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**Reducing Anxiety and Raising Engagement in Oral Classroom Settings  
through Better Teachers' Sociability**  
**The Case of First Year Master Students**  
**University of Constantine**

Dissertation Submitted in Part fulfillment of the Requirements for a Master degree in  
Applied Language Studies

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## **Dedications**

To the adorable memory of my mother,

To my kindest father,

To my brothers and sisters,

To my friends,

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## **Abstract**

This study investigates the actual sources of FL oral classroom anxiety at master's level within the oral expression subject classrooms. It suggests the concept of teachers' sociability as a recommended solution through reconsidering a variety of humanistic and affective strategies in the academic settings to mitigate learners' anxiety and raise their spontaneous engagement and better their performance. This study used a qualitative research method in a questionnaire format. The findings suggested that FL anxiety can originate from the fear of failing tests or negative evaluation, particularly, from teachers, the fear also from classroom procedures that provokes anxiety besides to the fear of speaking FL. The pedagogical implications of these findings for understanding FL anxiety for reducing learners' anxiety, and raising their engagement through teachers' sociability were presented as suggestions for further research by giving much concern for the crucial role of teachers in laying the successful foundations of FL pedagogies.

## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>FL</b>	Foreign Language
<b>EFL</b>	English Foreign Language
<b>CA</b>	Communication Apprehension
<b>FLCA</b>	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety
<b>CLT</b>	Communicative Language Teaching
<b>LAD</b>	Language Acquisition Device
<b>FLCAS</b>	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale
<b>IPM</b>	Information Processing Model

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## **Introduction**

### **Statement of the Problem**

There has been a growing body of research regarding individual variations in language learning; these variations that can be a result of the cognitive, the affective and psychological sides of foreign language learners and also due to the nature of learning foreign languages. In order to achieve better language learning and teaching both aspects should be taken into consideration; however, until now, research has focused mainly on the cognitive aspect of the learner with less attention to the affective factors.

Affect in language learning involves a number of affective and psychological factors, feeling, and attitude of the learner. Affective aspects of language learners may influence the learners' performance, positively or negatively. Thus, a right understanding of affect, by teachers, in foreign language learning can lead to more effective language learning and teaching.

Attending an oral classroom session is a source of anxiety for many first year master English LMD students at The University of Constantine. They show many negative emotions and behaviours before and while attending the class such as: fear of negative evaluation, fear of speaking in front of classmates and teachers, fear of embracement, fear of frustration, fear of difficulties, fear of volunteering, fear of failure, fear of losing self-esteem when making mistakes in front of peers, uneasiness, clear hesitation, shaking, losing words to the extent that they skip the oral classroom minutes before the session starts. These various manifestations of anxiety constitute an important problem that exists among EFL learners from the early stages to highly advanced levels. This affects,

particularly, the speaking skills, as it is confirmed by Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986, 130). Speaking is the most provoking anxiety aspect of language learning in some situations, and it is one of the most negatively influential affective variables. It plays a significant role in language learning and contributes in reducing learners' oral engagement and performance. According to Meng & Wang (2006), negative emotions bring barriers to language learning and reduce the learners' potential capacities and creativity. The task of learning a foreign language is a profoundly unsettling psychological proposition (Guiora, p. 8. as cited in Alatis, 1994).

### **Rationale**

Being a Master's EFL learner at the department of English, University of Constantine, the researcher himself has not only experienced moderate oral classroom anxiety but has also observed this phenomenon among many students with different anxiety manifestations and rates reflected in their specific situational low oral engagement, poor oral performance and bad oral subject marks. That is to say, the same students, who have experienced severe anxiety and poor performance in a given situation with given teachers of oral English, may have, in another specific situation, a less or moderate anxiety, and better performance. They also may have not experienced any at their different academic years with other teachers of oral expression or other subjects which require high speaking skills from first year Master students, as advanced learners, both inside and outside the classroom setting. The researcher has wondered why the same students have such severe anxiety with bad oral performance and marks in some situations and have less or no anxiety at all with better performance and marks in other specific situations. In this study, we try to comprehend the issue of anxiety from the perspective of EFL learners, in

an attempt to identify the sources of anxiety, focusing on the actual factors that cause it. We try to reconsider teacher's sociability as a close interpersonal, empathetic, enthusiastic, caring, friendly constructed, respectful, and communicative relationship with his/her students) and as a key factor that can reduce learners' anxiety, raise their oral engagement in the classroom, and give the students more chance for a potential use of their competences and capacities with less physiological barriers.

### **Aims of the Study**

The major aim of this research is to shed light on oral teaching strategies through reconsidering and promoting teachers-learners sociability in academic settings, as a practical way to fully exploit the learners' oral potential competence and capacities with the minimum rates of anxiety and better academic oral performance. In other words, the objectives of this research are identifying learners' anxiety sources that make speaking English more stressful in some situations than in others and suggesting some humanistic ways for teachers to reduce learners' oral anxiety by raising their awareness of the crucial effectiveness of their sociability towards their students in the academic setting.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions are addressed in this study:

**Q1:** Why do some 1st year master English LMD students studying in Applied Language Studies have a lower oral classroom engagement?

**Q2:** Can a higher teachers' sociability really raise and improve learners' oral engagement and performance?

## **Hypothesis**

If there is a higher teachers' sociability, lower anxiety of learners will result and, in turn, lead to a better oral engagement and performance.

## **Investigation Tool**

To check the validity of our hypothesis, as an attempt to gather as much data as possible on our EFL learners' anxiety, a modified questionnaire adopted from Horwitz and Cope's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), will be administered to the students; it is about understanding anxiety sources, and learners' perception and expectation for the teachers' sociability role in their engagement and performance.

## **Subjects**

We have decided to work on 1<sup>st</sup>. year Master LMD students because they tend to show clearer anxiety and the aforementioned negative emotions and behaviors than 1<sup>st</sup>., 2<sup>nd</sup>. and 3<sup>rd</sup>. year graduate students. They have been studying English for eight academic years, the last three years at the University, and have different English subjects including the oral expression one as a fundamental course. Their general proficiency in English is supposed to be good.

Due to time constraints, it is neither possible nor desirable to study all the population. For instance, dealing with more than 100 in our department will be time consuming. Thus, we have decided to take randomly a sample of 30 students to be given the administered questionnaire.

## **Structure of the Thesis**

The first two chapters will be devoted to the theoretical part of this research. Chapter one reviews literature on FL anxiety sources and impact. It gives some background to the study of FL anxiety, reviews the past research on language anxiety, and establishes the conceptual foundations of the construct of language anxiety in terms of its three components: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Chapter two will be devoted to look at the theories related to the concept of learners' engagement. It will also give a theoretical contextualization of the notion of teachers' sociability in the context of our research. Finally, chapter three will be devoted to the practical part of the study; it gives descriptive analytic statistics of the results obtained from the administered questionnaire and includes some suggestions and recommendations as to how to solve the problem of anxiety among students.

## Chapter I

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

In the last three decades , there was a shift in foreign language (FL) research from the focus on learning pedagogies and their improvement, the cognitive sides, and the external factors of FL learners to the affective sides and internal factors such as age, sex, learning style, learning strategy, motivation, self-esteem and the construct of anxiety .Consequently, the implications of this research remained restricted to the learning and teaching of the language itself, that is to say, the cognitive domain with little attention to the affective variables the learners bring with them into the academic setting.

Most researchers posited that in order to have a holistic understanding of the learning process and to gain better academic achievements, learners' affective variables need to be taken into consideration. This was certainly in parallel with the cognitive ones (Samimy, 1994, cited in Wei, 2007). In addition, the focus of FL teaching programs shifted from the narrow concern of developing the learners' linguistic competence to the need of communicative competence. With the current advance in communicative approaches, the aim has become to make English foreign language (EFL) learners speak spontaneously in various academic and social contexts, express themselves openly with the minimum rates of anxiety, develop their oral skills, activate their autonomy and be fully engaged in the classroom. In order to meet this challenge, attention has been diverted to studying the role of affective variables like learning styles, motivation, personality traits that can impede the process of learning and speaking. Among these affective variables,



learner anxiety has come to be recognized as an important area of study because of the negative influence it can have on students' performance.

This chapter reviews literature on FL anxiety. It gives some background to the study of FL anxiety and establishes the conceptual foundations of the construct of FL anxiety in terms of its three components: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Furthermore, it looks at the factors that stem from learners' self-esteem, learners and teachers' beliefs about language learning, and classroom procedures. It also highlights the impact of FL anxiety at the three learning stages, input, processing, and output. Finally, it describes how anxiety is manifested in the learners and presents some strategies to cope with it.

## **I.1 Psychological Barriers in Oral English Teaching**

The psychological barriers to EFL learners in oral English communication are the psychological abnormal negative emotions associated with learning English as FL including nervousness, self-abasement and lack of self-confidence, and anxiety etc. Those are caused by fear or inhibition while performing in English. Different learners may experience different psychological barriers due to different factors. They can be attributed either to subjective reasons related to the learner, or to objective ones related to the environment, method of language teaching, and teachers' role...etc.

### **I.1.1 Types of Psychological Barriers in Oral English Teaching**

The main barriers of a psychological nature to Oral English Teaching are:

### **I.1.1.1 Self-Abasement**

As Guang and Liang (2007, p.54) point out, self-abasement students have almost no self-confidence. They hardly ever believe in their ability to speak English or face teachers, classmates and any sort of audience. Then, they either keep silent or say a little with great difficulty in oral English classroom activities.

### **I.1.1.2 Pride**

Many FL learners attach too much importance to their self-image and others' evaluation. Anxiety threatens their self-esteem. They often choose to speak a little, or to keep silent in the classroom just to avoid making mistakes and be laughed at by others in oral English communication (ibid. p.54).

### **I.1.1.3 Fear of Difficulty**

Guang and Liang (ibid, p.54) state that students who fear difficulty do see oral English communicative skills as being really hard to improve. They cannot successfully communicate in English due to great psychological pressure and lack of self-confidence as they tend to avoid facing the difficulties involved in oral English by frequently missing the class.

## **I.2 Anxiety**

### **I.2.1 Definition of Anxiety**

Anxiety is one of the most negative psychological hindrances for many EFL learners. FL anxiety is an emotional response for "a threat to some value that the individual

holds essential to his existence as a personality” (May, 1977, p. 205, cited in Bekleyen, p.50). Spielberger (1983, as cited in Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986, p.125) has supported that it is a kind of troubled subjective feeling in the mind of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system. According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) FL anxiety is “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feeling, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”. This means that anxiety is related to self-focused, negative and anxious cognition during the learning process. Highly anxious students often have relatively negative self-concepts, underestimating the quality of their speaking ability when compared with others.

### **I.2.2 Facilitative and Debilitative Anxiety**

FL anxiety has been said by many researchers (Horwitz et al (1986), Sammy (1992), Macintyre (1991) to influence language learning. Anxiety is a unique emotion as it can be facilitative or debilitative. Indeed, experiencing moderate anxiety can be helpful and facilitate the learner’s performance, and it can serve as a motivator and lead to better oral performance through motivating learners to adopt a strategy and to be willing to confront the new learning task, whereas having severe anxiety can be debilitating and significantly hinders one’s performance through motivating them to assume an avoidance attitude and therefore tends to escape from the learning task (Scovel,1978 cited in Moira, 2006, p.1-2). For example, a student can become slightly anxious before a major exam; the slight anxiety felt can motivate the student to study for the exam and do better because of the time spent preparing for it. In contrast, high levels of anxiety may interfere with the student’s ability to concentrate, process information, or remember information from long-

term memory. Under these circumstances, the student is less likely to do his or her best on the exam.

### **I.2.3 Anxiety and Threat to Self-Esteem**

Anxiety stands out as a serious problem for many EFL learners because it threatens their self-esteem. As MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) claim that an anxious student is the one who feels uncomfortable toward speaking an FL, avoids taking part in conversations for more safety regarding his social image, and makes the least attempts with new linguistic forms.

### **I.2.4 Anxiety Types**

Anxiety is classified into three types: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Trait anxiety, as MacIntyre and Gardner (1991, p.87) describe, refers to a more permanent feeling of anxiety, i.e. a learner suffering from this type is likely to be highly apprehensive in a number of objectively non threatening situations. It is provoked by the confrontation with threat. Situation-specific anxiety is also another type to the study of anxiety adopted by researchers. This type focuses on the situations in which anxiety is aroused. It refers to the apprehension experienced by EFL learners in oral expression skills in some learning contexts. State anxiety is a unique emotional case characterized by feelings of distress and tension about real or future anticipated threats that may have cognitive, behavioural, or physiological manifestations. It may negatively influence FL learning and learners' performance, as it can interfere with their learning, social, and emotional development (Salkind, 2008, p.38).

## **I.2.5 Foreign Language Anxiety in Oral Expression**

FL learning contexts appear to be particularly prone to anxiety arousal. Many students who have experienced learning FL have expressed how stressful it is to be in the classroom. The shift towards the communicative competence approach in FL teaching has given much importance to authentic, contextual, functional, and communicative language use in the classroom. As the emphasis on developing oral competence increased, teachers faced more affective variables such as anxiety that may affect the learning process (Phillips, 1992, p.14).

In their influential study, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) with many other researchers in the field of language education and psychology, confirm that FL anxiety has been almost entirely associated with the oral aspects of language use. This means that FL speaking is the most anxiety provoking aspect for most learners, followed by listening as apposed to reading and writing. They claim that they have a mental block against learning an FL in contrast to other subjects as Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, p.125) concluded. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) also find that performance in the FL is negatively correlated with language anxiety. Besides, the various symptoms of FL anxiety show that the construct of anxiety has a pervasive impact on the FL learning process in general and more in particular when it comes to speaking skills. According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, p.127-128), significant FL anxiety is experienced by many students in response to at least some aspects of FL learning. In other words, FL students may feel as if they are in a vulnerable position in which they are expected to reveal and express themselves to others without the security of their mother tongue. They often feel that they are representing themselves badly, showing only a small part of their real

personality and intelligence.

### **I.2.6 Importance of Investigating Foreign Language Anxiety**

FL anxiety is a very important affective variable in learning foreign languages because it can be an emotionally, cognitively, and physically a serious obstacle to a better functioning of the learners' potential cognitive, personal and emotional competence and capacities. If students are very anxious in the classroom, they are probably not fully engaged or not engaged at all. Many researchers find that anxiety has potential negative effects at different levels : on the learner's academic performance level, for example, bad oral subject grades; on the learners' cognitive process level , the inability to produce language, for instance; or on the social context level such as less communication with others; (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986, p.28).MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) suggest that anxiety causes many potential problems for the FL students because it can interfere with the "acquisition, retention and production of the new language". It negatively affects language learning at every stage, which finally causes a disadvantage for the anxious students in the language classroom when compared to their more non anxious classmates.

### **I.3 Previous Research**

According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), FL anxiety belongs to situation-specific anxiety. In the following, we will review the literature on FL anxiety concerning the concept of FL anxiety, the construct of FL anxiety, and the effects of FL anxiety.

Literature has offered a somewhat confusing account of FL anxiety. Researchers have found mixed results for anxiety effects in FL learning and learners' performance because of the various instruments used in measuring anxiety as well as the differences in

languages studied, age of subjects, skills evaluated, level of learning, and teaching methodology (Phillips,1992, p.14, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope , 1986, p.125). Some researchers report a negative relationship between language anxiety and achievement so that the higher is anxiety the lower is performance (Goshi, 2005, p.61, Phillips, 1992, p.14). Others report no relationship, or a positive relationship. Based on the situation-specific perspective, most recent studies focus have been on the specific situational anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986, p.127).

### **I.3.1 Conceptual Foundations of Foreign Language Anxiety and Related Causal Factors**

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, p.27) describe anxiety with relation to performance evaluation within academic and social contexts. They have described it in relation to three related performance anxieties: communication apprehension (CA), test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The construct of communication apprehension is one of the crucial components in the conceptualization of FL anxiety. They have argued that developing the learners' speaking proficiency is the major aim of teachers and educators in the academic settings.

Hence, an accurate description of these typical anxieties will lay the foundations for the concept of FL anxiety, providing an insight to comprehend the sources or causes from which it can originate. As the focus in this dissertation is on speaking skills, the first component CA will be explained more than the other two components. The second one will be fear of evaluation, and then, test anxiety as a third component, respectively since this latter is a result of the second one.

### **I.3.1.1 Communication Apprehension (CA)**

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) claim that, for many students, speaking in FL often means knowing that language. They think that interpersonal interactions are the major emphasis in the English class. Speaking FL is still the most anxiety-provoking aspect for many EFL students (ibid. p.127). Daly and Young (as cited in Chan & Guo, 2004, p.292) find that most students are particularly anxious when they have to speak an FL in front of their classmates. Thus means that many EFL learners usually have difficulty in communicating and understanding others. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) also found that the emergence of CA for EFL is due to lack of control of oral communication with some psychological barriers that threaten their self-esteem, hinder their performance, and make them display anxiety in the classroom.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) define CA as:

A type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people..., the special communication apprehension permeating FL learning derived from the personal knowledge that one will almost certainly have difficulty understanding others and making oneself understood. (p. 127-128).

Here, the researchers claim that CA plays a major role in the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) because of the type of communication situation related to the FL classroom. Specifically, many students feel they have very little control of the FL communication situation and their performance is constantly unsatisfactory.



Most of research in this area is based on McCroskey's conceptualization of CA as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey's 1977, p.78 cited in Byrene, 1997, p.1). Learners' communication anxiety may be specific to just a few settings, such as attending an oral expression session, or may exist in most everyday academic communication situations. McCroskey and Bond (1977, cited in Byrene, 1997, p.3) find seven factors that offer an explanation of adult CA: low intellectual skills, speech skill, deficiencies, voluntary social introversion, social alienation, communication anxiety and low social self-perception. However, CA is only one of these factors; other factors also can lead to communication anxiety for FL learners.

According to Byrene (1997), CA is divided into four categories of trait: situational, audience-based, and context-based. A learner with trait apprehension usually feels discomfort in the academic setting in any situation. This type of apprehension is stemming from some typical personality traits such as an overlapping of students' shyness, being non-assertion in front of others, reticence, a habitual inclination not to speak, and quietness. Situational CA arises when the learner finds himself or herself in a new unique psychological proposition such as defending his/her dissertation. Even though for those who do not have such troublesome emotional state, they can experience high levels of fear and CA in this unique, one-time situation. Learners also may experience audience based communication apprehension, suffering from fear and nervousness when they have to speak to a particular person or group of people. Students with this type of apprehension can easily communicate with less or without psychological problems to his/her classmates or few particular teachers and academics, but never feel comfortable when talking to some other particular teachers and even colleagues. Finally, context-based apprehension is the

last category of CA; this type occurs in some given contexts such as within a meeting, within small groups, or classrooms.

This means that many students experience speaking context-based apprehension in some oral expression classrooms. Evidently, they can be to some extent, good fluent speakers of English outside the class with their classmates or with some instructors with better oral performance and abilities. But the fear of speaking in more threatening contexts inhibits them within the public speaking class, hinders their potential cognitive and personal competence, and makes them not fully engaged in the classroom. This prompted many scholars to wonder if context-based CA affected students in other courses. Specifically, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) have examined context-based CA at some Spanish University classes to determine if students learning a FL also experience context-based communication apprehension in the context of FL classroom. The study has revealed that students who experience CA in the FL classroom almost always suffer from context-based apprehension. Their FL class may be the only class, in which they have speaking problems.

Apprehensive speaking learners are likely to be more anxious in FL classroom where “in addition to feeling less in control of the communicative situation, they also may feel that their attempts at oral work are constantly being monitored” (ibid, p.127). MacIntyre & Gardner (1991) point out that apprehension is explained in relation to the accumulation of the learner’s negative self-perceptions caused by the negative experiences, and the inability to understand others and to be understood by them. Thus, CA obviously plays a pervasive role in FL anxiety, affecting negatively the learning process and the learners’ performance.

### **I.3.1.2 Fear of Negative Evaluation**

The second component of FLCA is the fear of negative evaluation. This fear is defined by Leary (1982, cited in MacIntyre, 1995, p.93) as a fear which arises from "the prospect or presence of interpersonal evaluation in real or imagined social settings". Students may experience fear from being negatively evaluated by their classmates or the teacher, fear from having other students laugh or even being aware of their mistakes during the communication, which often produces large amounts of apprehension. Fear of negative evaluation is an extension of test anxiety component of FL anxiety because it is not only restricted to test situations. It can rather occur in any evaluative situation such as attending an oral expression classroom (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986, p.27). They believe that although CA, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation provide useful conceptual building blocks for a description of FL anxiety, it is more than just the array of these three components. As stated before "we conceive FL anxiety 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" (ibid. p.28). What makes language learning a distinct and unique process is its interaction with the concept of one's self-esteem.

### **I.3.1.3 Test Anxiety**

Test anxiety is a result of the fear of negative evaluation. As explained by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), it "refers to a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure". Test anxiety also has a pervasive effect on EFL students, particularly on those with high anxiety. Since FL learning usually requires a continual evaluation by teachers, it

is also important to note that oral testing has the potential to provoke both test and oral communication anxiety simultaneously in susceptible students (ibid, p.127).

#### **I.4 Factors Associated with Learner, Language Classroom, and Environment**

Previously, we have established the conceptual basis, introduced by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), of FL anxiety with relation to its three components: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety as the primary sources of anxiety. This section reviews literature on language anxiety related to learners' sense of self and language classroom environment.

The results of the previously conducted studies regarding FL anxiety indicate those personal and impersonal anxieties. Learners' beliefs about learning a FL, teachers' beliefs about teaching a FL, classroom procedures and testing are among the main sources of anxiety (Young, 1991, cited in Aydin, 2008, p.3).

##### **I.4.1 Learners' Self-Concept**

Guiora (as cited in Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986, p.125) argues that FL learning itself is "a profoundly unsettling psychological proposition" as it likely to threaten the learners' self concept as a competent communicator, because it is the learners' self-esteem which is at risk of failure or negative evaluation in any threatening, provoking, or test-like situation which requires communication in front of others. This risk to one's sense of self, frequently, occurs in an FL classroom, which may lead to embarrassment and disengagement. Similar to Guiora's claim, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, p.128-129) support the view that perhaps no field provokes anxiety and threatens EFL learners sense of self as FL learning does. Individuals who have high levels of self-esteem are less likely

to be anxious than are those with low self-esteem. They find that learners' self-esteem is strongly related to EFL anxiety. It may have a profound influence on learning performance or behaviours due to the fact that successful learners develop positive beliefs about language learning processes, and their own abilities and the use of effective learning strategies. They tend to develop a more active and autonomous attitude that allows them to be more engaging in the learning task contrary to those who develop negative self-perception aptitude, which results in less effective strategies and leads to discouragement, crucial disengagement, poor cognitive and oral performance, low grades, anxiety and a negative attitude to autonomy.

In her explanatory study, Price (1991, cited in Zheng, 2008, p.4) also conclude that the learners' personal perception of aptitude, personality variables, bad embarrassing classroom experiences are all possible causes of anxiety. Krashen (1985, as cited in Lightbown & Pada, 2006) also classifies self-esteem as one of the affective variables that may block the learning process. He concludes that learners with low self-esteem worry about what their peers think; they are concerned with the others' evaluation, and thus have to do greatly with anxiety. According to advocates of Terror Management Theory (TMT), (Joshua et al, 2005, p.1000) 'People are motivated to maintain a positive self-image because self-esteem protects them from anxiety'; they have explained that when self-esteem is high or boosted, learners display and report less anxiety in response to classroom threats related stimulus.

#### **I.4.2 Learners' Beliefs about Language Learning**

Concerning capacities and capabilities, most adults have a certain degree of personal control over academic achievement; they have various reasons for success and

failure at different tasks with different expectancies for the future (Wenden, 1991, p. 12-13, cited in Andrew, 2008, p.2). Thus, in response to learners' low self-esteem, EFL students may generate negative expectations, harmful beliefs and perception that often affect their performance. In the light of FL anxiety research findings, students are directly influenced by their unrealistic perceptions of success in learning and by their levels of expectancy; positive self beliefs build confidence and negative expectations build incompetence (Puchta, 1999, p. 257, cited in Andrew, 2008, p.2). As Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) clarify, certain negative beliefs contribute in arising learners' worry about the learning task. They often lead to frustration, dissatisfaction with the course, unwillingness to perform communicative activities, and lack of confidence in the teacher, as well as affecting the ultimate achievement and performance in the FL and decreasing motivation.

Horwitz (1988, cited in Byrene, 1997, p.22) notice that there are a number of beliefs derived from learners' unrealistic conceptions about language learning. Hence, some students erroneously believe that pronouncing FL words with a proper accent is an extraordinarily difficult task while some attach great importance to speaking with excellent native like accent; some hold that learning a FL is simply a direct translation of words; some view that two years are sufficient in order to gain fluency in the target language; and some believe that language learning is given only to some people. These unrealistic perceptions or beliefs on language learning and achievement can lead to frustration or anger towards students' own poor performance in the FL.

### **I.4.3 Instructor Beliefs about Language Learning**

Instructor beliefs can also become a source of language anxiety among FL learners.

Some teachers believe that they should be the leaders in the classroom environment. Their role in class is to correct students' errors constantly, and consequently some of the students might be anxious about their class performance (Ohata, 2005, p. 7). Hence, the teaching manner, including controlling, threatening, coldness, and strictness, can increase language anxiety in FL learners.

Actually, Instructor-learning interactions are critical to consider because they affect how the instructor will conduct the class and the kind of atmosphere in which the students will learn. Many students prefer a supportive atmosphere, one in which they do not have to worry about being evaluated or intimidated, in which they are free to make mistakes and be corrected without feeling threatened, which is seldom what they get because of time constraints, class size, and a need to cover a certain amount of material.

#### **I.4.4 Classroom Procedures**

According to Byrene (1997, p. 25), anxiety provoking classroom activities in which students have to engage are potential sources of anxiety. The most obvious example of an anxiety provoking activity is to speak the target language in front of a group. Less anxiety provoking activities usually involve group work because all students must contribute something and all run the risk of making mistakes. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approaches are often recommended from teachers to provide such an unthreatening environment where students talk to one another and not exclusively to the teacher.

## **I.5 Impact of Language Anxiety on Foreign Language Learning**

### **I.5.1 Three Stages of Language Learning**

After reviewing the findings of past research on language anxiety and its three basic components and establishing the conceptual foundations of the topic. The following section discusses the impact of language anxiety on FL achievement that occurs at the three stages of language learning: input, processing, and output.

In order to gain a complete understanding of FL anxiety, it is important to know how FL anxiety affects students. Tobias (1986, cited in Byrene, 1997, p.27) claim that FL anxiety can interfere with the three stages of learning a FL: input, processing, and output .it can affect the learners' ability to process information at each stage. The description of these three stages with relation to anxiety will point out the reasons of FL learners' oral deficiencies and linguistic difficulties when learning and using the target language. This can offer an insight to help understand anxiety experienced while communicating in the target language.

#### **I.5.1.1 Input**

Regarding input, it is the first learning stage that activates the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), which carries out the further process of language learning. According to Tobias (1986, cited in Byrene, 1997, p.27), a highly anxious learner cannot receive information because of the high degree of the learners' affective filter. The learner's affective filter is defined by Krashen (1985, as cited in Lightbown & Pada, 2006, p.36) as the unreal barrier which causes learners not to acquire a language despite the availability of suitable knowledge. An anxious learner may filter out input and take it away



when needed for acquisition. In other words, these barriers are the learners' affective factors, including self-esteem, risk-taking, inhibition, empathy, and anxiety. They cause a mental block that prevents input from reaching the LAD. Thus, they restrict the anxious students' ability to pay full attention to what their instructors say and reduce their ability to represent input internally. That is to say, if anxiety arouses during this stage, internal reaction will distract the learners' attention to their state of fear and discomfort. Input anxiety refers to the anxiety experienced by the learners when they encounter a new word or phrase in the target language. It is more likely to cause miscomprehension of the message sent by the teacher, which may lead to the loss of successful communication and an increased level of anxiety. MacIntyre (1995, p.96) state:

Language learning is a cognitive activity that relies on encoding, storage, and retrieval processes, and anxiety can interfere with each of these by creating a divided attention scenario for anxious students. Anxious students are focused on both the task at hand and their reactions to it. For example, when responding to a question in a class, the anxious student is focused on answering the teacher's question and evaluating the social implications of the answer while giving it.

### **I.5.1.2 Processing**

FL anxiety also affects students in the processing stage, where the performing cognitive operations for new information took place. At this stage, anxiety interferes with the learners' cognitive tasks. The more difficult the task is, relative to a student's ability, the greater effect anxiety will have on a student's ability to concentrate and use stored information. For instance, a learner talking about a given topic, such as having to express

oneself, give one's opinion about politics, economics, cooking, travel, or any other topic with which a student has little previous experience or has a lack of vocabulary.

Cognitivists like Segalowitz (2003, cited in Lightbown & Padoa-Schioppa, 2006, p.38) working on the "Information Processing Model" (IPM) have tried to explore how these cognitive operations are performed in the human brain and have explained the learners' inability to spontaneously use everything they know about a language at a given time.

Those psychologists suggest that learners have to "pay attention" at first to any linguistic aspect they are trying to understand or produce by using cognitive sources in processing information, and building up knowledge that can eventually be called on automatically for speaking and understanding. However, they explain that there is a limit to how much information a learner can pay attention to. IPM (ibid. p.39) has suggested that there is a limit to the amount of focused mental activity a learner can engage in at one time. Speaking in the FL requires from the learner to perform more than one mental activity at one time, and for relaxed students, students who are relatively free from anxiety, "choosing words, pronouncing them, and stringing them together with the appropriate grammatical markers" is essentially automatic in contrast to their anxious counterparts (ibid. p.39). In order to perform these operations while communicating many complex and non spontaneous mental operations are required, and failure to do so may "lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic" (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986, p.128).

## - **Relation between Anxiety, Cognition and Behaviour**

According to Leary (1990) and Levitt (1980) (cited in MacIntyre, 1995, p.92) there is a recursive or cyclical relationship between anxiety, cognition, and behaviour. That is to say, these three constructs often happen repeatedly in a particular order, one following the other. Limited processing mental capacity may cause anxiety, whereas anxiety may restrict this operational capacity of the mind, and both may cause impaired performance or altered behaviour. They argue (ibid. p.92) that being in a position that requires an answer in an FL class leads the student to feel anxious and worried. Due to the resulting divided attention, cognitive performance is reduced. This, in turn, causes negative self-evaluation and damages performance.

The IPM can also explain the difficulty learners feel in remembering and retrieving vocabulary items while communicating in the target language - another important source of language anxiety for the EFL learners. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b, cited in MacIntyre, 1995, p. 93) find a significant negative correlation between language anxiety and ability to repeat a short string of numbers and to recall vocabulary items. This demonstrates that anxiety can limit the use of both short term and long term memories. According to Tobias (1979, cited in MacIntyre & Gardner, 1995, p.3), “processing anxiety can impede learning by reducing the efficiency with which memory processes are used to solve problems”. In other words, anxiety arousal may distract the learners’ cognition from its normal functioning to the focus on excessive self evaluation, worry over a potential failure and concern over the other opinions, which, in turn, make the cognitive performance less efficient.

### **I.5.1.3 Output**

Finally, FL anxiety affects the output stage of learning. This is most often with speaking in FL. Anxiety is more likely to appear clearer at the learners' performance stage, which entirely depends upon the successful completion of the previous stages: input, and processing. Anxiety at the output stage refers to learners' nervousness or fear experienced when required to demonstrate their ability to use previously learned material. According to Tobias (1986, cited in Byrene, 1997, p.28) output anxiety involves interference, which is manifested after the completion of the processing stage but before its effective reproduction as output. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991, p, 93) assert that "high level of anxiety at this stage might hinder students' ability to speak in the target language".

Although the results of research in the relationship between anxiety and FL differ, language anxiety displays the negative effects in most cases. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) prove that anxiety has negative effect on performance in FL learning. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) also report a significant negative correlation between anxiety and FL achievement through using Horwitz's developed Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Furthermore, in similar studies, Phillips (1992) shows that language anxiety is negatively correlated with students' oral performance, he has reported that highly anxious students are likely to have lower oral performance in contrast to their relaxed counterparts; his study suggest that FL anxiety can make an effect on the learners' performance and his attitudes toward language learning.

In addition, communication research investigations have dealt with the relationship between learners' communication apprehension, willingness to communicate, and perceived competence with the frequency of communication as a central aspect in the

investigations. Findings revealed that anxiety is associated with perceived competence, and learners' willingness to communicate is influenced not only by anxiety but also by their perceived competence. Baker and MacIntyre (2003, p.71, cited in Imura, 2009, p.177) stress that it is not the learners' potential actual communication competence but their perceived competence which determines their willingness to communicate. That is to say, learners who may perceive that they will not succeed in their oral classroom participation or engagement are likely to choose not to talk, and they become disengaged from fully exploiting their potential actual competence even though they can do well. They postulate (ibid. p.71) that anxious people who have lower perceived competence in FL are unlikely to communicate. Therefore, they miss the opportunity to get better proficiency and experience.

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) explain the negative correlations between FL classroom anxiety and language proficiency; they point out that as the learners' experience and proficiency increase, anxiety decline in a fairly consistent manner. On the other hand, FL anxiety develops if the student's following experiences with the FL are not positive. Poor FL performance, in turn, reinforces FL anxiety. Consequently, these two variables affect each other constantly.

## **I.6 Manifestation of Language Anxiety and Its Effective Reduction**

### **I.6.1 Common Features of Anxiety**

According to Michael et al (as cited in Salkind, 2008, p.40), there are some common features across the different types of anxiety among EFL learners. These common features of anxiety include escape and avoidance behaviours, chronic worry, faulty threat

perception, and activation of the nervous system. Anxious students try to avoid or escape from the anxiety provoking stimulus or situations, and they constantly worry about current and future events. Faulty threat perception is another common feature found among learners with anxiety. These individuals erroneously perceive situations as threatening. Nervous system activation is also a core feature found among individuals with anxiety so that all the physiological body of the learner changes. Anxious students may experience accelerated heart beat, sweating, shaking, muscle tension, increased respiration, facial expressions and the like as a result of the activation of the nervous system.

Accordingly, Anxiety, in general, can have physical, emotional, and behavioral manifestations and these manifestations can differ with each individual. Krinis (2007, p.1) listed the following manifestations as prominent symptoms of FL anxiety:

- Sweat
- palpitations(quick heart beat)
- avoidance of eye contact
- apprehension
- worry
- lack of concentration
- forgetfulness
- ‘freezing up’ when called on to perform
- short answer responses
- Avoidance behaviours such as missing class, postponing homework studying, refusing to speak or remaining silent, and coming to class unprepared.

### **I.6.2 Alleviation of Foreign Language Anxiety**

In order to alleviate anxiety and help students to cope with anxiety, most literature findings brought similar suggestions. It has been concluded that teacher have a vital role to play by taking a lead in creating supportive, interpersonal, caring, empathetic, and enthusiastic atmosphere in the academic setting for optimal learning process and providing

personal help to students so that they can cope with their oral classroom anxiety. Instructors should ensure that the classroom is a place for learning and communication and not a platform for performance. Instructors need to provide students with a greater amount of fluency based activities in which they can practice their oral communication skills.

Numerous studies have significantly demonstrated negative correlations between FL anxiety and learners achievements. As a result, many researchers in FL learning have recognized the negative effect of anxiety and, thus, developed alternative affective-focused teaching approaches. For instance, they suggested more humanistic approaches such as the Natural Approach, Community Language Learning and Suggestopedia. According to Wang (2006, p.73) language anxiety can, therefore, be reduced by creating a positive classroom atmosphere in which students feel a sense of belonging and involvement. Various classroom activities can be used to reduce language anxiety such as group work. The emphasis should primarily be on conveying personal meaning to elicit the learners' potential competence through avoiding tension-causing strategies, creating safe and secure places, boost students' self-esteem. Language instructors need to practice positive error correction and show empathy, acceptance, patience, understanding and tolerance.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, we have reviewed literature of FL anxiety in terms of concept, construct, effects, and impact on FL learning. It becomes obvious that anxiety affects FL learning. Although it can be facilitating or debilitating, communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation affect negatively the learners' performance and achievements. The chapter has also discussed learners' perceptions about their self-esteem and language learning and communication, students' unrealistic beliefs, language learning

teachers' beliefs, and classroom procedures with relation to FL classroom anxiety. To explain EFL difficulties in speaking an EFL, we have looked at the impact of FL anxiety in terms of the three stages of language learning: input, processing, and output. It has been found that learners' affective variables impede the comprehensible input that, significantly, affects the subsequent stages. In addition, the literature has finally explored some FL anxiety manifestations and how anxiety can be alleviated.



## **Chapter II**

### **Learners' Engagement and Teachers' Sociability**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, we, firstly, introduces some background information, definitions, and theories related to the concept of learners' engagement; then, we give a theoretical contextualization for the notion of teachers' sociability in the context of our research, within the frame of humanistic teaching approaches, such as self personal investment theory. Finally, we explore the positive role of teachers-learners interpersonal relationships in the academic setting with more focus on teachers' sociability and social behaviours like caring, understanding, attentiveness and the like.

#### **II.1 Learners' Engagement**

##### **II.1.1 Definitions**

The importance of engagement to academic achievement in learning foreign languages is almost self-evident, and has gained much interest for many educators and researchers. Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991, cited in Barkley, 2010, p.04) postulat that the greater the student's engagement in academic work, the greater his or her level of knowledge acquisition, general cognitive development, and performance. Shulman (2002, p.37, cited in Barkley, 2010, p.4) also places engagement at the foundation of his learning taxonomy, "learning begins with students' engagement". This is because keeping students engaged is one of the most important pillars for the academic success. The National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE, cited in Barkley, 2010, p.4) defines engagement as the

frequency with which students fully participate in activities that represent effective educational practices. It is conceived as a pattern of involvement in a variety of activities and interactions both in and out of the classroom throughout bringing out the best of learners' personal competences and capacities. They believe that students' engagement has two key components: the first is the amount of time and potential effort students put into their studies and that leads to the outcomes that constitute students' success, and the second is the teaching ways followed by teachers and the allocated resources that induce students to spontaneous participation in the learning tasks. However, it is worth noting that many researchers use different terms for engagement. For instance, Bloom (1976) refers to it as participation, and Frederick (1980) refers to it as time spent on a given task (as cited in Marzano, 2007, p.99).

### **II.1.2 Engagement Types**

According to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004, as cited in Marzano, 2007, p.99) learners' engagement falls under three types: behavioural, emotional, and cognitive. Reeve (2006, as cited in Marzano, 2007, p. 99) explains engagement in the following way:

Engagement includes on-task behaviour, but it further highlights the central role of students' emotion, cognition, and voice. . . . When engagement is characterized by the full range of on-task behaviour, positive emotions, invested cognition, and personal voice, it functions as the engine for learning and development. (p. 658).

That is to say, engagement refers to the potential behavioural, cognitive and motivational spontaneous participation of the learner in the learning task when required to do so. Behavioural engagement covers the learners' efforts, persistence, and teacher-help

seeking as observable behaviours in FL academic settings. Cognitive engagement refers to the potential involvement of the learners' mental activities and higher order thinking strategies in the learning context. However, it is difficult for teacher to gain access to the learners' thinking. Feryal (2008, p.151) explain that students who have not got full cognitive engagement for learning a material will not have a deep learning. Conversely, when learners are fully engaged with the material at a deeper level, they are likely to come to understand it better.

Motivational engagement, on the other hand, comprises personal interest, (liking and disliking), value (importance and utility) and affect. Personal interest in the task results in higher learning and comprehension (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Value beliefs like importance and utility lead to an increase at the cognitive development (Pintrich & Schrauben, 1992). Finally, positive and negative affect can be linked to better learning (as cited in Feryal, 2008, p.151).

### **II.1.3 Engagement and Self-Efficacy**

Students' engagement is believed to be related to the learners' self-efficacy in learning, which is defined by Bandura, (1986, p.391, cited in Feryal, 2008, p.149) "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required attaining designated types of performance". Self-efficacy can lead to more engagement and better achievement. The more self efficacy a student has, the more they are engaged. The more they are engaged, the more they learn and the better they perform.

Ferial (2008, p.51) confirm that self-efficacy's role in the learners' behavioural engagement is that anxious students with low self-esteem are less likely to exert efforts in

FL learning and they may even give up. Since their quality of effort in terms of deeper processing strategies and a general cognitive engagement of learning are not fully functioning. As to the role of self efficacy in motivational engagement, students work hard and learn better when they are motivated, not anxious, have high self-esteem, positive beliefs about learning, and good rapport with their instructors. As Bandura (1997, cited in Feryal 2008, p151) suggests, individuals first develop a sense of competence or efficacy at an activity then they do it.

#### **II.1.4 Engagement and Motivation**

According to Barkley (2010, p. 9), motivation is an important theoretical construct for FL learners. It explains the reasons for their engagement in a particular behaviour. In other words, it is the feeling of interest that makes students wants to learn. It refers to learners acquired competence developed through the accumulation of experience with the learning situation. Brophy has defined it as “the level of enthusiasm and the degree to which students invest attention and effort in learning” (2004, p. 4, as cited in Barkley, 2010, p.9). Regardless of the learners proficiency in the FL they are learning, their motivation can be activated and or suppressed in some specific situation, such as those of a threatening learning atmosphere which stimulates the learners’ anxiety.

Cognitive models of motivation also like Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs model, (1960, as cited in Barkely, 2010, p.10) proposes that learners behaviours and motivation is a response to meet their basic psychological needs. In terms of classroom this mean that FL learners must stick to the hierarchy of their needs, from the most basic physiological needs such as ‘sleep’ to the higher level needs such as the sense of belonging and safety. Therefore, before learners become highly engaged in learning, their lower-level needs must

first be met. For instance, if a student feels hungry or tired since he studies all night for an exam, he will be distracted by his or her fundamental need for sleep and not be able to concentrate fully in the learning process.

Accordingly, the psychological indispensable need for safety as a very basic need for any EFL learner that must be met covers many aspects of the learner such as fear, self-esteem, perceptions and expectations. Students, who feel unsafe in the classroom or with their teachers, will often experience debilitating anxiety, which, in turn, will discourage, and disengage students from participating in a discussion and saying what they truly think or feel if they are anxious about rejection from their peers or criticism by their professor, as suggested by Barkely (2010, p.10).

Goals theories, on the other hand, suggest that learners are motivated either by performance goals, in which students focus on preserving their self-perception or public reputation as capable individuals, or learning goals, trying to learn whatever the instructor's task is designed to teach them, or work-avoidant goals, refusing to accept the challenges inherent in the task and instead focusing on spending as little time and effort as possible in completing it (ibid, 10).

In order to apply learning goals in the classroom instead of performance or work avoidant ones, teachers try to establish supportive, caring, enthusiastic, interpersonal relationships with their students, and collaborative learning arrangements that encourage students minimize anxiety and all the sorts of pressures and bring the best of learners as Brophy (2004, cited in Barkely, 2010, p.11) explain:

students are able to focus their energies on learning without becoming distracted by fear of embarrassment or failure, or by resentment of tasks that they view as pointless or inappropriate (p. 9).

## **II.2 Expectancy Value Model**

This model holds that:

...The effort that people are willing to expend on a task is the product of the degree to which they expect to be able to perform the task successfully (expectancy) and the degree to which they value the rewards as well as the opportunity to engage in performing the task itself (value) (Brophy 2004 and Cross 2001, cited in Barkely, 2010, p.11).

In terms of learning foreign languages, this mean learners will not willingly invest much of their actual potential competence, capacities, and efforts in learning tasks that they do not enjoy or lead to something they value even if they know that they can perform the tasks successfully, nor do they willingly invest effort in even highly valued tasks if they believe that they cannot succeed no matter how hard they try. In short, students' engagement is strongly influenced by what they think is important and what they believe they can accomplish. First, we will explore the construct of expectancy, and, then, we will deal with value.

### **II.2.1 Expectancy**

Students' expectations are linked to their perceptions. According to Bandura (1977, cited in Barkely, 2010, p.11), learners personal beliefs about their abilities to succeed at a learning a task is more important than their actual skill level or the difficulty of the task. If

a student is not highly anxious and feels confident in his or her ability to perform a task successfully, he or she will be motivated to be fully engaged in it. Although the role of expectancy has received considerable attention in the study of student engagement, value is also an important variable.

### **II.2.2 Value**

As stated before, learners prefer not to engage in learning tasks that they do not value or think that its outcomes are of no value as far as their perception goes. However, if teachers make their subjects highly valued to their students, through breathing life in the classroom, creating a sense of belonging, being caring, enthusiastic, communicative, and approachable, the learners motivation raises and they will develop their likeability and value for the subjects, coming to the classroom motivated, not stressed, and happily engaged in what they are learning (Barkely, 2010, p.13).

The expectancy value model offers a framework for identifying learner's engagement strategies especially for those who show clearer anxiety classroom manifestations, have negative beliefs, and fears of negative evaluation, and their expectancy for failure makes them in a chronic disengagement. For instance, if a student values the learning task but has low expectation for his ability to accomplish it, s/he will prefer to hide and protect his or her self-esteem, make excuses, pretend to understand, or deny having difficulties, Also, if the same student has higher success expectancies and his or her task value perceptions are low, s/he feels confident in his or her ability but finds no reason for doing the task, s/he will then escape it by doing the minimum that is required to get the task done, but his or her heart and mind will not be engaged in it, Finally, if s/he has neither a high expectancy nor a moderate value for the learning subject, s/he would,

evidently, reject the task and become totally disengaged ( Brophy, 2004,p.19-20, cited in Barkely, 2010, p. 14-15).

Finally, teachers' interpersonal relationships with their students are the portal for high oral expression engagement since anxious students are often checked out cognitively, behaviourally, and affectively from the learning process. Conversely, to students who feel relaxed and have good rapport with their teachers, they will constitute an enjoyable engaged learning. Thus, a modest and objective understanding for the complexities that underlie learners' potential engagement in oral expression classrooms in relation to the inevitable construct of anxiety, relying on interpersonal perspectives in the teachers-learners relationships, may, to a great extent, reduce learners' anxiety, raise their engagement, and improve their performance and grades.

### **II.3 Sociability and Humanistic Approaches**

Recently, most of the FL researchers' and educators' focus is to understand, scientifically, the construct of FL anxiety, in an attempt to find practical ways and approaches to help learners in coping with this significant influential negative variable, which, evidently, affects the learning process often negatively, the learners' engagement , performance, proficiency, and grades. Thus, there are more supportive humanistic trends adopted by academics, in higher education levels, for FL learners, in order to alleviate their anxiety, so they can, optimally, deal with it and improve their academic success.

#### **II.3.1 Sociability**

One of the major beliefs of current thinking about learning is that learning is a social and interpersonal process between the teachers and learners, which is driven as



much by social and situational factors as by cognitive ones. In this view, teaching and learning constitute a social process of communication that occurs in a social interpersonal environment, i.e. the academic settings, where a structure of social and interpersonal interactions develops and evolves affecting learners' behaviours and perceptions towards the learning process. Therefore, the academic setting is the place where students and teachers make sense of who they are and what they are expected to do.

Collins & Green (1992, as cited in Marisa & Ryberg (2004, p. 3) explain:

Together, teacher and students develop and evolve a social structure that establishes social norms, permissible behaviours, interpersonal relationships, etc. In this context of social interaction, participants foster the learning process through social exchanges (such as give and receive feedback, guidance, encouragement, etc.

In other words, the development of a social structure in the academic setting, where teacher are likely to be more sociable, they tend to build close interpersonal relationships with their learners, without strict intellectual boundaries, through adopting a more affective, humanistic, and social behaviours like showing concern and knowing students beyond the narrow confines of the classroom, caring, attentiveness, understanding, in addition to showing enthusiasm and empathy, figuratively being able to stand in the students' shoes. In the context of this research, we follow Sanson, Hamphil, and Smart (2004, as cited in Jami, 2009, p.3), and Harkin, Turner, and Dawn's (2001, p.82-84) definition of sociability. Teachers' sociability refers to the positive social behaviours teachers show towards their students in the academic settings, as a professional attitude or stance towards learners to encourage learners' autonomy, raise their engagement, and improve their performance. We emphasise all the least and most affective interpersonal

qualities learners perceive as desirable qualities for their willingness to be fully engaged with the minimum rates of fears or anxiety, in the learning process, particularly, within an oral expression subject as far as the reach is concerned.

However, we did not mean by sociability, establishing a typical friendship as that one we find between learners. Since, pragmatically, it is impossible for teachers to establish friendship with all learners; there are too many of them and they change every year. But we refer to it as liking students, making some self disclosure, being friendly, sharing close caring, understanding, attentiveness, being empathetic, enthusiastic, constructed, and having respectful interpersonal relationships in favour of teachers. This means, in a professional sense, that it is very limited and may be demonstrated by relatively simple meaningful acts such as using personal names, friendly smiles, encouraging words, phatic communion, caring and understanding students...etc. These are the small courtesies of everyday interaction and are as important in the classroom as in the rest of life because the relationship between the learner and the teacher is central to the learner's experience. Learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, like FL anxiety, are particularly in need of teachers who will pass time with them outside formal teaching, acknowledging them as persons and boosting their self-esteem. For all learners, the process of education is as or more important than the subjects taught (Harkin, Turner, & Dawn, 2001, p.82, 84).

### **II.3.2 Humanistic Approach**

Pollard state (2008, p. 24):

The involvement of the whole person in the learning experience is central to the humanistic approach. A supportive atmosphere is encouraged in the classroom where students are listened to, their comments accepted without judgement and they are encouraged to share their feelings and experiences. Activities are used that involve students talking about their feelings and experiences. Students may be involved in fixing the aims for the course or for one lesson..., I think care is needed in this type of approach; some people or some cultures might be uncomfortable unveiling their feelings in front of people they might not know well. However, I fully agree with the advantages of creating a supportive, non-judgemental learning environment.

In other words, obtaining academic success with good grades and high achievement levels are important objectives in an academic setting for FL educators. Traditional teaching methods concern is related to learning strategies, abilities, and metacognition to reach high cognitive performance (Pressley et al, 1997, cited in Larson, 2009, p.260) However, for FL adult learners, learning is not only grades and academic outcomes. Many other important variables affect the well-being in the academic setting for example emotions, motivation, and attitude towards the academic setting and teachers. Emotions can be defined as affective responses to external stimuli or internal thoughts, such as expectations, and self-perception (Russell & Barrett, 1999, cited in Larson, 2009, p.260).

According to Larson (2009, p.260) students with close, sociable, interpersonal relationships with their instructors will develop positive emotions like enjoyment, pride, hope, relief, which sustain learners' motivation, activates their autonomy, raise their

engagement, and reduce their debilitating anxiety, boredom, hopelessness, and the like negative emotions through creating high expectations for success. Positive emotions can be raised by positive teacher-student relationships and a positive, supportive, and non-threatening learning environment (Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996, cited in Larson, 2009, p.260).

#### **- Personal Investment theory**

Following Maehr's (1984, cited in Larson, 2009, p.261) theory of personal investment, in the context of learning foreign languages, the amount of value given by learners to an activity is very important, since, that determine their motivation, engagement, how time and energy will be invested that task. In turn, valuing the task depends, generally, on factors such as goals, self-efficacy, and particularly, on classroom environment, and perceived peer and teacher relationships. That is to say, Being valued as a person before being a learner gives meaning to the study activities and sustains positive affect through thoughts such as 'I invest because peers/teachers value me and think I can succeed'. A supportive academic setting reduces negative affect in general and anxiety in particular and sustains academic motivation (Boekaerts, 1993, cited in Larson, 2009, p.261). When students feel accepted and are considered as valued members they are more likely to pursue mastery goals. On the contrary, if students perceive not to be accepted and considered mainly for their results they develop performance goals, tend to make comparisons and become competitive.

All these results, suggest that to increase learners' well-being in the academic settings and create an adaptive pattern of cognition and affect, a positive attitude toward university, learning, and, particularly, teachers; there should be an environment

characterised by no threat to self-worth, no anxiety to hinder performance, no excessive worries linked to evaluation. In order to develop self-competence and enjoy learning without excessive anxiety and worries regarding performance, students should have caring teachers who communicate affect, mastery goals and provide a secure emotional basis (Boekaerts, 1993, Covington, 1998, Dweck, 1999, cited in Larson, 2009, p.261). Such kind of “supportive teachers meet the students' needs for relatedness, autonomy and competence, which, in being fulfilled, determine the individuals' well-being” Ryan & Deci, 2000, cited in Larson, 2009, p.261). Consequently, learners' potential engagement could be shaped by appropriate goals and values, positive affect, supportive interpersonal relationships and a caring environment. These factors should favour personal involvement and promote learners' autonomy, motivation, enjoyment, and performance.

#### **II.4 Teacher- Student Relationship**

According to Oxford et al (1998, p.6, as cited in Nikitina & Furuoka, 2009, p.164) the learning environment implies a set of power relationships, which are almost always asymmetrical, between two parts, the teacher and the learner. That is to say, in the context of education, there is a strong link between positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students, as an important ingredient in the recipe for student success. Pianta (1999, cited in Weber, 2007, p.2) finds that emotionally warm relationships between teachers and students provide students with a sense of security within the academic settings. It is believed that this sense of wellness promotes exploration and comfort, as well as social, emotional, and academic competence among students. Similarly, Birch and Ladd (1997, cited in Weber, 2007, p.2) finds also that students who had closer relationships with teachers were better adjusted academically than students with conflicted teacher-student

relationships. Ryan and Grolnick (1986, cited in Weber, 2007, p.2) adds that students who perceived their teachers as personally positive and supportive were more likely to feel a greater sense of competence and to be more intrinsically motivated.

Much of recent studies, suggest that a close, positive, interpersonal relationship between teachers and learners is a vital key for teaching effectiveness. They emphasize the teachers' affective characteristics, social and emotional behaviours, more than pedagogical practice. These affective characteristics are difficult to quantify; however, characteristics such as a caring, enthusiastic, empathetic, positive relationships with learners contribute to a teacher's feeling of happiness, which positively affect the classroom climate, and therefore affect students (Noddings 2005, cited in Stronge, 2007, p.22). Moreover, the teacher's psychological influence on students has been linked to student achievement in various effectiveness studies. (Stronge, 2007, p.22).in this section, we try to sum up some of the teachers' affective characteristics which are related to a better teaching effectiveness towards learners' performance and engagement.

Garmston (1998, cited in Westwood, 2008, p.30) confirm that expert teachers possess a number of important attributes including a deep knowledge of their subject, a varied repertoire of teaching skills, and an understanding of students and how they learn. Shulman (1987, cited in Westwood, 2008, p.30) stress that in addition subject matter knowledge effective teachers need to possess 'pedagogical content knowledge', know how best to organise and present particular subject matter in a way that optimises students' learning. He explains:

The most effective teachers...and they create a positive classroom climate in which students feel valued, trusted and supported....

Effective teaching therefore combines knowledge of pedagogy and knowledge of subject matter together with human relationship skills, judgement, humour and intuition (p.58).

#### **II.4.1 the Role of Caring**

Caring is defined as an act of bringing out the best in students through affirmation and encouragement (Stronge, 2007, p.22). Obviously, the characteristics of caring go well beyond knowing the students, including qualities such as patience, trust, honesty, and courage. Specific teacher attributes that show caring include attentiveness, gentleness, understanding, knowledge of students as individuals, nurturing, warmth and encouragement. Students who perceive their teachers as caring tend to engage more with the content, take intellectual risks, and persist in the face of failure.

##### **- Caring and the Personal Disclosure**

According to Anderman and Lynely (2009, p.38-39) most of learners need to be understood by their teacher. Students perceive teachers are perceived as caring when they attempt to understand and connect with their students as individuals. A teacher, who develops individual relationships with his or her students, tends to monitor the emotional climate of the classroom, particularly, with regard to the learners negative experiences and emotions such as FL anxiety, and endorses more humanistic orientations towards classroom management is perceived as a caring teacher. Oldfather & McLaughlin, 1993) explain:

Caring teachers may employ strategies such as personal disclosure, where they share information about themselves as a way to create space for relationships in the classroom. They cultivate a climate in their

classroom where students have an “authentic” voice. In contrast, teachers who distance themselves emotionally or develop differential relationships... are less likely to be viewed as caring teachers (p.39).

#### **II.4.2 Attentiveness**

Caring teachers have a sympathetic attentiveness for their learners’ authentic voices. To show students they care about not only in the classroom but about students’ lives in general. These teachers initiate communication that exudes trust, honesty, and care. In the act of attentiveness, they are dedicated to bettering students’ emotions, perception, autonomy, engagement and performance, and they demonstrate their understanding through tenderness, patience, and gentleness (Stronge, 2007, p.23).

#### **II.4.3 Understanding**

Stronge (2007) argue:

Students highly value teachers’ understanding of their concerns and questions. Interviews with students consistently reveal that students want teachers who listen to their arguments and assist them in working out their problems. They want teachers who hold them in mutual respect and who are willing to talk about their own personal lives and experiences. Through appropriate self disclosure, teachers become human in the eyes of students. Being available to students and showing a deep understanding of students legitimizes the teacher as a person when he or she demonstrates genuine concern and empathy toward students (p.23).



#### **II.4.4 Knowing Students**

Stronge (2007, p.24) postulate that knowing students both formally and informally has a pervasive positive impact on learners' personality and learning. Learners do their best for teachers who use every opportunity in the academic setting, without intellectual boundaries, to keep the lines of communication open for all students, many educators emphasize that effective teachers know their students individually, not only understanding each student's learning style and needs but also understanding the student's personality, likes and dislikes, and personal situations that may affect their behaviours and performance. Effective teachers care for students first as people, and second as students. As Glasser states, "The better students know the teacher, and the more they like what they know, the harder they will work for him or her" (1992, p. 48 cited in Erwin, Jonathan, 2004, p.47).

Research on caring teachers yields the following important points: (as cited in Stronge, 2007, p.24)

- Caring teachers who know their students create relationships that enhance the learning process (Peart & Campbell, 1999).
- Effective teachers consistently emphasize their love for students as one key element of their success (Brophy & Good, 1986).
- Teachers who create a supportive and warm classroom climate tend to be more effective with all students (Peart & Campbell, 1999).
- Caring teachers truly believe that each student has a right to a caring and competent teacher (Collinson, Killeavy, & Stephenson, 1999).

- Caring teachers appropriately respect confidentiality issues when dealing with students (Collinson et al., 1999).
- Teachers' positive affective characteristics are important qualities for educating students to their full potential (Collinson et al., 1999).
- Students who perceive their teachers as caring exert academic effort and social responsibility (Wentzel, 1997).
- Teachers in effective schools go beyond a mere respectful relationship to a caring relationship with students (Langer, 2000).

#### **II.4.5 Social Interactions with Students**

In the same line, Stronge (2007,p.24) report that teachers-learners social interactions which give the teacher opportunities to demonstrate caring, enthusiasm, empathy, fairness, and respect have been shown to be important elements of teacher effectiveness. Establishing positive connections with learners play a significant role cultivating a positive learning environment and promoting student engagement and achievement. Through teachers' sociability which goes beyond the walls of the classroom to care for learners' interests and lives. Additionally, researchers contend that constructive social interactions between teachers and students not only contribute to student learning and achievement, but also increase student self-esteem by fostering feelings of belonging to the classroom and the academic setting.

Aspects of effective teaching related to social interaction involve the following:

- Effective teachers consistently behave in a friendly and personal manner while maintaining appropriate teacher-student role structure (Brookhart & Loadman, 1992; Peart & Campbell, 1999).

- Effective teachers work with students as opposed to doing things to or for them (Kohn, 1996).
- Students indicate that effective teachers spend more time interacting and working directly with them than ineffective teachers (NASSP, 1997; Peart & Campbell, 1999).
- Effective teachers have a good sense of humor and are willing to share jokes (NASSP, 1997; Peart & Campbell, 1999).

#### **II.4.6 Promoting Enthusiasm and Motivating Learning**

Furthermore, Stronge (2007, p.27) emphasize that teachers' enthusiasm, feeling of energetic interest, their subject matter, teaching, and learning, is an important part of effective teaching, both in supporting positive relationships with students and in encouraging student achievement. He argue that "teachers have residual positive effects on their students' willingness to work effective to their potential and beyond" (p.27); consequently, less effective teachers may actually extinguish students' interest in the subject. In other words, the teacher can bring out the best of his or her students by establishing a personal disclosure and building constructive interpersonal relationships. Which increase learners' self-concept, interest in the subject area, and the desire to learn more about the subject. Emphasizing higher-order mental processes and engagement along with mastering learning strategies tends to create a learning environment that is exciting and constantly playful.

Researchers have investigated the influence of teacher enthusiasm on student motivation and learning, with the following results and conclusions (as cited in Stronge, 2007, p.27):

- Teachers' enthusiasm for learning and for their subject matter has been shown to be an important factor in student motivation, which is closely linked to student achievement (Covino & Iwanicki, 1996; Monk & King, 1994).
- Some studies indicate that the enthusiasm factor is more significant with adult students than younger ones (Bain & Jacobs, 1990).
- High levels of enthusiasm in teachers relate to high levels of achievement in students (Rowan et al., 1997).

## **Summary**

In this chapter, we have reviewed literature, firstly, on learners' engagement, in terms of definitions, types, and relation to other variables, motivation and self-efficacy; we also explore the Expectancy Value Model to understand, how, why and when learners optimally engage in an academic task. To look for what previous research findings and recommendations suggest as far as helping students to cope with FL anxiety, we attempt to focus on the teacher perspective, considering a more humanistic teaching approach through teachers' sociability. Finally, we explore the role of some social meaningful acts, such as, caring, understanding, attentiveness, and so on, to build close, friendly, interpersonal relationships in a professional sense; as a practical way, to mitigate learners' debilitating anxiety and improve their performance.

## **Chapter III**

### **Description and Analysis of the Questionnaire**

This study has been conducted during the academic year 2009-2010 Academic year at the Department of Foreign Languages, University of Constantine, Algeria. Because of the fact that anxiety is an abstract psychological phenomenon, data in this field are generally collected through questionnaires, self report, and interviews (MacIntyre, 1991). Similarly, in this study, we have collected the data by administering of a questionnaire

#### **III.1 Subjects**

The total subjects of the study are 60 first-year Master's degree students. They have been studying English for eight academic years, the last three years at the University, having different English subjects including oral expression as a fundamental course. Their general proficiency in English is supposed to be good.

The questionnaire consists of four parts: background information, the FLCAS, Teachers' Qualities, and Learners' Personal Preferences.

#### **III.2 Background Information**

The background information includes questions about the subjects' gender, their teachers and teachers of oral expressions, and their marks in this subject during the last three years. However, it is worth noting that sex here is a noisy variable, which is requested for mere curiosity from the researcher.

### **III.3 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale**

To investigate oral anxiety felt in the oral classroom by the learners in relation to their engagement and teachers' sociability, we decided to replicate Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) 33-item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to examine the degree of anxiety and identify its actual sources. This tool integrates four related anxieties: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety and classroom anxiety.

To replicate this instrument, we first made a considerable review of the literature on foreign language learning anxiety. Then, we adapted the original thirty three statement FLCAS, and as far as the context of this research is concerned, our learners are not taught by English native teachers. To meet the purposes of the present study, we reduced the number to only 28 statements, of which 6 items have been for communication anxiety (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6), 7 items for fear of negative evaluation (3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13) and 5 items for test anxiety (14, 15, 16, 17, 18). As for the remaining 9 items (19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28), they have been put in a group which has been named classroom anxiety.

### **III.4 Teachers' Qualities and Learners' Engagement**

As the third part of the current questionnaire focuses on the students' opinions regarding their oral expression teachers' qualities. A list of 63 teacher's characteristics has been adapted and randomly distributed in a table with a form of 3-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'strongly desirable', 'least desirable', and 'not desirable'. The list is a mixture of pedagogical capabilities, (e.g. 'Gives clear explanation', 'Conducts interesting classes'), professional qualities (e.g. 'competent' 'creative', 'well-organized'), and mainly personal characteristics such as sociability in the academic settings, good rapport and

relations with their students to help them cope with all their difficulties, particularly, oral classroom anxiety and raise their potential engagement. This study focuses only on the personal qualities.

### **III.5 Learners' Personal Preferences**

In order to gain more objectivity and reliability for the obtained data concerning learners' preferences of the qualities of a good teacher of oral expression, with whom they will feel less anxious and be more engaged, we have asked them again using an open ended question with different wording allowing them more freedom and no limitations and restrictions on the type of qualities; we have given them the opportunity to express their real perceived good qualities of the teacher who makes their oral class a better engagement-inducing session, where they feel comfortable and they can do their best with him/her. They have been asked to list only seven qualities in one word or one sentence.

### **III.6 Procedures**

Sixty questionnaires have been distributed to two groups of Master 1 students at the Department of English, University of Constantine, during the second semester of 2009/2010. Only 53 copies (88.33%) have been collected back, of which 12 (22.64%) participants did not complete the questionnaire or failed to answer seriously. Only 41 (68.33%) replies have been found statistically valid, of which 30 copies have been randomly chosen for the analysis because of the current time constraints and research limitations. Hence, the final sample of this study is constituted of only 30 participants, of which 9 have been male (30%) and 21 have been female (70%).

## **- Reliability and Validity**

After administering the questionnaire, the research tool has demonstrated satisfactory reliability with this group of subjects because of several factors. First, there have been uniform and non-distracting circumstances of administration. Second, the students have been provided with clear, explicit and unambiguous instructions given in simple English. The scale administered to the students has been started by an introductory note about the aim of the study. Third, the real aim of the study has not been openly presented to the students so that students' responses could not be biased by the researcher's goals; moreover, the research has been presented as a study on the general topic of language learning experience and on feeling about oral English classes. Fourth, we have reminded the group of informants of the importance of giving honest answers.

## **III.7 Data Analysis**

### **III.7.1 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale**

The data analysis in the research has been done quantitatively; we have analyzed the data by performing descriptive statistics in order to understand the actual sources of FL anxiety and to find out which of the four factors, communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and classroom anxiety, respectively, is the most anxiety provoking aspect among learners.

The responses to the 28 statements are displayed using percentages and the overall findings have been analysed, compared and discussed. The responses 'strongly agree' (SA) and 'agree' (A) have been combined to create an overall score of agreement; the answers 'neutral' (N) are counted as indecisive data, and the sum of responses 'Disagree' (D) and



‘Strongly disagree’ (SD) have been similarly calculated to gain a measure of disagreement. The results of each factor have been presented in a table followed by a chart which matches its data.

### **III.7.2 Learner’s Engagement and Teachers’ Sociability**

In order to measure the learners’ engagement in relation to teachers’ sociability, the respondents have been asked to check the appropriate box for each quality in the table, on the basis of two important aspects, in order to make their choices systematic. This should be according to their personal preferences of a good oral expression teacher’s attributes from the most to the least important ones. That is to say, they have been clearly directed to indicate the extent to which they mostly desire, less desire, or not desire, respectively, the suggested qualities in the table for their success. It has also been in order to make a correlation between teachers’ sociability and learners’ anxiety and potential engagement with oral expression subjects; and to measure this latter as it refers to learners’ self perceptions and beliefs; and to avoid biased choices, we have also provided clear instructions for all informants of how and on which basis they must make their personal preferences. We have strongly emphasized that any choice for any quality should be on the basis of four parameters which, inherently, constitute the operational definition of the learners’ engagement variable in this study as defined in the previous chapter. The students’ choices must be on a conviction that:

1. They feel at ease with their oral expression teachers (less anxious).
2. They can do their best with those teachers (being fully engaged).
3. They can participate, spontaneously, in the class with less pressure and fears.
4. They can defend their opinions and express their thoughts.

Again, due to time constraints we have taken only 20 personal qualities for the analysis with frequencies and percentages.

Regarding the final part of the questionnaire, after checking all the learners' personal preferences and also considering the previous four convictions, we have decided to take only the top 14 frequent qualities for analysis.

### **III.8 Results**

Based on the analysis of the questionnaires, discussing the results will consist of the descriptive statistics of the learners' background information, the FLCAS, Teachers' Qualities and learners' personal preferences; the correlation between foreign oral classroom anxiety and learners' engagement, on one hand, and the teachers' sociability, on the other. Finally there will be the interpretation of the results and pedagogical recommendations.

#### **III.8.1 Background Analysis**

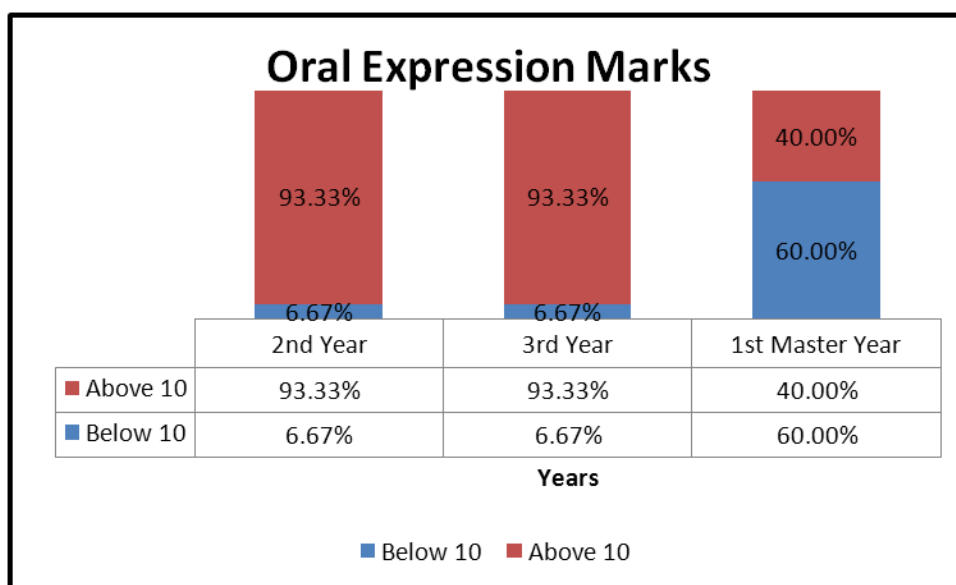
The discussion of descriptive statistics in the background analysis of the respondents has been analyzed taking into consideration three different variables: the participants' gender, the obtained marks, and the oral expression subject teacher (same teacher or different ones) during their last three years.

##### **- Individual's Background Variables**

The descriptive statistical analyses of the three different background variables mentioned above are shown in Table 1.

Variable Group	Item	Frequency (N)		Percent %	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	9		30 %	
	Female	21		70 %	
<b>Teacher</b>	Same Teacher	0		0 %	
	Different Teachers	30		100 %	
<b>Marks</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Below 10</b>	<b>Above 10</b>	<b>Below 10</b>	<b>Above 10</b>
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	2	28	6.67 %	93.33 %
	2 <sup>rd</sup> Year	2	28	6.67 %	93.33 %
	1 <sup>st</sup> Master Year	18	12	60.00 %	40.00 %

**Table 1: Individual's Background Variables**



**Figure 1: Oral Expression Marks during the Last Three Years**

Concerning gender, most of the respondents are females; there are 21 females (70%), and only 9 males (30%). However it is worth noting that Gender (sex) is a noisy variable in this research; we will not take it into consideration. As for whether they have had the same oral expression teacher, all the respondents (100%) have had different teachers during the last three years. Regarding the oral expression marks obtained, table 1 shows that during the second and third year 28 (93.33%) of the participants' marks have

been above the average 10 and only 2 participants (6.67%) have got below the average. However, during the first year master, 18 students (60%) have had marks below the average, and 12 learners (40%) above the average 10.

### **III.8.2 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety**

After administering the FLCAS to our subjects, the resulting data revealed interesting information about the anxiety levels of this group of students. The thematic relationships among the different items of the scale have allowed us to organize the presentation of the resulting data in four groups with regarding to their relationship with the following different subscales (factors) of foreign language classroom anxiety: communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and classroom anxiety, which, in turn, cover different types of FL anxiety for EFL learners.

#### **III.8.2.1 FLCAS**

Responses to all the FLCAS items are reported in Table 2 (communication Anxiety), Table 3 (Fear of Negative Evaluation), Table 4 (Test Anxiety), and Table 5 (Classroom Anxiety). All percentages refer to the number of students who agreed or disagreed with the statements. The first column of the table show the combinational percentages of students who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement; the second column stands for neutral responses, and the third column show the combinational percentages of students who disagreed and strongly disagreed.

For the first chart, the numbering of the statements corresponds to that of its table (table 2). Whereas for the second, third, and forth charts the numbering of the statements

do not match that one of their tables (table 3, 4, 5), respectively. The numbering differs as follows:

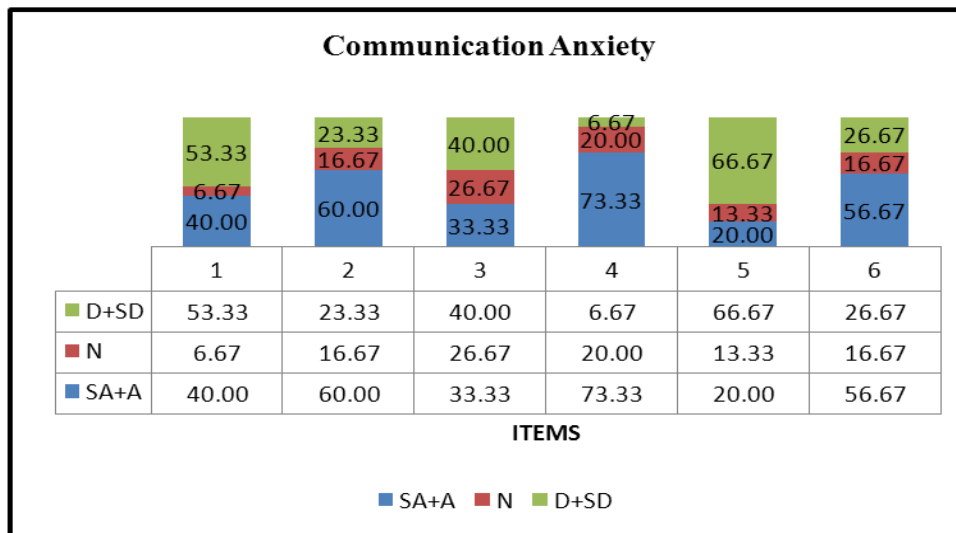
- Table 3: Correlation between table and chart items numbering: 7→1, 8→2, 9→3, 10→4, 11→5, 12→6, 13→7.
- Table 4: Correlation between table and chart items numbering: 14→1, 15→2, 16→3, 17→4, 18→5.
- Table 5: Correlation between table and chart items numbering: 19→1, 20→2, 21→3, 22→4, 23→5, 24→6, 25→7, 26→8, 29→9, 30→10.

### III.8.2.1.1 Communication Anxiety

Table 2 presents the percentages of the Communication Anxiety Subscale given to the Master's students:

ITEM	TYPE	Percentages		
	COMMUNICATION ANXIETY	SA+A	N	D+SD
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.	40.00	6.67	53.33
2	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	60.00	16.67	23.33
3	I feel confident when I speak in English in my language class.	33.33	26.67	40.00
4	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of the other students.	73.33	20.00	6.67
5	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	20.00	13.33	66.67
6	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	56.67	16.67	26.67

**Table 2: Communication Anxiety Percentages**



**Figure 2: Communication Anxiety**

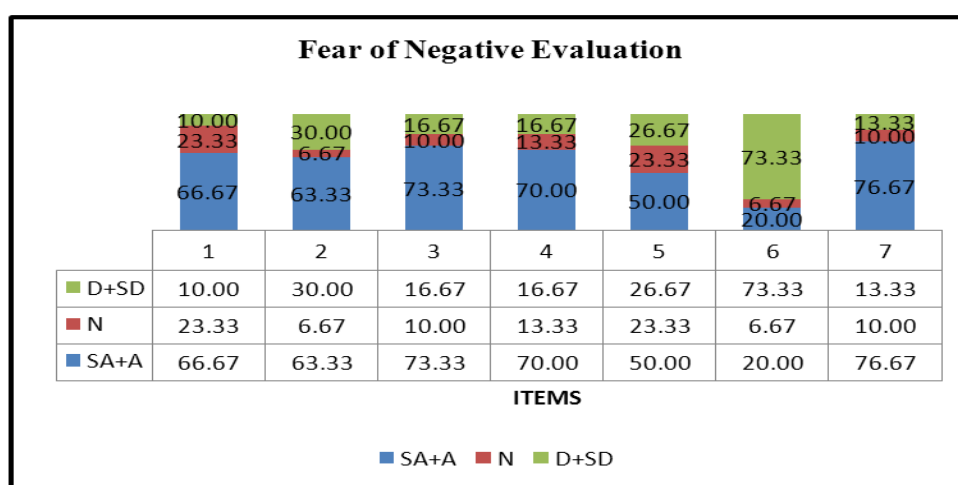
Table 2 shows that students have endorsed the questionnaire items that suggest oral expression anxiety, since students' lack of self-confidence when speaking the foreign language has been revealed by the fact that 40% of the students have agreed with item 1, which is that they do not feel sure of themselves when they speak in English. The same amount (40%) disagreed with item 3, which is 'I feel confident when I speak in English in my language class'. A higher percentage (60%) claim that they start to panic if they are called upon to speak without having prepared in advance (item 2), and 73.33% feel self-conscious when speaking in front of their classmates (item 4). As far as the manifestations of speaking anxiety are concerned, item 5 has revealed that only 20% of the students get nervous and confused when they speak in the foreign language classroom. The combinations between items 6 'I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says' and 19 'It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the English language' has showed that a total mean of 53.33% of the students feel unwilling to participate when they don't understand what the teacher said in the foreign language.

### III.8.2.1.2 Fear of Negative Evaluation

Table 3 presents the results of Fear of Negative Evaluation factor:

ITEM	TYPE	Percentages		
	FEAR OF NEGATIVE EVALUATION	SA+A	N	D+SD
7	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class	66.67	23.33	10.00
8	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	63.33	6.67	30.00
9	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	73.33	10.00	16.67
10	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	70.00	13.33	16.67
11	I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.	50.00	23.33	26.67
12	I am afraid that the other students in the class will laugh at me when I speak in English.	20.00	6.67	73.33
13	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	76.67	10.00	13.33

**Table 3: Fear of Negative Evaluation Percentages**



**Figure 3: Fear of Negative Evaluation**

Furthermore, in connection with the self-confidence factor, 63.33% of students have also showed their reticence to volunteer answers in the language class (item 8) and a

higher percentage of 66.67% of students said that they tremble when they know that they are going to be called on in class (item 7). Feeling one's heart pounding when being called on in class has been a much more frequent sensation among students since, according to item 10, 70% of the students actually have had this experience. Quite in relation with the students' high level of worry about making mistakes (66.67%), we find that the level of fear of negative evaluation has increased considerably when error correction has been involved in the process, since 73.33% of the students said that they get upset when they do not understand what the teacher is correcting (item 9).

Comparing themselves with the other students is also a source of fear of negative evaluation; 50% of the students have had a permanent feeling that the other students speak the foreign language better than they do (item 11). In this regard, we find that the students of this study display the fear of being evaluated by others, as we can also realize that their fear of being evaluated by the peers has not been as big as their fear of being evaluated by their teacher; whereas 53.33% of students are afraid that the teacher is ready to correct every mistake they make; 73.33% of the students feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students (item 4). This means that the participants' fear from the teacher's correction for each mistake is higher than the fear from the evaluation of the classmates because 73.33%, a significant percentage, of students have not been afraid that the other students would laugh at them when they speak the foreign language (item 12) as they are all advanced learners and adults, consciously, understanding and helping each other. They are also equally having the desire of succeeding and fulfilling their goals. Finally, With regard to the intervening factors, we have found that not feeling prepared has made a greater number of students anxious since item 13 indicates that



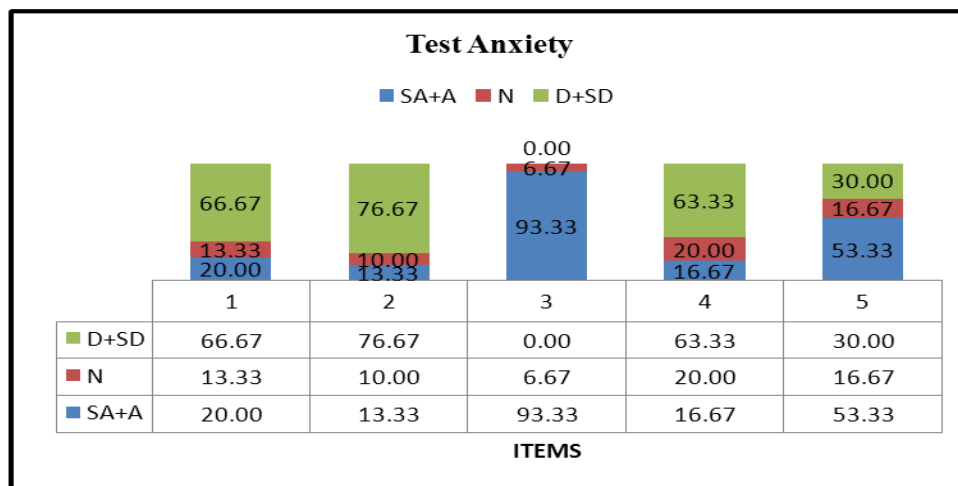
76.67% of the students get nervous when the language teacher asks questions without allowing for preparation time.

### III.8.2.1.3 Test Anxiety

Table 4 reveals the results of Test Anxiety factor

ITEM	TYPE	Percentages		
	TEST ANXIETY	SA+A	N	D+SD
14	I DON'T worry about making mistakes in language class.	20.00	13.33	66.67
15	I am usually at ease (comfortable) during tests in my language class.	13.33	10.00	76.67
16	I worry about the consequences of failing my language class.	93.33	6.67	0.00
17	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	16.67	20.00	63.33
18	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	53.33	16.67	30.00

**Table 4: Test Anxiety Percentages**



**Figure 4: Test Anxiety**

Nonetheless, the most critical level of oral anxiety has been exhibited by those items related to the phenomenon of test anxiety. Students' fear of making mistake is an important factor also, since there have been 66.67% of the students who have showed that

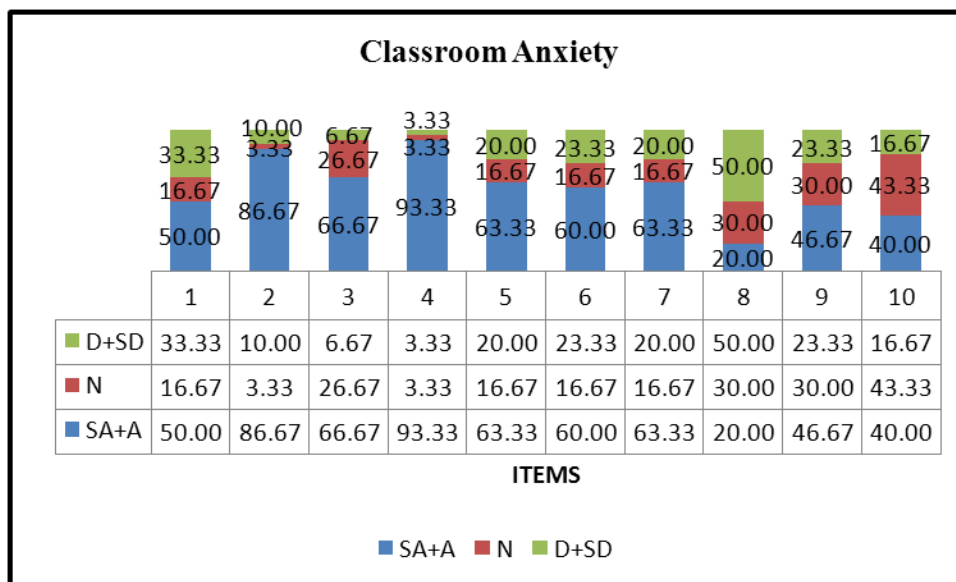
they have been worried about making mistakes in the language class (item 14). Item 15 has showed that 76.67% of the students have denied being usually at ease during tests in their language class. This is most probably related to the fact that also a big number of students accounted for 93.33% have been worried about the consequences of failing the subject, as item 16 shows. One possible interpretation is that the students at this level (Master's level) have been more anxious than in previous levels; they fear failing the courses and not passing to the second year Master's.

#### III.8.2.1.4 Classroom Anxiety

The table below presents the results of Classroom Anxiety factor:

ITEM	CLASSROOM ANXIETY	Percentages		
	TYPE	SA+A	N	D+SD
19	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the English language.	50.00	16.67	33.33
20	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes.	86.67	3.33	10.00
21	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	66.67	26.67	6.67
22	In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	93.33	3.33	3.33
23	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	63.33	16.67	20.00
24	I often feel like not going to my language class.	60.00	16.67	23.33
25	I DON'T feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.	63.33	16.67	20.00
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	20.00	30.00	50.00
27	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	46.67	30.00	23.33
28	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak the English language.	40.00	43.33	16.67

**Table 5: Classroom anxiety Percentages**



**Figure 5: Classroom Anxiety**

After administering the questionnaire, we could also appreciate general reactions of anxiety towards the foreign language classroom existing in our group of subjects. Several items revealed that there has been a considerable level of concern over classroom. For instance, only 10% denied that it wouldn't bother them at all to take more foreign language classes (item 20).

The high percentages related to learners' negative beliefs and self perceptions registered between the thematic items 19, 9, 6, and 16 indicate that comprehension reactions have been highly frequent as those corresponding to communication anxiety, since a perceived lack of competence can also lead students to display anxiety in the classroom. Whereas, 50% of the students feel frightened when they do not understand what the teacher says in English (item 19); 73.33% get upset when they do not understand what the teacher is correcting (item 9), and 56.67% get nervous when they cannot comprehend everything that the teacher says (item 6). 93.33% worry about the consequences of failing the English class (item 16). As regards the anxiety experiences lived inside the classroom,

66.67% of students find themselves in class thinking of things that have nothing to do with it (item 21); they have frequent distractions because of boredom and uneasiness. Furthermore, only 20% of students showed that they felt more tense and nervous in the foreign language class than in other classes (item 26), in the sense that having a computing sciences or Arabic language lecture would be less anxiety provoking than English classes. Besides, a very high percentage (93.33%) of the students also said that in class they can get so nervous that they forget things they know (item 22).

We figure out also that 63.33% of the students actually say that they have worried about the foreign language class even when they have been well prepared for it (item 23). 60% of the students often have felt like not going to the language class (item 24), Besides, 20% of the students revealed that they have felt pressure to prepare very well for the foreign language class (item 25), and, finally, 33.33% of the students have denied feeling sure and relaxed when they have been going to the English class (item 27). Finally, 40% of the students feel uniquely unable to do with the task of learning language, as item 28 shows that students feel overwhelmed by the number of rules to learn to speak the English language. This data gives the support for the view that FLA is a distinct set of the learners' beliefs, perceptions and feelings in response to foreign language learning in the classroom and not merely a composite of other anxieties.

To some degree then, anxiety must be understood in relation not only to English as an academic subject, but also in terms of the activities that take place in language learning environments. Thus, obviously such findings must call into question teaching strategies that require learners to speak in front of the whole class, or tasks where they feel pressured to compare their performances against others.

### **III.9 Discussion**

These results about the levels and sources of anxiety indicate that our EFL learners have suffered from language anxiety due to certain anxiety-provoking factors. First, the findings reveal that learners experienced oral expression anxiety when they have been required to communicate in the classroom; hence, communication apprehension felt towards teachers and peers has been suggested as a factor provoking anxiety. Second, for most of the students, teachers' questions and corrections in the classroom environment have been among the factors intensifying their anxiety. As the values indicate, among other sources arousing anxiety, there has been fear of speaking during classes, concerns about making mistakes, fear of failing classes, test anxiety, and negative attitudes towards English courses. The values presented in Table 2 demonstrate that learners have also suffered from fear of negative evaluation. They have had the fear of negative judgments by leaving unfavourable impressions on others. Besides, to the fear of making mistakes, the fear of shortcomings noted and the faults found by others and the fear of disapproval by others are other sources causing fear of negative evaluation.

#### **III.9.1 Correlation between Language Anxiety and Fear of Negative Evaluation**

The second factor investigated in this research is the relationship between the levels and sources of language anxiety and the fear of negative evaluation. The percentages presented in Table 2 point out that there have been a significant correlation between FL oral anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Firstly, the data indicate that thinking of others' evaluation has significantly correlated with being called on in the classroom, communication with teachers, peers, fear of making mistakes, teachers' questions, not being prepared for the lesson, fear of forgetting vocabulary and sentence structure while speaking, negative attitudes towards courses (feeling nervous and upset), fear of failing and

test anxiety. Secondly, the values also demonstrate that there existed a significant correlation between the fear of shortcomings noted by others and some sources of foreign language anxiety. Fear of leaving unfavourable impressions on others has significantly correlated with most of the foreign language anxiety sources. Furthermore, fear of disapproval by others has also significantly correlated with the fear of being called on in class, communication apprehension with teachers and peers, fear of failing classes and test anxiety, teachers' corrections and not being prepared for the lesson. The participants fear that others would notice their mistakes has significantly correlated with the anxiety-provoking factors in addition to fear of forgetting vocabulary and sentence structure while speaking. Finally, fear of making mistakes, particularly, pronunciation ones, has significantly correlated with all anxiety-provoking factors. Speaking concisely, the obtained results show that language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation significantly correlate.

### **III.9.2 Correlation between Subjects' Background Information Variables and Anxiety**

As the study mainly focuses on the levels and sources of language anxiety in relation to communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and classroom anxiety, and the findings on the relationship between the subject variables seem irrelevant to the scope of the study. This is particularly regarding questioning the respondents about studying oral expression with the same teacher or different teachers during the last three years. Nevertheless, the related results will be presented in brief. In this sense, the findings on the relationship between the subject variables and language anxiety indicate that there exist significant correlations between the level of anxiety for some students and their oral subject marks. Whereas 93.33% of the students' marks have been above the average during

their second and third year, and during the first year master, there has been a dramatic decrease down to only 40% above the average. These shifts in learners' marks correlate with the highest levels of anxiety. This is marked, mainly, in test anxiety (61.33%) and fear of negative evaluation (60%), which are factors with a total mean of  $61.33+60/2$ , which amounts to 60.66%, in addition to corrections in classroom (53.33%) and fear of making mistakes (66.67%). These results apply to first year master's degree students. To sum up, the findings of the study suggest that the respondents' oral subject marks significantly correlate with the level of anxiety they display, particularly because they are studying at master's level.

The values also indicate that grades have significantly correlated with some of the sources of fear of negative evaluation, such as leaving an unfavourable impression and disapproval by others. In other words, the higher learners' grades, as in their second and third year, 93.33% of the participants' marks have been above the average, the less they suffered from disapproval and making mistakes. However, in the first year master, we have noticed a dramatic shift in the learners' oral subject marks from a total mean of 6.67%, for the second and third year, to 60% below the average in the their first master year.

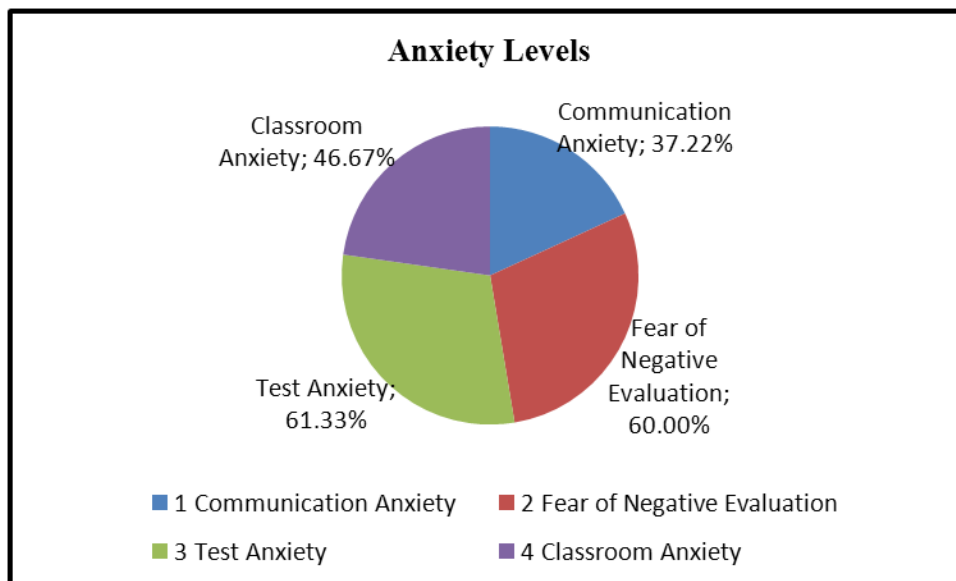
### **III.9.3 Highest Anxiety Provoking Factors**

With regard to the highest anxiety provoking factors posited in this paper, communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and classroom anxiety, the means of percentages of agreement and disagreement, as far as they indicate anxiety, have been calculated for each item of each factor separately in order to determine which aspects of the foreign language classroom anxiety that have produced the highest anxiety levels in the context of our study. Table 5 shows the means of percentages for the participants that selected each category that shows anxiety level.

N°	Factor	A	D	MP
		N		
1	Communication Anxiety	1, 2, 5,6	3,4	37.22%
2	Fear of Negative Evaluation	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12,13	/	60%
3	Test Anxiety	16, 17,18	14,15	61.33%
4	Classroom Anxiety	19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27,28	20,25	46.67%

**NB: A: Agreement/ D: Disagreement/ MP: Mean of Percentages/ N: Number of Item**

**Table 6 : Means of Anxiety Levels**



**Figure: 6 Anxiety Levels**

A close look at Table 5 shows that the actual sources of anxiety for the subjects of this study are not primarily attributed to the communication anxiety factor, the speaking skills, competence and capacities. They are rather attributed to factors which have crucial and thematic relationship with the communication anxiety factor. The fear of tests causes great anxiety for them as we estimate that 61.33% (highest level of anxiety) of informants have suffered from the test anxiety factor. The highest significant endorsement by almost all students (93.33%) of item 16, 'I worry about the consequences of failing my English class', confirms this fact. This is because those students have been test-anxious either because of negative expectation of test results with their oral subject teacher, or because of



unpleasant test experience in the past. The thematic correlation between tests and evaluation indicates that negative evaluation seems to play a bigger role than anxiety which stems from communication apprehension and classroom factors, respectively. Since a quite high percentage with 60% of the respondents have been suffering also from the fear of negative evaluation factor, those learners feel that they have been less competent than their classmates; they anticipate that their teachers and peers would evaluate them negatively, while they highly endorse statements like 'I always feel that my classmates speak English better than I do' with 50%. Furthermore, we observe that only 37.22% of the students' anxiety stems from communication factor; learners have been anxious about speaking English; these students have been exceedingly shy when they had to speak English in front of others. They have been easily embarrassed and nervous because they felt that everyone has been looking at them and judging them; this explains the endorsement of 10 learners of items such as 'I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class' and 10 others of 'I feel my heart pounding when I am going to be asked to speak in English class'.

Finally, classroom procedures are anxiety provoking also for the subjects of this study since 46.67% of them report that they experience anxiety at oral classrooms. In other words, some inevitable factors may cause anxiety for learners such as the teachers' role and their rapport with students, the classroom management and atmosphere, and the intellectual and pedagogical skills in dealing with the heterogeneity of learners' levels.

### III.10 Teachers' Qualities, Learners' Personal preferences and Engagement

#### III.10.1 Teachers Qualities

After identifying learners' foreign oral anxiety classroom sources with the most anxiety provoking aspects for our students, Table 6 shows the frequencies and percentages for our respondents' agreements and preferences for better attributes of a teacher of oral expression.

N°	QUALITIES	MD		LD		ND	
		Num	Per %	Num	Per %	Num	Per %
1	Can create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom	29	96.67	1	3.33	0	0.00
2	Considerate	28	93.33	2	6.67	0	0.00
3	Sensitive	28	93.33	1	3.33	1	3.33
4	Able to listen to all students carefully	28	93.33	2	6.67	0	0.00
5	Understanding	28	93.33	2	6.67	0	0.00
6	Fair	27	90.00	2	6.67	1	3.33
7	Patient	27	90.00	3	10.00	0	0.00
8	Treats the weak learners well	27	90.00	2	6.67	1	3.33
9	Helpful	26	86.67	4	13.33	0	0.00
10	Have the ability to establish good rapport with the students	26	86.67	4	13.33	0	0.00
11	Approachable	25	83.33	5	16.67	0	0.00
12	Caring	25	83.33	4	13.33	1	3.33
13	Cheerful	24	80.00	5	16.67	1	3.33
14	Friendly	23	76.67	7	23.33	0	0.00
15	Sociable	23	76.67	7	23.33	0	0.00
16	Enthusiastic	22	73.33	4	13.33	4	13.33
17	Has a professional personal disclosure	21	70.00	6	20.00	3	10.00
18	Modest	19	63.33	11	36.67	0	0.00
19	Empathatic	16	53.33	10	33.33	4	13.33
20	Makes harsh public comments	3	10.00	2	6.67	25	83.33
<b>NB:</b> Num = Number of students/ Per = percentage/ MD= Most desirable/LD = Least desirable / ND = Not desirable		<b>Means</b>					
		<b>24.85</b>	<b>82.83</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>14.00</b>	<b>2.05</b>	<b>2.81</b>

**Table 7: Qualities of a Better Teacher of Oral Expression**

To measure the level of teachers' sociability, we consider the frequency/percentages of learners' endorsement for the qualities as the most desirable characteristics of a better oral expression teacher for their potential engagement and success with less anxiety. In other words, the teacher's level of sociability is correlated with the highest endorsement for the presented qualities as most desirable ones.

The above table reveals interesting findings concerning the urgent need and role of teachers' sociability, the well-established and close interpersonal relationship and rapport with learners in order to raise their potential engagement in classroom with less feeling fearful or anxious. We notice very significant high percentages that correlate with the most desirable alternative.

As table 6 shows that a total mean of 23 with 82.83 % of the students rate their likableness (degree of desires) for the 20 chosen personal traits with high percentages as most desirable attributes for teachers in order to do their best, become fully engaged, express themselves and opinions with the minimum rates of anxiety. The most desirable qualities for our subjects have been tabled in descending order in the above table ranging from the highest frequencies and percentages to the lowest ones and indicating the number of students who endorse each quality with its percentage. The qualities have been rated as follows: Can create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom (96.67 %), Considerate (93.33 %), Sensitive (93.33 %), Able to listen to all students carefully (93.33 %), Understanding (93.33 %), Fair (90.00 %), Patient (90.00 %), Treats the weak learners well (90.00 %), Helpful (86.67 %), Has the ability to establish good rapport with the students (86.67 %), Approachable (83.33 %), Caring (83.33 %), Cheerful (80.00 %), Friendly (76.67 %), Sociable (76.67 %), Enthusiastic (73.33 %), Has a professional personal disclosure ( 70.00 %), Modest (63.33 %), Empathetic (53.33 %), and finally, 83,33 % of the respondents rate

the attribute of making harsh public comments as not a desirable quality (n° 20). Alternatively, we notice that a total mean of 14.00 % of the learners consider those characteristics as least desirable qualities, and only 2.81 % of them are taken as not desirable.

These significant values indicate that almost all subjects (82.83 %) of this study have been in favour of a higher sociability. They indeed emphasise the importance of teachers' sociability, their personal side in establishing well, oriented, constructed, interpersonal and caring relationships in a professional sense within the academic settings; particularly in the classroom, in order to have a higher level of potential engagement for the learning tasks with less levels of foreign oral classroom anxiety.

### III.10.2 Learners' Personal Preferences

Table 7 lists the learners' personal preferences for the teachers of oral subject:

N°	Learners' Preferences	Frequency	Per %
	Qualities		
1	Competent	23	76.67
2	Gives chances to weak learners well	21	70.00
3	Fair with all students	20	66.67
4	Understanding	19	63.33
5	Helpful	18	60.00
6	Can create relaxed atmosphere	17	56.67
7	motivating	15	50.00
8	Caring for all students	14	46.67
9	Have good relations	13	43.33
10	Friendly with all students	12	40.00
11	Knowledgable	12	40.00
12	Cheerful	10	33.33
13	listening	9	30.00
14	Have no intelectual limits	8	26.67

**Table 8: Learners' Preferences for the Teachers of Oral Subject**

The subjects have been asked to indicate their personal preferences by providing seven personal characteristics to discern the qualities assigned to the better teacher. 180 traits have been initially listed as the most desirable teacher's qualities; Thirty traits described the teacher's most unfavourable behaviour such as *Never make laugh of students*, *Don't focus on learners' mistakes*, *Don't make harsh public comment*, *Arrogant*, *and Unfair*, and the like which are not of our concern in this study. After the initial lists has been compiled and analyzed, semantically close qualities have been combined together (e.g. *Creative*, *Imaginative*, *Conducts interesting classes*, and *Competent*), and the total number of responses have been counted. Because of time and space constraints, the final list of the learners' preferences contained only 14 items (see Appendix A). In the lists, the majority of adjectives related to the teachers' personal qualities (e.g., *Friendly*, *Cheerful*, *Understanding*) rather than their professional and pedagogical qualities (e.g., *Competent*, *Gives chances to weak learners well*, *Knowledgeable*).

As reported in Table 7, the top fourteen most desirable qualities of the language teacher have been listed also in descending order ranging from the most to the least frequent ones as the following: *Competent* ( 76.67 %), *Gives chances to weak learners well* ( 70.00 %), *Fair with all students* (66.67 %), *Understanding* ( 63.33 %), *Helpful* ( 60.00 %), *Can create relaxed atmosphere* (56.67 %), *motivating* (50.00 %), *Caring for all students* (46.67 %), *Has good relations* (43.33 %), *Friendly with all students* (40.00 %), *Knowledgeable* (40.00 %), *Cheerful* (33.33 %), *Listening* (30.00 %), *Has no intellectual limits* (26.67 %).

As the list has revealed, the teacher's interpersonal skills have been highly valued qualities, and such virtues as *Gives chances to weak learners well' qualities*, *Fair with all students*, *Understanding*, *Helpful*, *Can create relaxed atmosphere* have been mentioned by

more than half of the students ranging from 56.67 % to 70.00 %. The language teacher's professional and pedagogical competency occupied the first, sixth, seventh, eleventh place in the list, (item 1, 6, 7, 11) with significant percentages also; *Competent* (76.67 %), *Can create relaxed atmosphere* (56.67 %), *Motivating* (50.00 %), and *Knowledgeable* (40.00 %). This data has revealed that our students at this level have a professional awareness for the primary indispensable need of teachers' professional, cognitive, and pedagogical skills, in addition to the personal qualities. They show this awareness also in categorizing all the pedagogical and professional attributes listed in part three of the questionnaire, as most desirable qualities of a better oral subject teacher for their success.

Thus, these results confirm the subjects' responses in the third part of the questionnaire; the obtained values have correlated with the previous ones as far as the qualities of a better teacher are concerned in order to reach a higher engagement, less anxiety, and better achievements. Since they have almost placed high value on the qualities directly related to the ability to establish good rapport with the students and, to more or less the same extent, the teacher's professional competency.

### **III.11 Summary of the Findings**

#### **- Correlation between Teachers' Sociability, Learners' Anxiety, and Engagement Levels**

The levels of teachers' sociability, learners' anxiety, and learners' oral engagement correspond with the number of students (total mean) of each variable in this study. That is to say, the values (82.83%) stand for the number of students who emphasize the role of teachers' sociability for their oral engagement will stand also as a value for the teachers' sociability level; the same rule will be applied for anxiety level, since 51.31 % which relate

to the number of anxious learners is also used, interchangeably, as a value for anxiety level; and, finally, the learners' oral engagement level equals the mean of both teachers' sociability level and learners' anxiety level. In order to find out the correlation between the independent and dependent variables of this study, the following formulas have been applied:

a. The Independent Variable

- **Teachers' Sociability Level** = the total mean of the most desirable qualities in the teachers (82.83%).

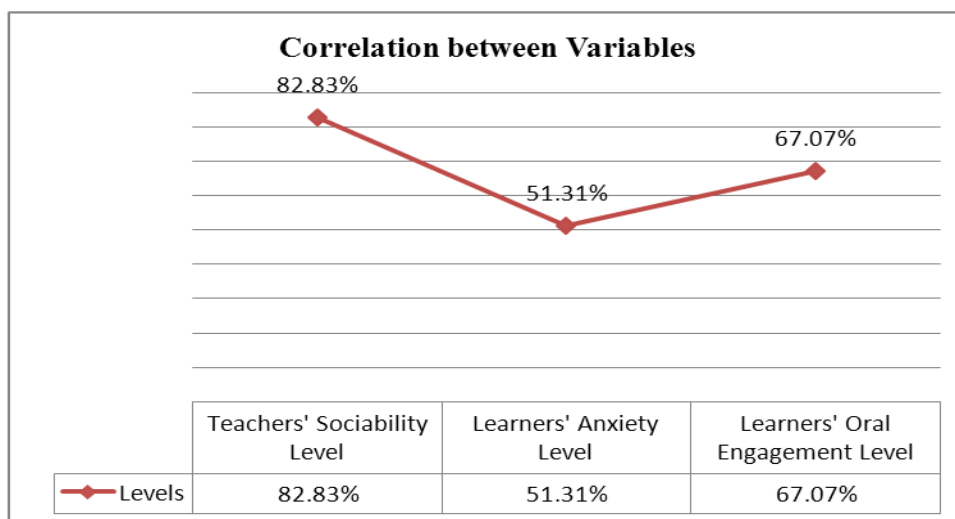
b. The dependent variables

- **Anxiety Level** = the total mean of the four factors, communication anxiety + fear of negative evaluation + test anxiety + classroom anxiety / 4 = 51.31%.
- **Learners' Oral Engagement Level** = Since learners' oral engagement is the most dependent variable which changes its values with both variables, positively with teachers' sociability variable, and negatively with anxiety variable, the learners' oral engagement level = the mean between the teachers' sociability level (82.83%) + anxiety level (51.31%) / 2 = 67,07%.

The correlation between the three variables came as follows:

Teachers' Sociability Level	Anxiety Level	Learners' Oral Engagement
<b>Total Means</b>		
<b>82.83%</b>	<b>51.31%</b>	<b>67.07%</b>

**Table 9: Levels of Research Variables**



**Figure 7 : Correlation between Research Variables**

As the chart above shows, the level of the subjects' anxiety level determines the level of teachers' sociability, and the level of learners' oral engagement. The anxiety level correlates positively with the level of teachers' sociability, that is to say, the higher is the learners' anxiety level, and the higher is the level of teachers' sociability that the students emphasise for a higher engagement level, as it is shown in the chart 51.31 % → 82.83 % → 67.07 %. The opposite is also true since the less anxious learners are the less they urge from teachers to be sociable. Besides, the fact that 82.83 % of the students have been highly in favour of teachers' sociability in order to become fully engaged and feel less anxious as far as they report shows that the anxiety level once again correlates negatively with the level of learners' oral engagement. This means that a higher anxiety level corresponds with a lower students' oral engagement. These results confirm our hypothesis which is that if there is a higher teachers' sociability, then a lower learners' anxiety will result, which, in turn, leads to a better oral engagement and performance.



## Summary

By using the FLCAS, we have figured out that foreign language oral anxiety really exists among the subjects of this research. The results show that test anxiety, fear of being less competent, fear of speaking in English, and classroom anxiety have been four main constructs of students' anxiety. They have had only a limited number specific anxiety-provoking experiences; whereas, a total mean of 51.31 % stands for the general state of oral anxiety for the subjects of our study. They clearly become quite anxious when they are thinking about: Firstly, having tests, getting good grades, failing the class, and passing the exams at a higher level as far as the master's degree is concerned. Secondly, being negatively evaluated, having low marks, which is likely to result in degrading the self-esteem, and raising the fear of failing the year. Thirdly, classroom anxiety factor is a source for oral anxiety for our learners. Fourthly, the fear of speaking in oral expression situations with peers and particularly with teachers, which makes a challenge for the learners' perceived competence and abilities. This finding corresponds with the three components of foreign language anxiety of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). Furthermore, this study reveals interesting findings concerning the great significance for the efficient role of teachers' sociability in the academic settings in reducing the level of oral anxiety, and raising the oral engagement level for the subjects of this study, in the context of the first year master's level. Since there is a very high percentage of the students (67.07 %) who report that the level of their engagement can be raised, and they become fully engaged, with less feeling anxious if there has been a higher teachers' sociability, there is 82.83 % of the respondents who greatly emphasize the need of teachers' sociability.

## **Conclusion**

The present study has investigated the foreign oral classroom anxiety among English first year Masters' degree at the Department of Languages, University of Constantine. It has explored the relationships between teachers' sociability, on the one hand, and learners' oral anxiety and their oral engagement, on the other one.

Anxiety is an important affective variable which must not be overlooked and should be investigated since it may interfere negatively with the learning process at different levels affecting the learners' performance and achievements. It is important to detect its presence among our students not just by mere intuition and diagnose the main actual sources of this phenomenon as a construct, particularly the one which is related to oral expression.

Creating warm and friendly relationships and atmospheres in the English academic settings, especially in the classroom, is an important prerequisite to language learning success. The results from the collected data show that the main important provoking FL oral classroom anxiety factors for our tested subjects are: test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, classroom anxiety, and communication anxiety, respectively from a higher level to a lower one. Therefore, the teachers can take the lead in helping anxious learners to cope with their anxiety. They have to pay more attention to those provoking anxiety aspects through reconsidering the immense positive role of their sociability in building close interpersonal and respectful relations, and establishing good rapport with the students in the learning place, in a professional sense. In other words, educators should help anxious students cope with the existing anxiety-provoking situations and try to make the learning atmosphere less stressful.

This study raises the English instructors' awareness about the crucial negative effect of FL oral anxiety among EFL learners at a Master's level. By understanding the extent of learning anxiety our students have, the teachers will then be more aware of how to help them reduce their learning anxiety and maintain and even promote their learning process, especially for highly anxious learners.

This study has many limitations, the most important of which may be:

To begin with, the results of this study have been applicable only to the sample of population in this study; it cannot be generalized to all the EFL learners at the University at all levels. Second, self-reported measures obtained from the FLCAS may not reflect accurate and real psychological status in EFL learning. Due to some reasons, the participants may be afraid to express themselves honestly or desire to report that they have had lower oral engagement, grades, or achievements because of the anxiety factor...etc. Finally, despite oral anxiety negative effects, we cannot attribute all the negative behaviours and fears of students to the construct of anxiety only since there are other affective variables affecting FL learning which are also important. For instance, personality, self-perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and intelligence; they should also be considered as important variables in acquiring foreign languages.

Based on the findings and limitations of the present study, the results have given evidence about the existence of FL oral classroom anxiety among our subjects, with the urgent need of teachers' sociability to raise the learners' engagement and optimize their performance.

Some suggestions for further research may be in order here:

First, to investigate learners' affective variables related to FL learning, further research should involve more EFL learners at different levels, first, second, or third LMD

students, for instance. This study can be also replicated at the level of two or more foreign languages, between English and French at this University as it can tackle more than one affective variable such as motivation, self-esteem, age, sex, attitudes...etc. In addition, we have suggested that the potential affective interactions between the learners' oral anxiety, engagement, and teachers' sociability require more empirical evidence to produce a clearer teaching approach that emphasises both teachers' cognitive and pedagogical competency and the social and behavioural competence in academic settings. Finally, different kinds of qualitative studies for more evident findings are recommended. For example, interviews or class observations would give more information and insight regarding different variables.

Therefore, more research to reveal the relationship between learners' oral anxiety, engagement, and teachers' sociability is required to affirm the findings of this study. We hope that this study can help EFL learners to create a positive and cheerful experience in English learning and to raise teachers' awareness about the role they may do to reach higher academic success.

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## **APPENDIX**

## Survey

This survey aims to help better understand your language learning experience, particularly how you feel about your oral English language class.

### Part 1

#### Personal Information

1. Year .....

2. Sex: use M/F

3. Have you studied oral expression with the same teacher or different teachers during the last three years?

a. Same teacher

b. Different teachers

4. What have your marks been in oral expression during the last three years?

**S1**      **S2**

a. Second Year.

b. Third Year.

c. First Year Master

## Part 2

### Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

Please show your opinion about the statements below by indicating whether you:

1. Strongly agree = SA
2. Agree = A
3. Neither agree nor disagree = N
4. Disagree = D
5. Strongly disagree = SD

Please check the appropriate box on the right. ALL statements must be checked.

N°	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.					
2	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.					
3	I feel confident when I speak in English in my language class.					
4	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of the other students.					
5	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.					
6	I get nervous when I do not understand every word the language teacher says.					
7	I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in language class.					
8	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.					

<b>9</b>	I get upset when I do not understand what the teacher is correcting.					
<b>10</b>	I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in language class.					
<b>11</b>	I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.					
<b>12</b>	I am afraid that the other students in the class will laugh at me when I speak in English.					
<b>13</b>	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.					
<b>14</b>	I do not worry about making mistakes in language class.					
<b>15</b>	I am usually at ease (comfortable) during tests in my language class.					
<b>16</b>	I worry about the consequences of failing my language class.					
<b>17</b>	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.					
<b>18</b>	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.					
<b>19</b>	It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in the English language.					
<b>20</b>	It would not bother me at all to take more English language classes.					
<b>21</b>	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.					
<b>22</b>	In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.					

23	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.					
24	I often feel like not going to my language class.					
25	I do not feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.					
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.					
27	When I am on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.					
28	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak the English language.					

### Part 3

#### Teacher's Qualities

Please indicate your personal preferences from the most to the least important (desirable) attributes of good oral expression teachers. Use 1= Most desirable, 2= Least desirable, 3= Not desirable for you and for your success. Your choice should be on the basis of a conviction that:

1. You feel at ease with him/her (less anxious).
2. You could do your best with him/her. (Become fully engaged).
3. You could participate spontaneously in the class with less pressure and fears.
4. You could defend your opinions and express your thoughts.

Check the appropriate box to each quality in the table below using (√). ALL boxes should be checked.

N°	Qualities	Most Desirable	Least Desirable	Not Desirable
1	Sincere			
2	Efficient			
3	Truthful			
4	Capable			
5	Caring			
6	Helpful			
7	Accessible			
8	Competent			
9	Loyal			
10	Creative			
11	Happy			
12	Modest			
13	Fair			
14	Indifferent ( not interested in others)			
15	Friendly			
16	Respectful			
18	Polite			
19	Informed			
20	Imaginative ( clever)			
21	Understanding			
22	Patient			
23	Sociable			
24	Empathetic			
25	Open-minded			
26	Hardworking			

27	Well-organized			
28	Trustworthy			
29	Humorous			
30	Intelligent			
31	Pleasant			
32	Exciting			
33	Fascinating			
34	Reliable			
35	Knowledgeable			
36	Strict			
37	Lacking knowledge			
38	Tedious (boring)			
39	Share personal interests			
40	Has positive attitude			
41	Gives clear explanation			
42	Conducts interesting classes			
43	Treats the weak learners well.			
44	Makes harsh public comments			
45	Cheerful (Happy and Positive)			
46	Considerate (kind and helpful)			
47	Emphasizes good pronunciation			
48	Sensitive (understanding students needs).			
49	Could admit his or her own mistakes			
50	Thoughtful (carefully considering things)			
51	Able to listen to all students carefully			
52	Available for consultations after the classes			



53	Approachable (friendly and easy to talk to at any time)			
54	Personable (having a pleasant appearance and character)			
55	Can create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom			
56	Gets moody (whose mood often changes very suddenly)			
57	Industrious (having the characteristic of regularly working hard)			
58	Enthusiastic (very interested in and involved with his/her subject)			
59	Dependable (you can trust him/her or have confidence in him/her)			
60	Flexible (able to change or be changed easily according to the situation)			
61	Has a professional personal disclosure (no intellectual boundaries)			
62	Able to motivate the students and to stimulate their interest in the subject			
63	Have the ability to establish good rapport with the students (good relations)			

**Part 4**

**Learners' Personal Preferences**

In the following list, in JUST in one word or one sentence, 7 characteristics you like a teacher of oral expression subject should have in order to enjoy learning and participate potentially in the classroom without feeling anxious or uncomfortable.

1/.....

2/.....

3/.....

4/.....

5/.....

6/.....

7/.....

### Learners' Personal Preferences

N°	Learners' Preferences	Frequency	%
	Qualities		
1	Competent		
2	Gives chances to weak learners well		
3	Fair with all students		
4	Understanding		
5	Helpful		
6	Can create a relaxed atmosphere		
7	motivating		
8	Caring for all students		
9	Have good relations		
10	Friendly with all students		
11	Knowledgeable		
12	Cheerful		
13	listening		
14	Have no intellectual limits		

## ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة المصادر الحقيقية لشعور طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية بالقلق أثناء دروس التعبير الشفوي على مستوى الماستر. وتقترح فكرة الاعتماد على نزعة الأساتذة الاجتماعية كحل ناجع للتخفيف من حدة قلق المتعلمين وزيادة مشاركتهم العفوية وتحسين أدائهم. ويتم هذا من خلال إعادة النظر في مختلف الاستراتيجيات الإنسانية والعاطفية ضمن علاقة المعلمين بالمتعلمين في السياق الأكاديمي من أجل التقليل من هذا الشعور السلبي وحث المتعلمين على أداء ومساهمة أكثر عفوية . وقد بينت نتائج تحليل استبيان قُدم لعينة من الطلبة أن الشعور بالقلق أثناء تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية يمكن أن يكون مصدره الخوف من الفشل في الاختبار أو التقييم السلبي من الأساتذة بالخصوص، والخوف أيضا من طرق التدريس المثيرة للقلق والخوف من التحدث بلغة أجنبية. ويخلص البحث إلى توصيات بالاهتمام أكثر بهذه الظواهر النفسية وبدور اجتماعية الأساتذة البالغ في إقامة أسس بيداغوجية أكثر نجاعة في تدريس وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.

## Résumé

Cette étude examine les sources effectives de l'angoisse qu'éprouvent les étudiants de Master en anglais durant les sessions d'expression orale. Elle suggère le concept de sociabilité des enseignants comme solution en reconsidérant un nombre de stratégies humanistes et affectives dans la relation enseignant-enseigné dans le contexte académique. Ceci est afin de réduire l'angoisse des apprenants et de les motiver pour plus de spontanéité et d'engagement et pour une meilleure performance. Les résultats obtenus par l'administration d'un questionnaire à un échantillon d'apprenants montrent que le sentiment d'angoisse peut avoir comme origines la peur d'échec aux examens et l'appréhension d'une évaluation négative, notamment de la part des enseignants. Il peut également émaner des méthodes d'enseignement qui génèrent cette angoisse et cette peur de participer dans une classe d'oral en langues étrangères. Les implications de cette recherche, quant à réduire le sentiment d'angoisse chez les apprenants et motiver leur engagement, est d'exploiter la sociabilité des enseignants et son rôle primordial dans l'établissement des fondements pédagogiques d'un enseignement efficace des langues étrangères.