicing syntax in communication); vocabulary (lexical) games (exercises in learning words); games that help learn the pronunciation of words by letters, and therefore their correct spelling; games for pronunciation exercises (phonetic aspect); games for listening and performing relevant tasks after listening; playing activities used for writing; role-playing games (playing the situation in roles using facial expressions and gestures); discussion games (practicing coherent oral speech), etc.

As for the games to reduce language anxiety, one can highlight a large number of them, and here the responsibility lies not only on the teachers, but also sometimes it is needed (in cases of extremely high anxiety) to involve psychologists-practitioners. Examples of such playing activities are the exercises “Window of Greetings”, “Cave of Fears”, “Magic Fairy”, “Interesting Talk”, “Palms”, “Colored Balls”, “Sentences”, “Experience of Confident Behavior”, “Which Step I Am On?”, “Learning a Foreign Language for Me Is...”, “Incomplete Sentences”, etc., which can, if possible, be used by teachers during a foreign language class, as well as be a part of various training sessions to reduce both general and language anxieties [1]. Undoubtedly, the best option is a skillful and appropriate combination of various proposed strategies.

Practical implications.

Participants. A total of 153 Ukrainian university students (55 males and 98 females; $M_{age} = 18.7$; age ranged from 17 to 21) participated in this study voluntarily and for free. All participants shared the same cultural and linguistic background; Ukrainian was their native language, English was their foreign language they studied in the university. These students took English classes from different teachers during the experiment. They were the students of the International Relations Department of the National University of Ostroh Academy that came from such majors as international relations, country studies, and history.

Instrument. The instrument used in the study consisted of the adapted and translated into Ukrainian version of the “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) [78]. This tool has been used to measure the extent of students’ anxiety levels during English classes.

Procedure. Participants were required to complete the FLCAS questionnaire.

Results and Discussion. All percentages refer to the number of students who agreed or strongly agreed (or disagreed and strongly disagreed) with statements indicative of foreign language anxiety. The data were rounded to the nearest tenths. Because of the rounding, some percentages may not total 100. Descriptive analysis for participants’ responses to the FLCAS is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Adopted FLCAS items with percentages of students selecting each alternative (N = 153)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class.				
	6	23	29	30	12
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in my English language class.				
	20	37	21	19	3
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in my English language class.				
	0	10	9	53	28
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.				
	5	15	20	40	20
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes.				
	37	37	15	9	2
6	During English language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.				
	4	24	31	32	9
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.				
	11.1	43.1	20.3	20.3	5.2
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my English language class.				
	5	33	37	21	4
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my English language class.				
	6.5	21	22.2	32	18.3
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my English language class.				
	9	37	16	25	13
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over English language classes.				
	17	31.3	23	23.5	5.2
12	In English language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.				
	6	27	17	40	10
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English language class.				
	3	12	18	48	19
14	I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.				
	12	23	32	27	6
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.				
	3	22	18	47	10
16	Even if I am well prepared for English language class, I feel anxious about it.				
	3	20	12	46	19
17	I often feel like not going to my English language class.				
	10	18	18	40	14
18	I feel confident when I speak in English language class.				
	10	30	38	19	3
19	I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.				
	3.2	9.2	12.4	54.2	21
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English language class.				
	1	11	14	50	24
21	The more I study for an English language test, the more confused I get.				
	4	22	22	42	10
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for my English language class.				
	7	44.4	31	16.3	1.3
23	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.				
	14.4	26	25	29.4	5.2
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.				
	2	10	28	50	10
25	English language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.				
	1.3	5.2	15	57.5	21
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my English language class than in my other classes.				
	2	12	12	49	25
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English language class.				
	5	12	14	52	17
28	When I'm on my way to my English language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.				
	16	48	23.5	10.5	2
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English language teacher says.				
	6	27	21	32	14
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English.				
	10	23	21	33	13
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.				
	5.2	13	14	35	33
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.				
	8	23	51	14	4
33	I get nervous when the English language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.				
	3	27	23	37	10

With the help of the FLCAS we found that anxious students felt very self-conscious about speaking in the foreign language in front of others, feared negative evaluations by their peers, felt that their groupmates performed better than them, were afraid of making mistakes in the foreign language, and felt that they were always being evaluated and tested. For highly anxious students every correction of a mistake seemed to be viewed as a failure. Students also reported that foreign language classes caused them more tension and nervousness than other classes, which supports the idea that language anxiety is distinct from other anxieties [8].

The results of the questionnaire showed that students of the International Relations Department with high anxiety report that they are afraid to speak in English. They showed the results that endorse FLCAS items such as “I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class” (29%); “I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my English class” (27.5%); “I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students” (60%); “I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class” (17%). The students also rejected statements like “I feel confident when I speak in my English class” (22%).

Moreover, the questionnaire showed that anxious students experience fear that they will not understand all English language input (communication apprehension): “It frightens me when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying in English” (20%); “I get nervous when I don’t understand every word the English teacher says” (33%); “I get upset when I don’t understand what the teacher is correcting” (25%). In other words, according to Horwitz et al. (1986), students “believe that in order to have any chance of comprehending the target language message they must understand every word that is spoken” [8].

Students who experience language anxiety also fear being less competent than other students in a group or being negatively evaluated by them: “I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am” (54.2%); “It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class” (15%); “I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do” (40.4%); “English language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind” (6.5%); “I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English” (18.2%). Consequently, students may skip classes (“I often feel like not going to my English language class” (28%), overstudy (“The more I study for an English language test, the more confused I get” (26%), or “seek refuge in the last row in an effort to avoid the humiliation or embarrassment of being called on to speak” [8] (“I can feel my heart pounding when I’m going to be called on in my English language class” (12%).

Anxious students are afraid to make mistakes in their English: “I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make” (12.4%); “I don’t worry about making mistakes in English language class” (22%).

The findings also support the idea that “foreign language anxiety is a distinct set of beliefs, perceptions, and feelings in response to foreign language learning in the classroom and not merely a composite of other anxieties” [8]. Thus, students responded in such ways: “I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English” (33%); “I feel more tense and nervous in my English language class than in my other classes” (14%).

Conclusions and some further implications. To sum up, in particular, our attention was drawn to the interpretation of the term “language anxiety”, identification and description of its factors and types, some causes of its occurrence, study of its impact on the effectiveness of foreign language learning. We also noted the importance of self-regulated learning and playing activities, the role of fossilization. Practical contribution can be our attempt to group the practical methods available in the scientific literature, which are usually presented in the form of questionnaires, in the direction of detecting and preventing foreign language anxiety. Moreover, in our practical implication we provided examples of foreign (English) language anxiety existence from the students’ results who answered the questions of the adapted and translated into Ukrainian version of the “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale”. Thus, we can assume that our findings are supportive to Horwitz et al. findings and suggest that significant English language anxiety is experienced by many students. Teaching anxious students how to cope with the existing anxiety, as well as anxiety-provoking situations, and realizing how to make the learning context less stressful are the major pedagogical implications for university teachers.

A promising area of research is to provide more detailed study of the impact of foreign language anxiety on the whole process of university achievements, and more thorough study of the role of self-regulated learning and fossilization.

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