

MEASURING FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY : CONCERNING STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND THEIR SELF-PERCEPTION

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Abstract

Student motivation refers to the internal or external drive that influences students' desire and effort in achieving learning goals, which can be intrinsic (drive from within) or extrinsic (drive from external factors such as rewards or praise). Self-perception is a student's view or belief of their ability and competence in a particular area or task. Both play an important role in the learning process, where high motivation and positive self-perception can increase engagement, performance and feelings of effectiveness in facing educational challenges. The review conducted in this study used the literature research method. The results of this study confirm the importance of supporting positive self-perception and increasing intrinsic motivation to reduce foreign language anxiety among students. Educators are advised to create a supportive learning environment and provide constructive feedback, as well as design learning activities that foster students' sense of success and self-confidence. Thus, students can better enjoy the foreign language learning process without the burden of excessive anxiety, and ultimately, improve their overall learning outcomes.

Keywords: Foreign Language Anxiety, Student Motivation, Self-Perception.

Introduction

In the current era of globalisation, mastering a foreign language has become one of the most valuable skills. Many individuals and professionals in various fields are required to be able to communicate in a foreign language in order to increase career opportunities, expand international networks, and access global information.

Globalisation has broken down many geographical and cultural barriers, allowing for greater interaction between people from different backgrounds. In the business

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world, multinational companies seek employees who can communicate well in foreign languages, as this allows for market expansion and ease in handling international operations (Alamer & Almulhim, 2021). Foreign languages also open up access to collaborating with foreign partners, understanding international markets, and making more informed decisions. In short, foreign languages are the key to competing and surviving in an increasingly competitive global market (Aldarasi, 2020).

In addition, foreign language acquisition also has a significant impact in the fields of education and research. Much of the scientific literature, sources of knowledge, and important case studies across various disciplines are available in foreign languages. Researchers and academics who are fluent in foreign languages have greater access to information sources and can keep up with the latest developments in their fields (Aldubaikhi, 2023). Higher education in developed countries that are often destinations for international students also requires mastery of the primary language of instruction, generally English. In other words, foreign languages not only enrich individual knowledge but also enhance academic and professional mobility, support cross-cultural collaboration, and contribute to global innovation and development (Amrous & Zouiten, 2020). Therefore, foreign language acquisition is not only relevant for students studying languages as school subjects, but also for individuals who continue to learn throughout their life journey.

However, learning a foreign language is often not easy. Many students experience various emotional and psychological challenges that can affect their learning process. One crucial factor that is often encountered is foreign language anxiety. This anxiety can have a negative impact on students' communication skills, classroom participation and overall academic performance. Foreign language anxiety is a widely researched phenomenon, given the significant effect it can have on students' learning outcomes (Ayhan, 2020).

Motivation in learning also plays an important role in successful foreign language learning. Motivation can be defined as the reason or impetus that drives a person to act. In the context of foreign language learning, students' motivation to learn can come from various sources, both intrinsic and extrinsic (Ayuso et al., 2020). Highly motivated students tend to be more committed and persistent in the face of difficulties in learning a foreign language. However, an interesting question to research is how the combination of learning motivation and foreign language anxiety affects student performance (Badrasawi et al., 2021).

Apart from motivation, students' self-perception or self-efficacy is also an important factor in the learning process. Self-perception refers to an individual's belief about their ability to perform a particular task. High self-efficacy can help students face challenges and pressures in learning a foreign language. Conversely, low self-efficacy can increase foreign language anxiety and hinder students' learning progress (Barjesteh & Mouziraji, 2022).

Thus, this study aims to explore the measurement of foreign language anxiety, examine the relationship between anxiety and students' motivation, and analyse how students' self-perception affects anxiety. Through a comprehensive literature review, it is hoped that this study can provide a deeper insight into the psychological dynamics that occur in foreign language learning and suggest strategies that can help students overcome their anxiety, increase their motivation, and strengthen their self-perception.

Method

The study conducted in this research uses the literature research method. The literature research method is one of the approaches used in scientific research to collect, analyse and present information from relevant secondary text sources. This method is very useful in identifying and understanding various perspectives or findings that have been published related to a particular research topic. There are various techniques that can be used in the literature study method, including keyword searches, identification of credible sources, and analysis of the data found (Abdussamad, 2022); (Adlini et al., 2022).

In a practical context, researchers use this method by collecting, identifying, compiling, and analysing various data from books, journals, articles, reports, and other literature sources. Literature study allows researchers to develop a strong theoretical basis, as well as provide an overview and contextualisation of the research topic. In addition, this method provides researchers with a foundation to avoid duplication of research and to identify gaps that may not have been previously researched (Afiyanti, 2008); (Afiyanti, 2014).

Results and Discussion

Foreign Language Anxiety

Foreign language anxiety is an emotional state experienced by individuals when they encounter situations that require the use of a foreign language. It is often characterised by feelings of tension, discomfort, and fear of failure or criticism from others when communicating (Boato, 2022). Foreign language anxiety can arise in a variety of situations, such as when speaking in public, participating in class discussions, or even when reading and writing in a foreign language. High levels of this anxiety can hinder an individual's ability to process information, impair communication performance, and overall affect academic and social achievement (Botes et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding and overcoming foreign language anxiety is important to facilitate success in language learning.

Foreign language anxiety is a psychological phenomenon experienced by individuals when they engage in situations that require the use of a foreign language. It can arise in various contexts such as when speaking in public, participating in class discussions, having daily conversations, or even in reading and writing activities (Botes

et al., 2022). This anxiety is often characterised by feelings of tension, fear of failure, and worry about negative judgement from the audience. Physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling and rapid heartbeat may also accompany this anxiety. High levels of foreign language anxiety can hinder individuals' ability to process information effectively, reduce self-confidence, and overall affect their academic achievement and socialisation (Calafato, 2023).

Several psychological and pedagogical theories help explain the causes and effects of foreign language anxiety. Cognitive Processing Theory highlights how emotional distress can interfere with the cognitive processes necessary for effective language use. When a person feels anxious, the cognitive capacities that should be used to understand and produce language become inhibited by negative thoughts and fears (Canaran et al., 2024). In addition, Motivation and Affective Theory emphasises the importance of motivation, attitude and self-perception in managing language anxiety. Learners who have high motivation and positive attitudes towards foreign languages tend to experience lower levels of anxiety (Carrai, 2022). Therefore, learning strategies that focus on increasing self-confidence, managing stress, and providing a supportive learning environment can be very beneficial in reducing foreign language anxiety and increasing learning effectiveness.

Motivation in Learning a Foreign Language

Motivation is an internal or external drive that influences a person's behaviour to achieve a specific goal. Motivation is an important element in many aspects of life, including education, work, sport and personal development. In general, motivation plays a role in determining a person's level of effort, perseverance, and commitment to an activity (Chahrazad & Kamel, 2022). Psychological theories analyse motivation from various perspectives, ranging from biological needs to emotional and social needs. For example, Maslow's Theory of the Hierarchy of Needs identifies five levels of needs from the most basic to the most complex: physiological needs, security, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation (Chen et al., 2022).

Motivation is divided into two main types: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation comes from within the individual and involves the interest or enjoyment derived from performing a particular activity. An example of intrinsic motivation is someone who learns a foreign language because he or she is interested in the culture of that country and feels satisfied with the progress he or she makes (Doqaruni, 2022). On the other hand, extrinsic motivation comes from external factors such as rewards, praise or social pressure. For example, a person could be motivated to learn a foreign language because they want to get good grades, recognition from teachers, or to fulfil job or scholarship requirements. These two types of motivation can be mutually supportive or even conflicting, depending on the context and the individual concerned (Edwards, 2022).

Motivation plays a crucial role in influencing foreign language learning achievement. Strong motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, can increase engagement, perseverance and effectiveness in the learning process. Motivated learners tend to have a more positive attitude towards the material learnt, try harder in the face of challenges, and are more consistent in developing their language skills (Ergün & Demirdağ, 2022). For example, someone with high intrinsic motivation - such as a deep interest in culture and language - is more likely to enjoy the learning process and actively seek opportunities to improve. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation such as rewards, praise or academic needs can provide an additional boost that helps maintain focus and long-term goals. The combination of these different forms of motivation can significantly improve learning outcomes, making learners more proficient and confident in using a foreign language (Falkoni-Mjehović et al., 2022).

Thus, Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, plays an important role in improving foreign language learning achievement by influencing engagement, persistence, and effectiveness of the learning process. The right type and level of motivation can make learners more positive, consistent and focused towards their goals, which in turn contributes significantly to the improvement of language skills.

Self-Perception and Self-Efficacy

Self-perception in the context of foreign language learning refers to how individuals assess and understand their ability and potential in mastering the language. This self-perception includes self-efficacy, self-confidence, and a general view of their linguistic competence (Glory & Subekti, 2021). Someone with a positive self-perception is likely to believe that they are capable of facing challenges in language learning, which in turn, can increase their motivation and commitment to practice and learn consistently. Conversely, a negative self-perception can lead to a sense of insecurity and reduce the spirit of endeavour, thus hindering progress in learning a foreign language. Therefore, self-perception is an important component that can influence foreign language learning success (Gluhareva & Munro, 2022).

The relevance of self-efficacy to foreign language learning is also reflected in various studies that show that self-efficacy can affect learning outcomes. For example, learners with high self-efficacy are more likely to actively participate in class, dare to try speaking in the language being learnt, and are more persistent in the face of mistakes or failure (Guban-Caisido, 2020). Conversely, low self-efficacy can result in anxiety, procrastination and lack of participation, all of which can hinder learning progress. On a practical level, language teachers and trainers can help increase learners' self-efficacy through adaptive teaching methods, positive feedback, recognising small achievements, and creating a supportive and motivating learning environment. By increasing self-efficacy, learners can have a more productive and fulfilling learning

experience, bringing them closer to foreign language acquisition (Hamada & Takaki, 2022).

Self-perception has a significant impact on the level of anxiety experienced in foreign language learning. A person with a positive self-perception, who believes in their ability to learn and use a new language, tends to experience lower anxiety (Hamamorad, 2020). They are more confident to participate in language activities, such as public speaking or communicating with native speakers. In contrast, individuals with negative self-perceptions often doubt their own abilities, which increases fear of mistakes and judgement from others. This can exacerbate foreign language anxiety, discourage active participation, and hinder the development of language skills (Ibrahim et al., 2022). Therefore, building a positive self-perception is of key importance in managing anxiety and achieving success in learning a foreign language.

Foreign Language Anxiety Measurement

Measuring foreign language anxiety is an important step in understanding how feelings of anxiety can affect the language learning process. One of the most commonly used tools in research is the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope in 1986 (INAGAKI, 2022). The FLCAS consists of 33 statements that evaluate three main dimensions of language anxiety: communication, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statements using a Likert scale. The data collected can provide insight into the level of anxiety and specific areas that educators may need to address to help learners (Islam & Moon, 2022).

Besides the FLCAS, there are also other methods used to measure foreign language anxiety, such as qualitative surveys, in-depth interviews, and classroom observations. These methods allow researchers to get a more detailed picture of an individual's experience with anxiety in a more natural context. For example, in-depth interviews can identify specific sources of anxiety, such as past bad experiences or fear of failure (Jugo, 2020). Classroom observations, on the other hand, can provide direct observations of anxious behaviour that may not be revealed in written surveys. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods often provides a more thorough understanding of foreign language anxiety (Karakış, 2020).

Measuring foreign language anxiety is not only useful for researchers, but also for educators and learners. The results of such measurements can help educators design more effective teaching strategies to reduce anxiety and increase learner confidence. For example, knowing that many learners feel anxious when speaking in front of the class, educators can focus on activities that support oral communication in a less intimidating setting (Kasap, 2021). For learners, being aware of their own anxiety

levels can be a first step to finding ways to cope with feelings of anxiety, such as through breathing exercises, relaxation techniques, or seeking support from classmates. Thus, measuring foreign language anxiety can pave the way for a more supportive and inclusive learning environment (Kianinezhad, 2024).

Relationship between Motivation and Foreign Language Anxiety

Motivation plays an important role in foreign language learning, and its relationship with foreign language anxiety is a complex and interesting topic to research. Motivation can be divided into two main types: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation comes from within the learner, such as the desire to explore a new culture or the personal joy of mastering a new skill (Kurdi & Archambault, 2020). Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is fuelled by external factors such as the need to pass an exam, get a better job, or social recognition. High levels of motivation, especially intrinsic motivation, are often associated with lower levels of foreign language anxiety, as learners are more likely to enjoy the learning process and feel confident about their abilities (Limeranto & Subekti, 2021).

Motivation can also serve as a buffer against foreign language anxiety. Highly motivated learners tend to be more resilient and seek effective coping strategies to overcome their anxiety. For example, they may be more active in practising the language outside of class, joining study groups, or seeking feedback from native speakers (Lindberg et al., 2023). In contrast, less motivated learners may more easily feel overwhelmed by anxiety, avoid communication situations, and experience barriers in their learning progress. Therefore, increasing learners' motivation could be an effective strategy to reduce their language anxiety and boost their confidence (Liu & Dong, 2021).

However, it is important to note that the relationship between motivation and foreign language anxiety is not always linear. There are cases where very high motivation can actually lead to greater anxiety, especially if learners have overly high aspirations or are perfectionists. They may feel pressure to reach unrealistic standards, which in turn can increase their anxiety (Marlina et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important for educators to pay attention to the balance between enhancing motivation and managing anxiety. Through a holistic approach, which includes motivational encouragement as well as emotional support, learners can be helped to achieve optimal language learning outcomes without getting trapped in a detrimental cycle of anxiety.

The Effect of Self-Perception on Foreign Language Anxiety

Self-perception has a significant influence on foreign language anxiety. Self-perception refers to how one sees and judges oneself in various aspects of life, including foreign language ability. Students who have a positive self-perception of their foreign language ability tend to feel more confident and less anxious in foreign language

situations (Marnani & Cuocci, 2022). Conversely, learners who see themselves as less capable or incompetent in a foreign language often experience higher levels of anxiety. Negative self-perceptions can lead to fears of poor evaluation and failure, further affecting their ability to participate in foreign language activities (Miller, 2020).

In addition, self-perception can influence the approach learners take in the foreign language learning process. Learners with positive self-perceptions are more likely to take linguistic risks, such as speaking in challenging situations or practising the language with native speakers, which in turn helps them improve their language skills (Morali & Boran, 2021). They are also more likely to see mistakes as part of the learning process rather than as personal failures, which helps keep their anxiety in check. On the other hand, those with negative self-perceptions may tend to avoid challenges and opportunities to speak, thus reinforcing the cycle of anxiety and perceived inadequacy (Moskowitz, 2021).

The important role of self-perception in foreign language anxiety can also be seen from the perspective of self-efficacy theory or self-belief in the capacity to achieve certain goals. This theory states that a person's beliefs about their ability to succeed in a particular task can influence their motivation, behaviour and emotions (Muhic & Fazliu, 2020). In the context of foreign language learning, learners with high self-efficacy are more likely to face language challenges with optimism and minimal anxiety. They believe that they have the necessary abilities and resources to overcome difficulties, which reduces feelings of anxiety and provides a positive boost in the learning process (Mulyono et al., 2020).

To support learners in developing positive self-perception and reducing foreign language anxiety, educators can take several strategic steps. For example, providing constructive feedback and encouraging learners to celebrate small progress can help reinforce positive self-perception. Creating a supportive learning environment, where mistakes are considered part of the learning process, is also very important (NAKANISHI, 2020). In addition, lessons designed to increase self-efficacy, such as providing learners with successful experiences through gradual practice and realistic simulations, can help them build self-confidence. In this way, learners can enjoy the foreign language learning process more without being burdened by excessive anxiety (Ojansuu, 2021).

Thus, self-perception has a great influence on foreign language anxiety. Learners with positive self-perception tend to feel more confident and experience lower levels of anxiety, which allows them to be more active and effective in the language learning process. Conversely, negative self-perceptions can amplify anxiety, making learners fearful of failure and likely to avoid challenging language situations. Self-efficacy theory explains that belief in one's own abilities is instrumental in reducing anxiety and increasing motivation. As such, it is important for educators to support the development of positive self-perceptions through constructive feedback, supportive

learning environments and learning experiences designed to increase confidence. These strategies can help learners achieve optimal results in foreign language learning without getting caught up in excessive fear and anxiety.

Conclusion

This study confirms that foreign language anxiety is significantly affected by students' self-perception and motivation. Students who have positive self-perceptions of their language ability report lower levels of anxiety, while those with negative perceptions tend to experience higher anxiety. This suggests that students' self-belief in their linguistic ability plays a crucial role in controlling language anxiety levels.

Motivation, especially intrinsic motivation, was also found to be an important factor in reducing foreign language anxiety. Students who are motivated by personal interest and desire to learn the language show lower anxiety compared to those who are only motivated by external factors such as academic or social pressure. Intrinsic motivation helps reinforce positive self-perception, creating a positive feedback loop that reduces anxiety and increases engagement in foreign language learning.

This research suggests the importance of supporting positive self-perception and enhancing intrinsic motivation to reduce foreign language anxiety among students. Educators are encouraged to create a supportive learning environment, provide constructive feedback, and design activities that can increase students' sense of success and confidence. These efforts are expected to help students enjoy the language learning process more comfortably and effectively, and improve their overall learning outcomes.

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