




Language learning anxiety in face-to-face and distance learning A Literature Review

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EMORY





"Are we witnessing a dramatic change taking place in the world of education?"

What is happening among language learners who are currently studying under conditions of physical, social and economic stress and anxiety as a result of the global virus?"

Russell, 2020



In what ways do adult learners in a distance language class experience foreign language learning anxiety?



Feeling anxious

- **"Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry associated with the awakening of the autonomic nervous system"**
- **(Spielberger and Rickman, 1990).**

- *** Situational anxiety - social fear, fear of death.**
- *** Anxiety inherent in human personality.**
- *** Anxiety about learning a subject - math, science**



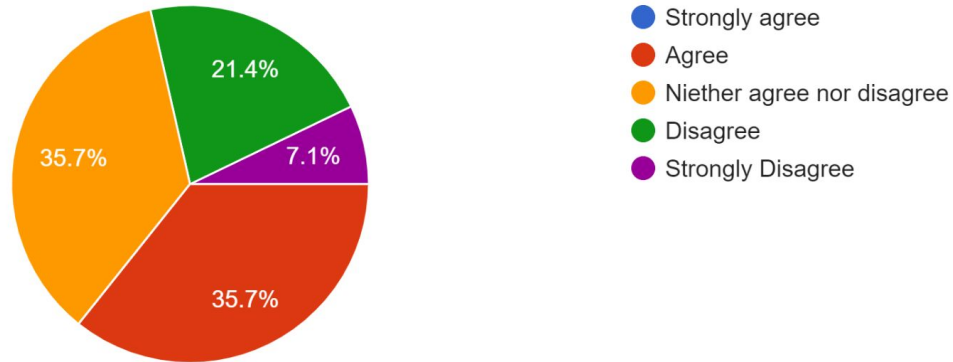
Language Learning Anxiety

(Elaine Horowitz et al. 1986) •

- Learning language anxiety is **unique** to learning a foreign language and does not depend on other anxieties that the learner has.
- The language learner comes to the classroom with **perceptions and assumptions** about language learning that are shaped in the learning process.
- Language anxiety has a great **influence on** the degree of **achievement** in the learning process.
- Language anxiety scale FLACS- Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

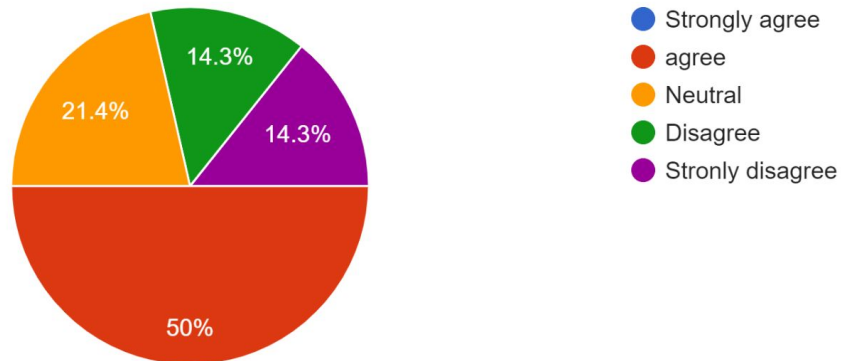
I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.

14 responses



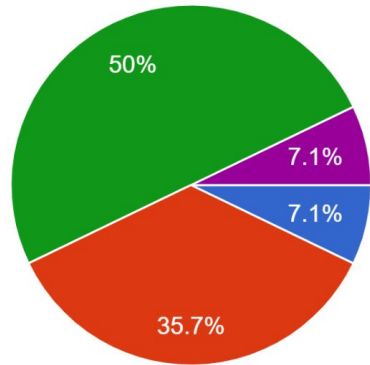
It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.

14 responses



I don't worry about making mistakes in language class

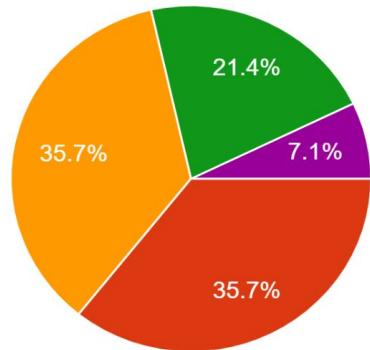
14 responses



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.

14 responses



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

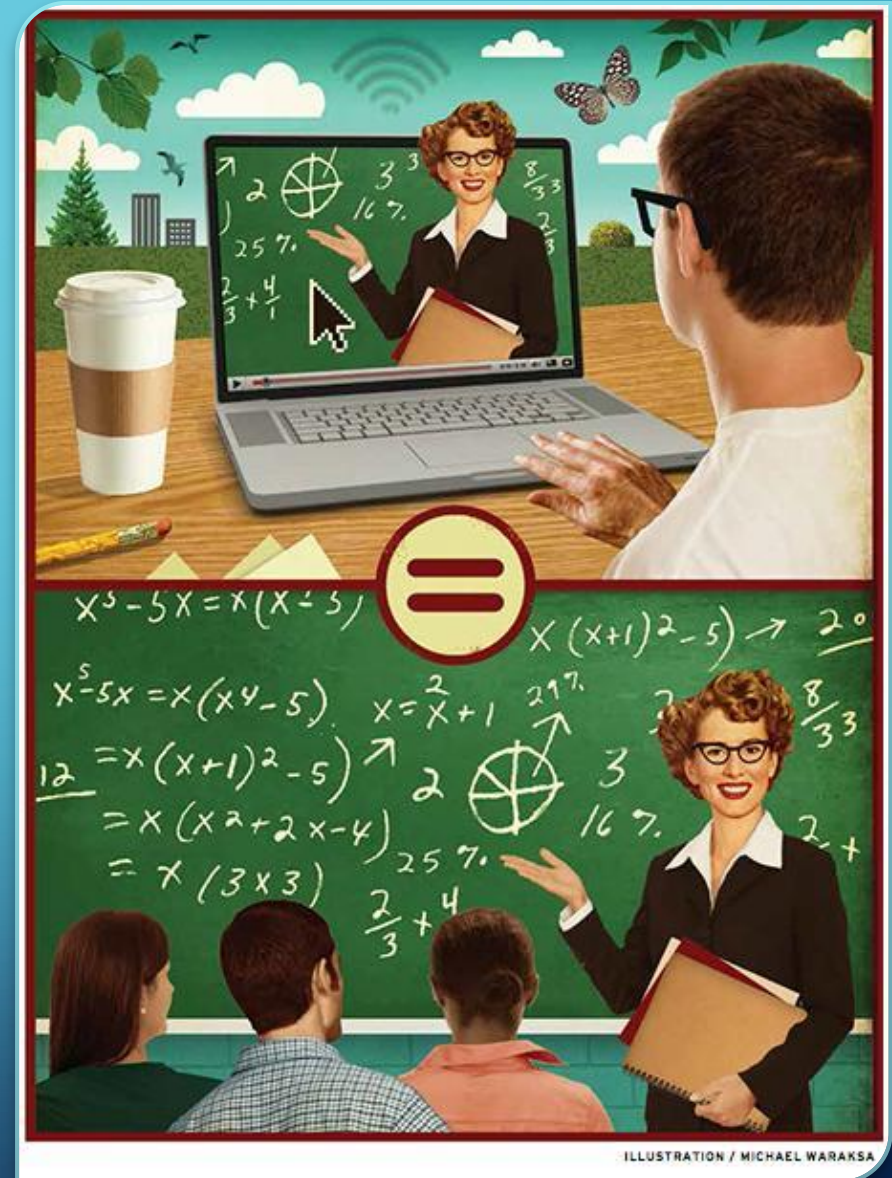


Factors shaping language anxiety

- **The student** - low self-esteem, fear of criticism from the environment
- **Perception of learning foreign language** - "I have to speak without an accent", "I must not make a mistake", "I must speak like a native speaker"
- **Teacher's perception of teaching as the ruler and the center of knowledge.** not allowing group activity for fear of losing control.
- **Teacher/student relations** - direction and guidance versus error corrections and lack of consideration.
- **Classroom set up**- individual speech in front of the class, no groups
- **Method of assessment** - an unfamiliar, vague assessment, long exam, mismatch between teaching method and assessment method.

From the existing research it appears that no significant difference was found between the degree of anxiety in the physical classroom and the online classroom, but the difference lies in the nature & quality of the anxiety

(Baralt and Gurzynski-Weiss 213; Pichette 83; Coryell and Clark 498; Grant et al. 7; Aydin 200; Hurd 12) .



Face to Face:
natural and
challenging social
environment

fun and
exciting

Online:
motivations of diversity in
the space, innovation, speed
and directness.



- Face to Face:
- teacher's rapid rate of speech causes confusion and embarrassment



frustrating and stressful



- Online:
- feelings of detachment, fear, boredom and frustration appear due to a lack of personal attention

• Baralt and Gurzynski-Weiss 216

So how does anxiety manifest itself in distance learning?

Learners often come to the online space by choice, accompanied by different assumptions and perceptions about language learning in the traditional classroom and the online world. Combining the perceptions regarding the two different learning spaces creates new assumptions and approaches that are not necessarily correct. When these assumptions meet reality, the degree of anxiety may increase or decrease.



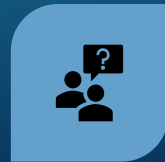
The distance factor



Language acquisition



Synchronous
Asynchronous



motivation &
enjoyment



Cooperative
learning



Cognitive
learning
strategies



Computer
anxiety



The distance factor



Language acquisition



a\synchronous



motivation & enjoyment



Cooperative learning



Cognitive learning strategies



Computer anxiety

(-)

schedule
distance
cost

input
intake

immediate feedback
short answers
untimed

motivation
organization
self discipline
learning enjoyment

group's work
think
share
trust

indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective and social)
take risks, guessing, reflections, soft music, yoga...

understanding the platforms
use of social media

(+)

not student choice
negative past experience

output

timed assignment
fear of peer's responses
fear of failing
no immediate feedback

"live show"
no motivation
no organization skills
no more enjoyment

no peer interaction

direct strategies: mental processing of the language
memory, cognition, and compensation strategies

work with unfamiliar platforms



Pedagogical recommendations

- **Training** and guiding the learner in the various platforms
- Available, open, encouraging and supportive **feedback** emphasizing that there is no expectation of perfection.
- Creating a **support network of learners**
- Awareness of **learning strategies**
- **Practice** and rehearsal before performance
- Lots of synchronous joint work **outside** the classroom
- Making **authentic and interesting materials** available to the learner
- Encouraging joining native speaker groups on **social media**

Pedagogy framework inspired by the Socratic seminar

A Socratic seminar is a ‘collaborative, intellectual dialogue facilitated with open-ended questions about a text.’ (The National Paideia Center)

Socratic seminar creates a dialectic class in regard to a story, an article, an artwork, movies, and other content.

**Students showed a tendency to become less nervous as discussion sessions were repeated.*

First step: Create the unit



- Choose comprehensible, engaging materials, find essential questions, design the rubric.
- facilitate students' comprehension and understanding: teach new vocabulary, use worksheets, provide a recording and give feedback. (Input, presentational mode)

*Present the rubric



Second step: Questions or topics for discussion

Created by students, if proficiency allowed, or by the teacher (or you can start with thought provoking statements instead).

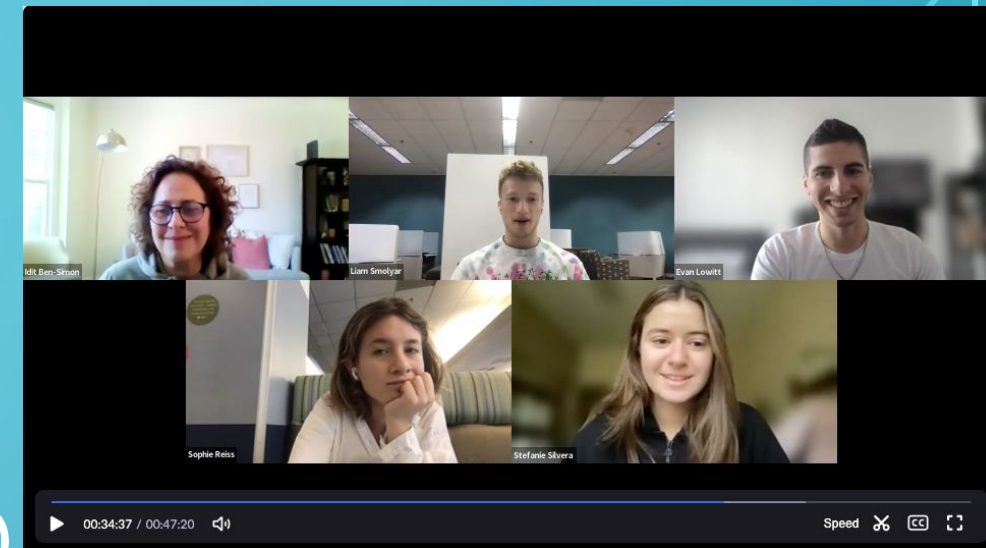
*Hand out the questions the day before.

Step three: Meet in small groups for student-led discussion

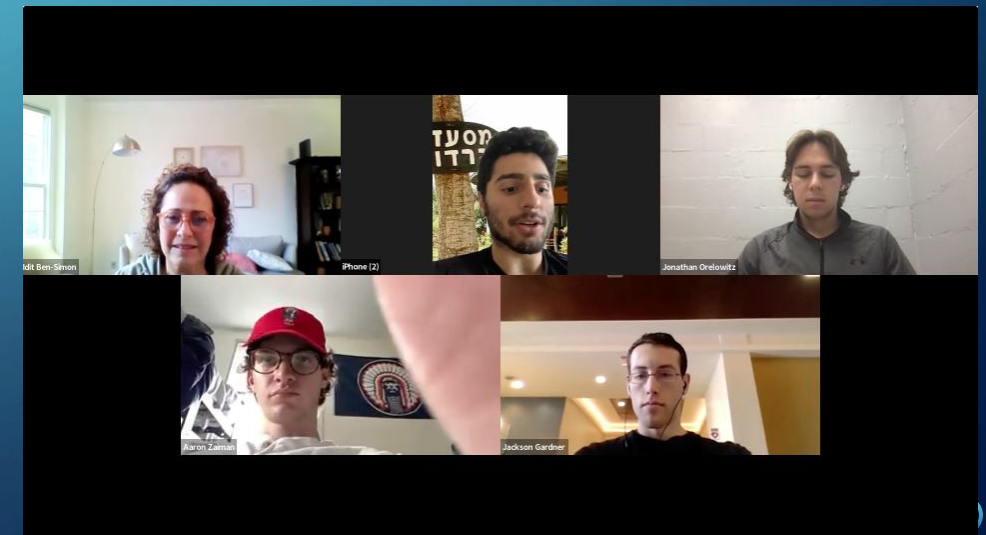
*Students present the questions of their choice (not necessarily from the list). (Output - interpersonal mode)

*By lifting teacher control and leaving the responsibility to participate to learners, we encouraged the participants to take up the challenge of keeping the discussion going.

*Familiarity among the interlocutors can influence power dynamics among them.



https://emory.zoom.us/rec/share/XLRExAkRVyPI_qIUE6J98uZ3rNq_a4NdRVwLdCp84dawO3cdey0ZYtJ-b2WxjiAdn.zcE5TnHc8kuKqlsV?startTime=1676905249000



Step four:

Writing an essay or create a project, based on ideas and insights from the discussion

(output - presentational mode)



The background is a solid teal color with a gradient from light to dark. In the corners, there are decorative white and light blue circuit-like patterns consisting of lines and circles.

Thank you!

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