CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Foreign Language Anxiety

Anxiety is a natural human response to stress or perceived threats, characterized by feelings of tension, worry, and physical changes like increased heart rate. According to Mathews et al. (2016), anxiety is a state of negative emotional arousal accompanied by concern about future threats. The relevance of anxiety as a major influence in modern life is increasingly acknowledged, and representations of current concern with anxiety issues are widely mirrored in literature, the arts, science, and religion, as well as numerous areas of our culture. Foreign language anxiety (FLA) is a common phenomenon experienced by learners when they attempt to communicate in a language other than their native tongue. It involves feelings of nervousness, insecurity, and fear of negative evaluation, which can significantly impact language acquisition and proficiency. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) was first defined by Horwitz et al. in 1986 as a specific type of anxiety related to language learning situations. It encompasses various negative feelings such as nervousness, fear of making mistakes, and apprehension about being judged or misunderstood (Fondo, 2019). Similarly, Petrić et al. (2021) defined FLA as "a type of anxiety related to all situations in which an individual is learning a foreign language. It includes personal traits, motivation, affect, age, and extroversion/introversion dichotomy".

The various characteristics of anxiety should be examined to comprehend foreign language anxiety from a broad perspective. Three different types of anxiety, including trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety, were previously recognized by psychologists. Trait anxiety refers to a stable and enduring tendency to experience anxiety across various situations (Saviola et al., 2020) It is a universal personality attribute that remains constant in all circumstances. This part of anxiety, which is a personality trait, remains constant over time (Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019). State anxiety is a temporary emotional condition that arises in response to a specific,

anxiety-inducing situation(Saviola et al., 2020). It impacts cognitive functions and can impair tasks requiring attention and inhibitory control, such as response inhibition and working memory (Leal et al., 2017). Situation-specific anxiety is a form of state anxiety that occurs in response to specific situations or stimuli, such as social interactions or medical procedures (Leal et al., 2017). Thus, foreign language anxiety is situational anxiety (Nilsson, 2019)

Horwitz et al. (1986) proposed that foreign language anxiety be viewed as a situation-specific anxiety stemming from the uniqueness of formal foreign language learning, rather than a case of general classroom anxiety being transferred to foreign language learning. Language researchers believe that learning a foreign language is associated with situation-specific anxiety rather than trait anxiety because trait anxiety is a stable trait in which all situations cause anxiety, whereas situation-specific anxiety is linked to particular situations (Huang, 2018). Furthermore, a previous pilot study conducted by Andryushkina (2020), that investigated the correlation between trait anxiety and foreign language anxiety, revealing no significant correlation between the two. It highlighted that foreign language anxiety is influenced more by situational factors rather than being a stable trait. Similarly, a previous study investigated the levels and triggers of language anxiety in primary classrooms found that high anxiety was situation-specific and closely related to oral performance in class, further supporting the notion that foreign language anxiety is primarily situation-specific (Nilsson, 2019).

2.1.2. Factors Contributing to Foreign Language Anxiety

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), foreign language anxiety is caused by three performance-related factors: 1) fear of negative evaluation, 2) communication apprehension and 3) test anxiety. The first aspect is communication apprehension. Horwitz et al. (1986) indicated that "communication apprehension is a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people". People who are afraid of communicating have difficulty communicating verbally in a group, especially when using a foreign language, as they have little control over their surroundings and are aware that their interaction is being observed. The second

aspect of constructing foreign language anxiety is test anxiety. It is defined as anxiety caused by a fear of failure, which commonly manifests when confronted with a test situation (Horwitz et al., 1986). When their teacher evaluates their performance, test anxiety arises and discourages students' foreign language performance. Fear of negative evaluation is the third component of foreign language anxiety. It refers to the anxious feeling of being evaluated, the fear of the test situation, and the expectation of receiving negative feedback (Horwitz et al.,1986).

Furthermore, various variables concerning foreign language anxiety have been discussed in studies. Fear of making mistakes and being negatively evaluated by teachers and peers is a common source of FLA. Studies have consistently found that junior high school students often experience anxiety when they are afraid of making pronunciation and grammatical errors and fear being judged or laughed at by their classmates. These factors contribute significantly to their anxiety levels and reluctance to participate in language activities (Wang & Chinokul, 2023). Students' perceptions of their own language proficiency also play a crucial role in FLA. Those who perceive their proficiency as low tend to experience higher anxiety levels. This self-perception affects their confidence and willingness to engage in language learning activities(Christyani et al., 2022). Besides that, a lack of preparation and an unsupportive classroom environment can exacerbate FLA. Students who do not feel adequately prepared for class activities and who perceive their classroom environment as hostile or unsupportive are more likely to experience anxiety. This is especially true in environments where the focus is heavily on test results and error correction (Yu et al., 2023). Interpersonal issues, such as the relationship between students and their peers, also contribute to FLA. Students who feel isolated or pressured by their peers are more likely to experience anxiety. Additionally, the broader social environment, including parental expectations and cultural attitudes towards language learning, can impact students' anxiety levels (Jianmin & Chen, 2020).

2.1.3. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope in 1986, is a widely used instrument to measure this specific type of anxiety. FLCAS has been extensively validated across different cultural and educational contexts. Park (2014) conducted a factor analysis of the FLCAS among Korean university students, revealing two meaningful latent components that adequately fit the data, highlighting the scale's robustness in different settings. The FLCAS assesses various aspects of anxiety that learners may experience while studying a foreign language. The scale consists of 33 items and is designed to capture the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions of foreign language classroom anxiety.

Table 2. 1. 33 Item Questions of FLCAS

No	List of Questions
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.
4	It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in a foreign language.
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.
6	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.
8	I am usually at ease during my tests in my language class.
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language class.
12	In language class, I can get so nervous that I forget things I know.
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.

14   I would not be nervous speaking a foreign language with native speakers.

15   I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.

16   Even if I am well-prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30   I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak a foreign language.

31   I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.

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

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

Here are the four conceptually distinct components that the FLCAS aims to measure:

1) **Communication Apprehension**

Communication apprehension is the initial concept of performance anxiety in educational settings. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), communication apprehension is a specific type of apprehension marked by fear of communicating with others. This factor refers to the fear or anxiety students may experience when they have to speak a foreign language in front of their teacher or peers. It encompasses the fear of making mistakes, being negatively evaluated, or feeling embarrassed while using the language in a communicative context.

2) **Test Anxiety**

Students who have test anxiety worry about and feel overwhelmed by taking foreign language exams (Horwitz et al. 1986). This factor focuses on anxiety related to taking tests or exams in the foreign language classroom. Students may feel nervous or stressed about their performance during language assessments, which can affect their ability to demonstrate their true language proficiency.

3) **Fear of Negative Evaluation**

Fear of negative evaluation, in contrast to test anxiety, places more emphasis on sentiments of others' opinions or expectations (Horwitz et al. 1986). This factor captures the anxiety associated with being judged or negatively evaluated by others based on their language abilities. Learners may worry about being seen as incompetent or unintelligent when using a foreign language, leading to avoidance or reluctance to participate in language-related activities.

4). **Anxiety of English Classroom**

This is a broader component that captures the overall anxiety students feel in the English classroom. It includes a general sense of unease and nervousness that may not be tied to specific activities or situations. Students experiencing high levels of general English classroom anxiety may struggle to focus, have difficulty retaining information, and display a lack of enthusiasm for learning the language.

The concept theory of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) from Horwitz et al. (1986) is used by the researcher in this study to assess students' foreign language anxiety in EFL classes. The FLCAS has been widely used in research to understand the nature and impact of language anxiety on language learning. By identifying the specific dimensions of anxiety experienced by students, educators, and researchers can develop strategies to help learners cope with and reduce language-related anxiety, ultimately enhancing their language-learning experiences and outcomes.

2.1.4. Levels of Anxiety

Levels of anxiety could be affected by personality, coping mechanisms, personal experiences, and gender. There are various forms of anxiety levels among students. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), there are five levels of anxiety among students in the learning process: very relaxed (very low), relaxed (low), mildly anxious (moderate), anxious (high), and very anxious (very high).

1) Very relaxed

Students in this category feel completely at ease in the classroom. They experience no anxiety and are comfortable participating in all classroom activities. These students are likely to perform well academically and socially in the classroom, engaging actively without fear or hesitation.

2) Relaxed

Students who are relaxed exhibit minor anxiety symptoms but generally feel comfortable. They may occasionally feel nervous but it does not significantly impact their performance. These students participate actively and perform well but might avoid a few challenging tasks due to slight nervousness.

3) Mildly anxious

The students frequently feel nervous about participating and may experience some physical symptoms of anxiety such as slight sweating or increased heart rate. Anxiety may affect their performance slightly. They may avoid speaking or performing in front of the class but can manage most tasks with some effort.

4) Anxious

Students experience noticeable anxiety that affects their ability to participate comfortably in classroom activities. They may experience physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, or a rapid heartbeat. This level of anxiety significantly impacts performance. Students might avoid participating in class and have difficulty concentrating, leading to lower academic performance.

5) Very anxious

Intense anxiety characterizes this category. Students often feel overwhelmed, experience severe physical symptoms, and have a constant fear of negative evaluation. Performance is heavily impacted. These students may avoid attending classes or participating in any activities, resulting in severe academic and social consequences.

2.2. Study of the Relevant Research

In the context of EFL, research on language anxiety has been done in several nations, including China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia, Iran, Taipei, and Saudi Arabia. First, Bensalem (2018) studied the relationship between foreign language anxiety (FLA), self-efficacy, English self-perceived competency, and three socio-biographical factors (gender, knowledge of a third language, and experience abroad) among 261 Arabic university students learning English. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and an Arabic form of the Foreign Language Self-Efficacy Scale were used in his study to gather data (Torres & Turner, 2016, as cited in Bensalem, 2018). The results showed that the Arab EFL students in this study had an average degree of anxiety, with female students experiencing higher anxiety than their male counterparts. Self-efficacy, self-perceived English competence, and gender were shown to be FLA determinants by regression analysis.

Second, a comparative study has also been done by Javid (2014). By delivering the FLCAS to 216 randomly chosen freshman students participating in Taif University's preliminary year programme, the study sought to understand the sources of anxiety among Saudi EFL learners. The findings show that Saudi

students in the preliminary year, as represented by the study's participants, have a moderate level of language learning anxiety. Communication apprehension anxiety continued to rank first among the four anxiety variables, with an average mean of 3.1, followed by English classroom anxiety. Test anxiety had the lowest overall mean and fear of a negative evaluation was placed third.

Third, Qaddomi (2013) carried out an insightful investigation to understand the anxiety of EFL students attending Al-Quds Open University (QOU). The impact of gender and educational level on anxiety levels was also researched. 52 EFL students from Al-Quds Open University were randomly chosen for the study, using the most widely used scale, FLCAS, created by Horwitz et al. (1986), was employed for this survey report. The findings of this study revealed that EFL students from QOU experience anxiety, particularly when speaking with native speakers. Additionally, compared to their male counterparts in EFL classes, female QOU EFL students indicate higher levels of anxiety. The participants' educational backgrounds had no statistically significant variations in the outcomes. University students have reportedly expressed anxiety over having to speak in the target language in class, which has been linked to FLA.

In certain nations, a similar study has been done with various populations (Andrea, 2021; Hu et al., 2021; Lileikienė & Danilevičienė, 2016; Şenel, 2016). However, the majority of them were higher education students. There exists a notable research gap when it comes to understanding FLA among junior high school students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Research on FLA has predominantly focused on high school and university students. However, investigating FLA in the junior high school context is equally important due to the unique developmental and educational challenges faced by younger learners. This study, therefore, was intended to investigate the foreign language anxiety levels in EFL classrooms among junior high school students.