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List of abbreviations

AMTB	Attitude Motivation Test Battery
ASSET	Advanced Speaking Skills for English Teachers
FL	Foreign Language
FLA	Foreign Language Anxiety
FLSA	Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety
FLCA	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety
FLCAS	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale
FLCSAS	Foreign Language Classroom Speaking Anxiety Scale
FLE	Foreign Language Enjoyment
S-FLCAS	Short- Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
EFL	English Foreign Language
PPOCS1	Practical Phonetics and Oral Communications 1
PPOCS2	Practical Phonetics and Oral Communications 2
T-FLAS	Telecollaborative Foreign Language Anxiety Scale

1. Introduction

Emotions have been a significant topic in language learning research for a considerable time now. Anxiety has been at the forefront of this research since the 1970s, as it can greatly impact learners in a multitude of ways. In the context of foreign language learning, this anxiety is termed foreign language anxiety (FLA). Extensive research has been done on the subject of FLA, having been described as one of the most “psychologically debilitating phenomena” to hinder foreign language learners’ language acquisition (Alnahidh & Altalhab 2020: 55), with effects ranging from neurological disruptions in the frontal lobe which affects memory retention (Arnold & Brown 1999: 2) to physical symptoms such as stuttering, trembling or heart palpitations (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 126; Marzec-Stawiarska 2015: 105). In addition, FLA has been shown to be one of the most significant predictors for student performance in the target language, having a distinctly negative impact (Liu, Huang & Wenhong 2011: 6).

FLA is a multifaceted construct, with subsets of skill-specific anxiety manifestations in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) is considered to be the most salient skill-specific component of FLA. As FLA most often affects students during oral production, anxiety related to speaking has been treated as the most impactful form of FLA (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 127; Young 1992: 159; Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014: 8).

FLSA affects learners in situations where they have to use their foreign language, whether it is for planned or spontaneous utterances (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 128). For advanced learners of English, this could lead to a negative impact on their studies. Students may experience anxiety when making errors, in turn becoming even more anxious than before, which is why FLSA has been described as “cyclical” (Gregersen 2003: 29). This could potentially lead to diminished participation in class and, thus, have a detrimental impact on their performance as students lack practice in the target language (Gregersen 2003: 29). Furthermore, in the long-term, students could be adversely affected in their future jobs, in which they might have to speak in English, as FLSA could be a significant obstacle to successful workplace communication (Aichhorn & Puck 2017: 755). Future English teachers suffering from

FLSA, in particular, could experience detrimental effects on their work and teaching performance.

Therefore, investigating how prevalent FLSA is at the Department of English and American Studies at the University of Vienna and which factors may contribute to it, provides useful information for lecturers at the department, in order to implement teaching practices that may help alleviate FLSA. Programme designers may also be informed by these findings during the currently ongoing redesign of the curriculum regarding the focus on speaking practice in the Bachelor and Master programs. More generally, course designers and lecturers in other tertiary education institutions who work with advanced language learners may also benefit from these insights in their lesson planning and curriculum design.

This study, thus, aims to investigate the prevalence and levels of FLSA that students experience, which factors relate to their FLSA, and whether there are differences between Bachelor and Master students in terms of FLSA levels. ‘Level’ of FLSA, in this case, means whether students can be classified as being highly, moderately or low-anxious, according to their responses in the survey.

The first part of this thesis is a literature review, which provides the necessary background information and theoretical framework for the study. First, [section 2](#), provides an overview of the interplay of emotions and the language learning process. The second part of the literature review, [section 3](#), illustrates the key concepts of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). After the concept of general FLA has been established, [section 4](#) focuses on FLSA as its own concept and a skill-specific type of FLA. The second part of the thesis is the empirical study. The [fifth section](#) of the thesis describes the methodological and empirical part of the study. Following the theoretical and methodological chapters is the analysis of the collected data and the results of the study in [section 6](#), which will also be interpreted in relation to previous research. As this is a small-scale study, the limitations of the research will also be considered in [section 7](#), before finishing with a summary of the findings in the conclusion and raising possible considerations for future research in this area in [section 8](#).

2. Emotions and the Foreign Language Learning Process

Emotions and other affective factors have been established as being influential in the language learning process since the 1970s (Arnold 2020: 5). Affect, according to Brown (2007:153)

refers to emotion or feeling. The affective domain is the emotional side of human behavior, and it may be juxtaposed to the cognitive side. The development of affective states or feelings involves a variety of personality factors, feelings both about ourselves and about others with whom we come into contact.

Feelings and emotions can be understood as the counterparts to the rational and cognitive side governing human decisions and behaviours. They are dependent on a multitude of factors, which are subjective to each individual, and can, therefore, have varying effects on language learning and other cognitive processes.

As such, affective factors and emotions can have both positive and negative effects (Arnold 2020: 4). They can either hinder or help the language learning process by influencing learners' behaviours, perceptions, and, lastly, learning outcomes (Simons & Smits 2020: xiii). One positive aspect of affect, according to Arnold (2020:4), is that it could lead to a more effective learning process. A negative aspect, on the other hand, could be its potential to hinder cognitive processes and impede students' ability to engage in learning (Arnold 2020: 4).

Over the last decades, research into affect and its connection to language learning has garnered substantial global attention. For example, Stevick (1980: 4) already commented on the influence of emotions on the language learning process in the 1980s, stating that “[s]uccess [in language learning] depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom”. Similarly, in subsequent research it can be seen that the most common scientific interests are connected to motivation, anxiety, and, more recently, positive emotions as well (Simons & Smits 2020: xiii). This chapter is thus concerned with an overview of emotions related to the language learning process,

starting with positive emotions and motivation in [section 2.1](#) Following in [section 2.2](#) are negative emotions, where a focus is put on anxiety in [section 2.2.1](#).

2.1. Positive Emotions

Research into positive emotions and their relationship to the language learning process is relatively new (Simons & Smits 2020: xiii). Two decades ago, Frederickson (2001: 220) hypothesised that positive emotions exert a lasting influence on individuals. MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012: 193) took this hypothesis as a starting point, in order to determine whether positive and negative emotions could be differentiated in the language learning process. They were able to show that positive and negative emotions were not opposite ends of a spectrum, as had previously been believed, but instead served individual functions separate from each other (MacIntyre & Gregersen 2012: 193).

One such positive emotion in the language learning context is enjoyment, more specifically foreign language enjoyment (FLE). FLE has been shown to have a positive correlation with task fulfilment, as well as improving student focus on tasks (Dewaele & MacIntyre 2014: 242). According to Botes, Dewaele and Greiff (2021: 858), FLE can be defined as “a broad positive emotion that is experienced by language learners when their psychological needs are met during challenging language-learning activities”. Additionally, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016: 216), note the importance to distinguish between simple pleasure and FLE, as FLE is “a complex emotion, capturing interacting components of challenge and perceived ability that reflect the human drive for success in the face of a difficult task”. This link between FLE and self-perceived competence has been found repeatedly in studies (Li, Jiang & Dewaele 2018: 194), making FLE an integral aspect that should be fostered in learning contexts, in order to enhance students’ language learning processes.

Another positively connotated affective factor is motivation. Given its significance in the language learning process, motivation has been termed “one of the most important individual factors” (Arnold 2020: 9). Moreover, researchers differentiate between different types of motivation, for example integrative and instrumental motivation, or intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Firstly, integrative motivation refers to a person’s

desire to understand the culture that is connected to the target language (Arnold 2020: 9). Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, is linked to the reason why someone is learning a language, for example for a certain job or achievement (Arnold 2020: 9). In contrast, the differentiation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is more generally known. It involves enjoyment of the learning process in and off itself for intrinsic motivation, and some outside impulse for extrinsic motivation (Arnold 2020: 9).

There are several motivation theories in relation to language learning, such as the social-educational model or the process-oriented model (Liu, Huang & Lee 2011: 2). While the social-educational model of motivation delineates the intricate set of attitudes towards the learning situation, with motivation representing a unifying drive that facilitates language acquisition, the process-oriented model emphasizes that the inherent nature of the work process is the driving force behind motivation (Liu, Huang & Lee 2011: 2). The fundamental premise of these theories posits that motivation in foreign language learning is shaped by attitudes and orientations towards language learning (Liu, Huang & Lee 2011: 2). Notably, intrinsic or integrative motivation is emphasized for its positive impact on language learning, sustaining learners' commitment to the process (Liu, Huang & Lee 2011: 2). Furthermore, motivation is interconnected with various factors such as self-confidence, L2 competence, language anxiety and other relevant variables (Liu, Huang & Lee 2011: 2).

2.2.Negative Emotions

Fostering positive attitudes during the language learning process is crucial, yet it is equally essential to mitigate negative emotional factors, such as boredom or anxiety.

Boredom, in comparison with FLE and FLA, has received considerably less attention in the research (Li 2021: 317). However, it has recently been added to the affective variables examined in combination with foreign language learning (e.g. Pawlak et al. 2020; Li, Dewaele & Hu 2023; Zawodniak, Kruk & Pawlak 2023). It should be noted that boredom is not specific to the language learning context or even the classroom context, instead it is a part of everyday life (Sundberg et al. 1991: 209).

Even though boredom has been a studied phenomenon since ancient Greek times (Martin, Sadlo & Stew 2006: 194), formulating a universally accepted definition has

proven to be a challenging task. This challenge stems in part from a limited comprehension of the underlying reasons for boredom and its intricate nature (Bench & Lench 2013: 460). One definition that has found widespread support is Eastwood et al.'s (2012: 482), who state: "boredom is the aversive state that occurs when it is not possible to achieve an optimal level of arousal through engagement with the environment". More specific to the language learning context, though, is Li, Dewaele and Hu's (2023: 234) definition of boredom as "a negative emotion with an extremely low degree of activation/arousal that arises from ongoing activities [which are] typically over-challenging or under-challenging and/or of little significance, relevance, or meaning to the learners."

Thus, boredom in the language learning context has been associated with a number of factors. For example, arousal, attention, and cognition have been shown to correlate with boredom in the foreign language classroom (Bench & Lench 2013: 460). Further studies are necessary to identify causality, though. Overall, it is important to alleviate boredom in the language learning context as much as possible (Bench & Lench 2013: 460).

Another negative emotion that needs to be considered in the language learning context is anxiety. Anxiety is a multifaceted concept, which psychologists have described in a number of ways. For example, Rachmann (2020: 2) defines anxiety as "a tense unsettling anticipation of a threatening but formless event, a feeling of uneasy suspense". He further compares anxiety to fear, stating that "[i]t is a negative affect so closely related to fear that in many circumstances the two terms are used interchangeably" (Rachmann 2020: 2-3). Other researchers have tried to further categorise this powerful emotion. One such conceptualisation of anxiety is facilitated through the differentiation between three types of anxiety – trait, state and situation-specific anxiety (Horwitz 2010: 154).

Firstly, trait anxiety describes a stable type of anxiety that is regarded as a distinct personality attribute which often remains unchanged over time and is not dependent on environmental or social circumstances (Gregersen 2020: 69). In this concept, individuals who experience trait anxiety are more susceptible to other kinds of anxiety as well, including FLA, as more situations are likely to cause anxiety reactions. Thus, trait anxiety further indicates an inclination to respond to threatening conditions with state anxiety (Gregersen 2020: 69).

On the other hand, state anxiety is not a disposition of an individual's personality, but rather a response triggered by specific circumstances, like a dentist visit or having to speak in public (Gregersen 2020: 69). As such, Gkonou (2014: 16) describes state anxiety as the "moment-to-moment experience" of negative emotions.

Lastly, situation-specific anxiety is a concept that describes anxiety that arises recurrently over time within the same context (Dewaele 2007: 393). Like state anxiety, situation-specific anxiety is not contingent on a person's inclination for anxiety. Rather, it can affect anyone, given that they experience the same anxiety-arousing context repeatedly.

Because of this, FLA has been defined as situation-specific anxiety that specifically occurs in settings where a learner has to use a foreign language, while at the same time being trait-like as it remains a stable learner characteristic. Furthermore, it does not change from one language learning situation to the next (MacIntyre 2018: 239; Botes 2022: 1007). Subsequently, even individuals who are not prone to trait anxiety as a stable personality feature may experience language anxiety "in the specific context of learning and using a foreign language," as Gregersen (2020: 69) asserts. According to Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014: 239), instruments that focus on measuring anxiety in foreign language specific situations, therefore, yield more consistent and useful results than instruments measuring other concepts, such as trait anxiety.

In addition to being defined as situation-specific anxiety, many previous studies further examined whether FLA could be categorised as either debilitating or facilitating. Debilitating anxiety, as explained by Scovel (1978: 139), discourages the language learner by making them avoid the learning task at hand, while facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to tackle the task by emotionally preparing them for a figurative 'fight'. The distinction between facilitating and debilitating anxiety was originally made popular by Alpert and Haber (1960), who argued for a more nuanced understanding of the concept of anxiety.

According to MacIntyre (2018: 11), the word anxiety, in English, is most commonly used to refer to a negative state of emotions, tension and a feeling of pressure that can lead to extreme discomfort and even the experience of phobias. While such intense anxiety reactions could have a potentially debilitating effect, another interpretation of anxiety – anxiety as anticipation – could have a facilitating effect (MacIntyre 2018: 12).

Similarly, Alpert and Haber's (1960: 213) argue that debilitating and facilitating anxiety are not opposite ends of a spectrum, but rather two different dimensions of the same concept. Thus, debilitating and facilitating anxiety are not mutually exclusive, as a person could experience both debilitating and facilitating anxiety, neither of them or just one of the two (Alpert & Haber 1960: 213).

However, the distinction of facilitating-debilitating has been problematic in FLA research, as Alpert and Haber's (1960: 213) positioning of the two dimensions has been misunderstood. Due to misapplications that neglect their original intention of treating facilitating and debilitating anxiety as distinct yet related dimensions, subsequent research projects applied the concepts retrospectively to explain different correlations, often involving unexpected or counterintuitive patterns. This facilitated the improper use of measuring instruments, as Alpert and Haber (1960) used two different scales to measure the concepts, whereas several SLA researchers conflated the two scales. Thus, MacIntyre (2018: 13) describes the misunderstanding of the two concepts as being the source of circular reasoning in SLA studies, as positive correlations between items and FLA are taken to indicate facilitating anxiety and, conversely, negative correlations are understood as debilitating anxiety.

Given the misapplication of the concepts, there is no consensus as to the nature of FLA as being either debilitating or facilitating (Apple 2013: 6). However, recent meta-analyses that surveyed 160 independent samples with close to 30,000 participants from different parts of the world corroborated earlier findings that showed negative associations between FLA and the language learning process, and achievement, as well as performance, in the target language (Teimouri, Goetze & Plonsky 2019; Zhang 2019).

3. Foreign Language Anxiety

Over the past four decades, second and foreign language research put considerable emphasis on the study of anxiety and its impact on language learning (MacIntyre 1999: 24; Scovel 2001: 127; Apple 2013: 6; Teimouri, Goetze & Plonsky 2019: 363). A major focus was centred on FLA, its causes, and effects. Subsequently, the following sections will present an overview of foreign language anxiety and its definitions ([section](#)

3.1), as well as the physical, emotional, cognitive and social effects of FLA in [section 3.2](#). skill-specific iterations of FLA ([section 3.2](#)). [Section 3.3](#) comprises a review of FLA research, including three different phases in FLA research and instruments used to measure FLA, in [section 3.3.1](#) and [3.3.2](#) respectively. The last section of this chapter, [section 3.4](#), consists of an overview of language skill-specific types of FLA.

3.1. Defining Foreign Language Anxiety

Foreign language anxiety is a common and intensely unpleasant experience (MacIntyre 2018: 11), which has been claimed to be one of, if not the most studied emotion in second and foreign language research. In this section, two definitions of FLA are introduced and compared.

The most commonly accepted definition of FLA is based on Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986). In their seminal paper on foreign language classroom anxiety, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 128) proposed that FLA is “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”. However, MacIntyre (1999) offered another definition of FLA. He described it in more general terms as “the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language” (MacIntyre 1999: 27). Thus, FLA distinctly relates to student’s negative feelings and reactions when trying to use a language that is not their first language. In that way, it has been shown to be different from other forms of anxiety.

Both definitions are clear in their understanding of FLA as dependent on using a foreign or second language and its relation to the language learning process. However, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 128) situate FLA exclusively in a classroom context. This is most likely due to the underlying concept they wanted to explore with the research instrument they proposed in their paper, namely foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA). Nonetheless, their definition has found its way into the research terminology and has since been used by most researchers (e.g. Foss & Reitzel 1988; Woodrow 2006; Huang 2012; MacIntyre & Gregersen 2012; Park & French 2013; Aichhorn & Puck 2017; Jiang & Dewaele 2019). In contrast, MacIntyre’s (1999: 27) definition is more general and thus applicable to contexts both inside and outside the

language classroom. Nevertheless, both definitions pertain to the same concept, a learner's anxiety during the use of their non-native language.

Additionally, it should be noted that some researchers differentiate between *foreign* language anxiety and *second* language anxiety (e.g. Woodrow 2006; Teimouri, Goetz & Plonsky 2019). Woodrow (2006: 309), in particular, argues that this differentiation is essential to her study, as most previous studies only focused on language anxiety in the context of institutional language learning, i.e. school and university, and thus on *foreign* language anxiety. Her study, on the other hand, was targeting non-native English speakers in Australia, who would also use the target language outside of a classroom environment (Woodrow 2006: 311) and thus *second* language anxiety. However, while the project at hand is also concerned with speaking anxiety experienced in discourse situations that take place outside of a language classroom, its focus is nonetheless on FLSA experienced by advanced EFL learners in their role as university students. The two concepts will, therefore, be treated as interchangeable.

3.2. Effects of Foreign Language Anxiety

FLA is not only a distressing experience, but it has also been described as being one of the most “psychologically debilitating phenomena” to hinder English foreign language (EFL) learners' language acquisition (Alnahidh & Altalhab 2020: 55). This section, thus, features an overview of the negative effects of FLA.

Given its negative effects on language learners and the language learning process, Arnold and Brown (1999: 2) report that FLA could compromise language learning to the effect of rendering even the best learning materials inadequate. They describe that FLA could disrupt the functioning of the frontal lobe and affect memory retention functions, which would reduce a student's learning capacity significantly (Arnold & Brown 1999: 2). Additionally, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994a: 15; 1994b: 301) observe that FLA is potentially disruptive to the language acquisition and production processes at every stage of the learning process, from input, to processing, to output stages. At the same time, anxiety is also understood as a reliable predictor of success in language classes (MacIntyre & Gardner 1989: 254) and even reported to be “the best single correlate of achievement” (Gardner & MacIntyre 1993: 183). Furthermore, FLA has

also been demonstrated to have a distinctly and statistically relevant negative impact on students' performance (Liu, Huang & Wenhong 2011: 6).

Overall, studies have consistently found FLA to negatively affect communication, as well as learning, in complex and multidimensional ways (Horwitz 2010: 154; Dewaele & MacIntyre 2014: 239; Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014: 6). Thus, it is not surprising that FLA can evoke a number of different reactions, which all factor together to debilitate learners' language acquisition. Gregersen and MacIntyre (2014: 6) suggest four categories for this "multiplicity of anxiety manifestations": physical, emotional/affective, cognitive/linguistic and interactional/social. All of these categories work together and interact with each other, leading to a complex expression of anxiety (Gregarson & MacIntyre 2014: 6).

Firstly, FLA can induce a variety of physical symptoms. Students are aware of these physical reactions stemming from FLA, which can manifest in various ways, such as increased heart rate, feelings of tension, and stammering as well as trembling (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 126; Marzec-Stawiarska 2015: 105). Moreover, unconscious physical behaviours of anxious students have also been observed. For instance, Gregersen (2005: 393) investigated how physical behaviours of low anxious and high anxious students differed and how they communicated their discomfort non-verbally. Gregersen (2005: 393) catalogued four different types of nonverbal reactions, including limited facial expressions with reduced brow movement and eye contact with teachers, less smiling, avoidant and closed-off posture, as well as self-touching and fidgeting with objects. It is not clear whether physical reactions such as a racing heart are precursors to cognition, or whether an emotional reaction precedes these sensations (Gregarson & MacIntyre 2014: 6). Either way, it is certain that anxiety reactions are processes that occur at a moment's notice. Due to this instantaneous trigger of physical anxiety reactions, attempts to intervene cognitively by trying to control anxious emotions are futile (Gregarson & MacIntyre 2014: 7).

Secondly, learners who show moderate or high levels of FLA seem to also experience emotional and affective expressions of FLA. For example, they may laugh out loud out of nervousness (Young 1991: 430) or hold themselves to higher standards of performance than their peers, while simultaneously worrying about their classmates' opinions of them and fear possible negative reactions to their own imperfections (Gregarson & Horwitz 2002: 562). In addition, they often feel insecure about speaking,

are afraid they may not understand the teachers, worry about failing their courses, are embarrassed about volunteering answer and participating in class, are afraid the teachers might correct their mistakes in front of the whole class, and may feel many more iterations of emotional FLA manifestations (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 129-130). Overall, they are self-conscious and often feel overwhelmed in their foreign language class.

Furthermore, FLA affects learners not only physically and emotionally, FLA can also impact them on a cognitive and linguistic level. Cognitive expressions of anxiety, which Woodrow (2006: 310) also refers to as worry, can include thoughts that are task irrelevant or even self-deprecating. Moreover, on a linguistic level, FLA has been shown to interfere with students' language production ability, as well as their target language proficiency (MacIntyre & Gardner 1994b: 284).

For example, Gregersen (2003: 25) found that anxious and non-anxious learners show differences in their ability to recognise spoken errors they made while being videotaped. As a result, Gregersen (2003: 25) reports that anxious learners made more errors while simultaneously being able to identify less of these errors retrospectively. In addition, they also correct themselves more frequently and resort to code-switching more often than non-anxious students (Gregersen 2003: 25).

More generally, Gregersen and MacIntyre (2014: 7-8) explain that, from a top-down angle, it is understood that FLA negatively interferes with target language proficiency and classroom achievement, while from a bottom-up perspective it is clear that both cognitive and linguistic elements are involved in this interference. Symptoms of this interference have been described by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 126) as including the inability to distinguish the sounds and structures the learner perceives or studying without seeing results from the work they put in. Furthermore, Young (1991: 430) reports a vast number of similar symptoms, such as the inability to replicate intonation and sound patterns in the target language, as well as the ineptitude to remember linguistic patterns that had been learned beforehand.

Lastly, another manifestation of FLA can be situated in social and interactional settings. For example, learners who find themselves to be highly anxious, often utilise what Gregersen and MacIntyre (2014: 8) term "social image protection strategies". Social image protection strategies are employed to save face with interlocutors (Gregersen &

MacIntyre 2014: 8). It does not matter whether they may be experiencing emotional, cognitive and/or physical effects of FLA, these social image protection strategies can be examined in various effects of FLA (Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014: 8). These various forms of avoidant behaviours include, amongst others, reluctance to volunteer answers in the classroom, refraining from participation in classroom activities in general, and overall remaining silent (Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014: 8). Furthermore, anxious learners also tend to give only monosyllabic answers in the target language and often opt for non-verbal communicative feedback, such as nodding their heads, in order to encourage their interlocutors to keep talking (Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014: 8). In general, highly anxious language learners commonly show signs of reduced linguistic self-confidence (MacIntyre 2018: 17).

Thus, FLA is described as not only a distressing experience but also one of the most psychologically debilitating phenomena hindering language learning (Alnahidh & Altalhab 2020: 55). The negative effects encompass physical, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and social dimensions, including various manifestations such as physical symptoms, emotional expressions, cognitive interference, language production difficulties, and avoidant behaviours in social and interactional settings (Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014: 6-8). Thus, these diverse manifestations collectively contribute to the complexity of FLA and its detrimental influence on learners' language acquisition.

3.3. Researching Foreign Language Anxiety

Since the 1970s, scholars have shown interest in finding out how anxiety relates to language learning. In the beginning phase of the research, many concepts had not been clearly defined yet and research instruments were simply 'borrowed' from other disciplines. However, the field changed rapidly in the next two decades. Today, FLA is a well-researched concept. This chapter first provides an overview of the different research trends, which MacIntyre (2018: 11) has divided into three broad phases. Secondly, different instruments for FLA research are examined, first and foremost focusing on the commonly used foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986).

3.3.1. Trends

Historically, research on FLA can be divided into three broad trends or phases, according to MacIntyre (2018: 11): the confounded phase, the specialised phase, and the dynamic phase. Each phase will be examined in this section and relevant studies will be mentioned.

The first one was the confounded phase. It was marked by its unspecified concepts of anxiety and mixture of different research methodologies. During this phase, early studies on FLA utilised existing instruments from educational research that used test anxiety as their basis of measuring FLA, which resulted in inconsistent results (Scovel 1978: 132; Young 1991: 426).

For example, Chastain (1975: 154) conducted one of the first studies on FLA in SLA, using the TAS (Test Anxiety Scales) and MAS (Manifest Anxiety Scales). He aimed to measure students' anxiety and correlate the results with their final grades in Spanish, French and German courses. His results indicated a correlation between anxiety scores and grades in every examined language, however, the directions of the correlation differed across each of the languages and were thus inconclusive (Chastain 1975: 155-157). A similar early study that is often cited in the literature is Kleinmann's (1977) investigation of the effects of anxiety on the speaking skills of ESL students. His study found a positive correlation between FLA and speaking skills (Kleinmann 1977: 105). Both studies reported inconsistent results in relation to FLA.

In the late 1970s, Scovel (1978: 132) already addressed these inconsistencies in his seminal review of existing studies on FLA. According to Horwitz (2010: 157) and MacIntyre (2018:11), Scovel's (1978) review is considered to be a turning point in FLA research, as he was urging researchers to be careful in their definition of anxiety-types and their use of research instruments, as they may not be fit for research into FLA.

Furthermore, Young (1990: 540) also criticised the state of the research at this time, stating that results were often not comparable due to a lack of consistency in the different studies. Young (1990: 540) reported that a multitude of factors were overlooked in the conception of different research projects, including the contexts of language acquisition and whether the project examined second or foreign language learning, whether the measures fit the definition of anxiety that was studied, and also

whether one variable (FLA) or different variables (e.g. motivation, personality, self-esteem, etc.) were examined (Young 1990: 540). Subsequently, MacIntyre and Gardner (1989: 255; 1991: 514) also concur that FLA is more specific than general anxiety. This means that FLA cannot be measured using instruments only geared towards examining more general types of anxiety, such as test anxiety, for example (MacIntyre & Gardner 1989: 255; MacIntyre & Gardner 1991: 514). According to MacIntyre (2018: 12), this is the essence of the confounding phase: although these different types of anxiety are not related to language learning, there were no specific measures for FLA yet, thus a variety of existing anxiety measures were used.

Following Scovel's (1978) call for action, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) designed the FLCAS. Based on student interviews and their descriptions of certain aspects in their courses that were especially anxiety-provoking, the FLCAS provided a comprehensive tool for measuring FLA (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 128). Some of the aspects mentioned by students included speaking aloud in the target language, being tested, and being afraid of negative evaluation from their peers (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 128).

The availability of a comprehensive measurement has led to an increase in systematic research on language anxiety (Teimouri, Goetze & Plonsky 2019: 365). In fact, this conceptualisation of FLA, as well as the design of an accompanying measurement instrument, marked another turning point in the research and initiated the specialised phase (MacIntyre 2018: 14). Thereby, the FLCAS constituted the first step towards consolidated FLA research (Teimouri, Goetze & Plonsky 2019: 365).

In the specialised phase, most studies were centred on speaking, as the skill was considered to be most anxiety provoking among students (Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014: 4). Studies quickly revealed that not only output, in its spoken form, was affected by FLA, but that input and processing suffered from anxiety experienced by the learner (MacIntyre & Gardner 1994b: 301). Furthermore, studies by Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley (1999) and Bailey, Onwuegbuzie and Daley (2000) confirmed and expanded previous research findings about anxiety at all processing stages. In order to extend existing empirical findings, researchers began to incorporate receptive skills into their studies, introducing measures for reading anxiety (Saito, Horwitz & Garza 1999) and later listening anxiety (Elkhafaifi 2005; Kimura 2008). Correspondingly, writing skills were also considered in the research, especially as a link to speaking and as "another

avenue for language production” (Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014: 4). Thus, separate instruments for detecting anxiety in this field were also devised (e.g. Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert 1999).

Alongside research into the correlation between FLA and communicative and linguistic factors, studies also examined the relationship between FLA and other factors, such as personality, willingness to communicate and perceived competence (MacIntyre 2018: 19). For instance, Dewaele (2002: 28) investigated the correlations between three personality traits - extraversion, psychoticism, and neuroticism – and language anxiety in Flemish students’ L2 (French) and L3 (English). Dewaele (2002: 32) found a complex pattern of results, wherein one important finding was the significant differences in the correlation of anxiety with personality traits depending on whether it concerned the students’ second or third language. This indicated that a different anxiety profile might be generated by each foreign language a person is learning (MacIntyre 2018: 19). Expanding on these findings, Dewaele, Petrides and Furnham (2008: 919) included emotional intelligence in their personality traits. Thereby, they found that participants who measured low emotional intelligence had a strong tendency to experience higher levels of language anxiety (Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham 2008: 946).

Lastly, the newest trend in researching FLA was termed the dynamic phase by MacIntyre (2018: 23). It adopts a different research strategy, as dynamic systems are viewed as “open and multiply determined” (MacIntyre 2018: 23). FLA, in this epistemology, is situated among a multitude of interacting variables that influence language acquisition and development (MacIntyre 2018: 23). Thus, MacIntyre (2018: 23) describes the perspective of the dynamic phase with regard to FLA as follows:

Anxiety is continuously interacting with a number of other learner, situational and other factors including linguistic abilities, physiological reactions, self-related appraisals, pragmatics, interpersonal relationships, specific topics being discussed, type of setting in which people are interacting and so on. Anxiety is an emotion that fluctuates over time and that might be examined on a timescale of seconds and minutes, as in the rising and falling of anxiety during communication or a timescale of days, as in fluctuations during a week of classes or a timescale of months/years or as in the trajectory of anxiety across the years of a language programme.

For learners, this suggests that FLA is a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various factors. Recognizing that FLA fluctuates over different timescales

underscores the need for a nuanced understanding and targeted strategies to manage and address FLA throughout the language learning journey. Therefore, the difference between the specialised phase and the dynamic phase lies mainly in the understanding of FLA as contextually situated and changeable from one moment to the next. FLA has, thus, also been studied over different time frames, for example from one second to another (Dewaele & Dewaele 2020: 47).

One of the first studies following this trend was Gregersen, MacIntyre and Meza's (2014: 578) examination of pre-service teachers of intermediate language proficiency during classroom presentations in their second language (Spanish). The participants' heart rates were measured, and their anxiety reactions retrospectively explained during interviews while reviewing the footage of the presentations. It was found that all subjects, whether they were identified as having high or low anxiety levels by the FLCAS (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986), experienced spikes of anxiety at least once during their presentations (Gregersen, MacIntyre & Meza 2014: 580). These spikes in anxiety occurred during vocabulary retrieval when the participants forgot what they wanted to say, or when the flow of the presentation got interrupted (Gregersen, MacIntyre & Meza 2014: 582). The study highlights that even learners who are usually comfortable and experience no, or low, FLA in general may experience anxiety depending on the context.

Another study situated in the dynamic phase, although focussing on motivation, was carried out by MacIntyre and Serroul (2015) on advanced language learners. They report that during communicative difficulties, which unfold over a span of a few seconds, the cognitive systems search for meaning and words, while the affective systems engage emotional reactions such as anxiety (MacIntyre & Serroul 2015: 113). Furthermore, failure to communicate in a foreign language may lead to a self-assessment process, which, if unsatisfactory, triggers an anxiety reaction (MacIntyre & Serroul 2015: 115). MacIntyre (2018: 25) aptly describes this as the "irony of anxiety," as the anxiety reaction itself inhibits successful communication, resulting in a vicious cycle of FLA. Thus, the two studies by Gregersen, MacIntyre and Meza (2014) and MacIntyre and Serroul (2015) examined moment-to-moment reactions, highlighting the dependence of FLA on the learner's situational context.

However, research conducted during the dynamic phase was also interested in examining FLA over a longer period of time, such as months or years. Dewaele (2007:

393) describes most studies in that phase, which attempt to measure diachronic variation of anxiety, as “quasi-longitudinal,” since they only compared scores of language anxiety across different year or age groups. Longitudinal studies, according to MacIntyre (2018: 26) have been exceedingly rare in FLA research.

One exception is Piniel and Csizér’s (2015: 164) study, as they use latent growth curve modelling and longitudinal cluster analysis to describe changes in issues pertaining to language learning, including language anxiety. They collected both quantitative, as well as qualitative data from advanced EFL learners over the course of a 14-week academic L2 writing course (Piniel & Csizér’s 2015: 170). The results indicate that there are different trajectories associated with anxiety and motivation: the established combination of low anxiety and high motivation, but also the unusual pairing of high anxiety and high motivation (Piniel & Csizér’s 2015: 184).

Another, more recent, longitudinal study was performed by Pan and Zhang (2021: 7), who examined high-intermediate language learners over the span of a semester (16 weeks). Their study focused on the changes in FLE and FLA over the course of the semester (Pan & Zhang 2021: 5). Pan and Zhang (2021: 14) report substantial change in both affective variables, with FLA being more stable than FLE.

Similarly, Veenstra and Weaver (2022: 3) examine changes in FLSA in 342 lower-intermediate language students over the course of a 15-week English presentation course. Their study found a decrease in overall FLSA over the course of the semester, while it also shows that students were more worried about their own English abilities in comparison to their classmates, felt more reluctant to express themselves in the target language and generally reported higher levels of aversion towards speaking English (Veenstra & Weaver 2022: 7).

Although research conducted in the dynamic phase, as well as longitudinal studies, are both promising due to their focus on situating language anxiety in different psychological, interpersonal, social and even temporary contexts, this study follows the trends exhibited within the specialised phase. This is due to constraints in the size of the project. Given that this study is a thesis project, limited resources were available and neither moment-to-moment changes in FLSA, nor longitudinal changes in FLSA could have feasibly been examined. Instead, the focus is put on students’ reports of their FLSA, measured through questionnaires.

3.3.2. Measuring Foreign Language Anxiety

A number of research instruments for measuring FLA have been designed over the last decades. Thus, this section provides a short overview of scales used to measure FLA. However, as none of them have received any particular support in the research (MacIntyre & Gregersen 2012: 106), the focus will be on the FLCAS. Given that the FLCAS by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) is the most frequently used scale (MacIntyre & Gregersen 2012: 106), it will be discussed in more detail than other scales. Additionally, adaptations of the FLCAS will also be mentioned in this section.

One of the first scales which measured FLA, the French Class Anxiety Scale, was devised by Gardner (1985: 179) as part of the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). The focus of the AMTB was not on anxiety specifically, but rather, as the name suggests, on motivation and attitude and the relationship between these concepts and the language learning process. However, the subscale of French Class Anxiety consisted of five items related to FLA when speaking L2 French in class. The items included in this scale inform some of the items used in the FLCAS by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986: 129-130).

Another early research instrument that also addresses FLA was the English Use Anxiety Scale (Clément, Gardner & Smythe 1977). This scale consisted of 38 variables related to FLA, which included five items referring to “English Class Anxiety” (Clément, Gardner & Smythe 1977: 125). Another eight items in the scale measured “English Use Anxiety,” which were included to measure a subject's “anxiety or discomfort when speaking English in a real-life situation” (Clément, Gardner & Smythe 1977: 126).

While the above-mentioned scales were attempts to define and measure FLA, the instrument that succeeded in providing the first step towards consolidated FLA research was the FLCAS (Teimouri, Goetze & Plonsky 2019: 365). The FLCAS was developed after Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 128) observed students’ desire to join support groups in preparation for their foreign language classes at a university in Texas in 1983. The students in these support groups expressed their concerns about and difficulties with various aspects of the language learning process, including their anxious responses in the foreign language classroom (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 128). Thus, the FLCAS was developed, in order to examine the presence of FLA and

its severity. It consists of 33 items following a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*.

Since its first publication, the FLCAS has been a popular tool in peer-reviewed FLA research (MacIntyre & Gregersen 2012: 106). However, like many psychological measures, the FLCAS has faced some criticism and limitations. For example, Sparks and Ganschow (2007: 261) remarked that some of the items “seem to be tapping students’ perceptions and attitudes about language as well as their feelings about anxiety.” Thus, the scale might measure more than just FLA. Furthermore, out of the 33 items, 20 focus on speaking and listening, in particular (Saito, Horwitz, and Garza 1999: 202). This means that FLA caused by other aspects of language learning cannot be identified by the FLCAS, as they are simply not present within the items of the scale. In addition, Horwitz (2016: 72) herself has cautioned to take additional variables into consideration when working with the FLCAS, in particular different learner populations and their respective proficiency levels, cultural differences, and learning contexts.

Thus, the first variable that should be considered when using the FLCAS for research purposes is the difference in learner populations (Horwitz 2016: 73). Seeing as FLA can be influenced by language proficiency, Horwitz (2016: 73) hypothesises that the underlying components of FLA may also vary in students of different proficiency levels. Another point that was raised in connection with learner populations and proficiency concerns the experience of FLA, as advanced learners may be anxious about conveying subtle meaning when communicating, while beginner learners are already worried about simple aspects of language use, such as articulation (Horwitz 2016: 73)

In addition to learner populations, cultural differences may also affect the outcome of FLA research using the FLCAS. Here, Horwitz (2016: 73) describes, for example, that the importance the target language holds in the cultural context of the learner population may influence the levels of FLA reported by the subjects. Horwitz (2016: 73) concedes that

[s]ince the FLCAS was developed and validated in English-speaking American populations (Horwitz, 1986), we must consider that the measure does not even include items eliciting anxiety triggers that people within particular cultural groups might experience.

This means that certain cultural influences may not be covered in the FLCAS and can, therefore, not be assessed through the scale.

Lastly, Horwitz (2016: 73), mentions that the specific learning context examined in a study could also affect the factor structure of the FLCAS. However, Horwitz (2016: 73) also recognises the close interrelation of learning context and cultural context. Thus, she urges future studies to distinctly delineate the particular group of learners and the learning environment under investigation. This is essential to ascertain whether there are variations in the nature of FLA across different learner groups and educational contexts (Horwitz 2016: 73).

Nevertheless, the available psychometric evidence on the FLCAS suggests that the measure is reliable and valid, affirming its ability to consistently and accurately assess FLA (Botes, Dewaele & Greiff 2020a: 29). This has been confirmed by various studies, which report an internal consistency of $\alpha > .90$ (e.g. Aida, 1994; Elkhafaifi, 2005). Given its prevalence in academic research and strong internal consistency, it is not surprising that, to this day, most researchers investigating FLA utilise the FLCAS (Botes, Dewaele & Greiff 2020a: 30; Piniel & Zólyomi 2022: 174).

However, not all researchers use the full FLCAS for their studies. Instead, the FLCAS has repeatedly been shortened and adapted to fit the needs of the researchers (Botes, Dewaele & Greiff 2020a: 29). Furthermore, it has also been common to translate the questionnaire into other languages, including German (Bruckner 2023), in order to facilitate understanding in the research subjects.

While many researchers chose to adapt the scale according to their study, an eight-item short form has been proposed for general use (Botes 2022: 1007). This scale, commonly referred to as S-FLCAS, was popularised by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) and has since been used repeatedly in empirical research (Botes 2022: 1007). Like the original FLCAS, the S-FLCAS has also been translated into different languages, again including German (Janoschek 2023, Pabst 2023).

Another noteworthy adaptation of the FLCAS was the telecollaborative foreign language anxiety scale (T-FLAS). In order to accurately measure FLA in the online learning context, Fondo and Jacobetty (2020) developed the T-FLAS, as there had previously been no tool available for measuring FLA in online learning situations, specifically. In order to address this need, the T-FLAS consisted of 21 items, seven items addressing problems with technology and the other 14 items being concerned

with FLA in virtual learning contexts. Those 14 items measuring FLA were adapted from the original FLCAS.

The study at hand is also included in the long list of empirical research relying on an adapted version of the FLCAS. While the FLCAS has been criticised for mainly comprising items measuring anxiety related to speaking (Saito, Horwitz, and Garza 1999: 202), the focus of this study lies on speaking anxiety and thus intentionally makes use of only those items to measure FLA.

The adaptations made to the FLCAS for the purpose of this study are detailed in [section 5.2.2](#). The FLCAS was chosen in order to facilitate comparison between the results of this project and previous studies, given the FLCAS prevalence in the research.

3.4.Skill-specific Foreign Language Anxiety

FLA may not only be examined as a general construct across all areas related to language learning, but it can also be investigated in relation to one particular language skill. Language-skill-specific anxiety, therefore, is a construct closely related to FLA, referring to anxiety in listening, writing, reading, or lastly, speaking (Huang 2012: Xiii). Furthermore, Gregersen and MacIntyre (2014: 8) mention the possibility that a learner's anxiety may be increased by the awareness of a disparity in the student's abilities in one or more skills. Thus, FLA related to one specific skill might influence a learner's anxiety with respect to other language skills. This implies that students who perceive themselves as less proficient in one domain compared to another might contribute to their own anxiety by being aware of their perceived shortcomings. For example, a student might feel confident in their writing skills, but feel less adequate when speaking. This perceived discrepancy in their skills may, in turn, affect their FLA in relation to speaking, affecting it in a negative way. Thus, anxiety in one skill domain may be self-triggering through the comparison with skills in other domains.

Historically, until the end of the twentieth century, research on FLA generally focussed on a combination of speaking and listening skills and their anxiety inducing qualities (Horwitz 2014: 162). Following this phase, situation-specific language anxiety constructs were introduced, led by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) FLCA, which

provided the basis for the development of more nuanced FLA related fields (Teimouri, Goetze & Plonsky 2019: 365). After the conception of this scale, various researchers expanded this understanding by studying FLA in other skill-related contexts, such as reading (e.g. Saito, Horwitz & Garza 1999), writing (e.g., Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert 1999) and listening (e.g. Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014). Accordingly, FLSA as a separate, skill-specific type of anxiety, has also been researched since the 1990s (e.g. Young 1990).

The first skill-specific foreign language anxieties to be studied on their own were reading and writing anxiety (Saito, Horwitz & Garza 1999; Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert 1999, respectively). While reading allows foreign language learners to take their time with a language sample by re-reading the text, FLA can still arise in this domain. Therefore, Saito, Horwitz & Garza (1999: 212) proposed that students feel anxious about reading when they have difficulties decoding symbol systems or scripts, which are new to them, at an adequate speed, while simultaneously being unequipped with schema activation that would lend itself to interpreting content that is culturally unfamiliar. Writing, on the other hand, presents different obstacles for language learners. According to Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert (1999: 421), students who experience foreign language writing anxiety are negatively affected in their communication, which often leads to avoidance of written social exchanges and manifests in fear of negative evaluation.

In comparison to foreign language reading and writing anxiety, foreign language listening anxiety has been described as “particularly problematic” due to its necessity for oral interaction and communication (Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014: 8). Learners often struggle with the different demands of listening, which are presented, for example, by the speed and unpredictability of utterances and incomplete expressions or colloquialisms (Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014: 8). Another factor that may influence a learner’s foreign language listening anxiety is the sometimes misguided notion of trying to understand every single word that is being spoken (Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014: 8). Furthermore, processing issues were also found to surface as “a result of ineffective strategies, lack of processing time, and the impossibility of studying how to listen or check comprehension” (Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014: 9). This means that learners do not only experience foreign language listening anxiety because of input problems, but also due to processing difficulties.

The fourth skill-specific iteration of FLA, FLSA, is considered to be the most salient skill-specific component of FLA. As FLA most often affects students during oral production, anxiety related to speaking has been treated as the most impactful form of FLA (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 127; Young 1992: 159; Gregersen & MacIntyre 2014: 8). As FLSA is the focus of this study it will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

4. Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

Spoken communication in the target language is a prevailing issue in foreign language education. FLA is notably pronounced in communicative situations, as learners struggle with both spontaneous and planned utterances (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 128). Hence, they experience the most prominent form of FLA: foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA). This chapter thus presents an overview of the impact of FLSA, instruments for measuring FLSA and the different factors and discourse types affecting FLSA. Furthermore, the interplay of proficiency, self-perceived competence and FLSA will also be addressed.

The detrimental effects of FLA on various aspects of language learning, classroom achievement and general performance have been described in [section 3.2](#). Correspondingly, studies on the effect of FLSA on oral performance also indicate a negative correlation between students' FLA and their speaking performance during oral exams (Phillips 1992: 20; Hewitt & Stephenson 2011: 18; Gregersen 2003: 25). Furthermore, FLA, and by extension FLSA, has been described as “cyclical” by Gregersen (2003: 29). This means that students experience FLA while making errors and, in turn, become even more anxious than they had been before. This could then lead to diminished participation in class and, consequently, to a negative impact on their performance as the students lack practice in the target language (Gregersen 2003: 29). Furthermore, in the long-term, students could be adversely affected in their future job, in which they might have to speak in English, as FLSA could be “a fundamental threat for effective communication in the workplace” (Aichhorn & Puck 2017: 755). In particular, future English teachers suffering from FLSA could experience detrimental effects on their work and teaching performance.

4.1. Measuring Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

Unlike the clear prevalence of the FLCAS in general FLA research, no singular scale specifically developed for FLSA has garnered comparable support in foreign language learning research (Veenstra & Weaver 2022: 2). Consequently, several measures have been proposed, focusing on communicative situations (Young 1990; Woodrow 2006), as well as situations identified by students as anxiety arousing (e.g. Cheng 2017). Additionally, adapted versions of the FLCAS have also been utilised repeatedly to measure FLSA. In order to give an overview of some of the different measures used to identify learner levels of FLSA, the aforementioned scales will be briefly described in this section.

The first speaking-skill-specific FLA measure was proposed by Young (1990). Young (1990: 541) designed a scale to examine in-class speaking activities, which may cause FLSA in students. Overall, the questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first one included 24 items designed to measure general FLCA in relation to in-class activities, including items such as “I am less anxious in class when I am not the only person answering a question,” and “I prefer to be allowed to volunteer an answer instead of being called on to give an answer” (Young 1990: 543). Examining specific activities, the second section asked learners to rate how much anxiety they experienced if confronted with 20 selected class activities, including *reading aloud in class* and *giving a presentation or skit in front of the class* (Young 1990: 547). Lastly, the third section provided the students with the opportunity to identify teacher behaviour that decreased their FLSA (Young 1990: 542). This section consisted of open-ended questions and student answers include teacher behaviour, such as *teacher attitude towards error correction*, class activities, including *doing activities in pairs or groups* and *getting speaking practice*, and teacher characteristics like *being friendly or relaxed* (Young 1990: 549).

While Young (1990: 540) explicitly stated her intention to design a scale for measuring anxiety in relation to foreign language speaking, it appears to me that the items themselves do not reflect that aim perfectly. Seeing as seven out of the 24 items in section one and another seven out of 21 class activities in section two are not directly related to speaking, the scale does not measure FLSA exclusively. Examples for these

non-speaking related items include “I feel very relaxed in class when I have studied a great deal the night before,” and “I would get less upset about class if we did not have to cover so much material in such a short period of time” in section 1 (Young 1990: 543) and “[r]ead silently in class” or “[l]isten to questions and write answers to the questions” (Young 1990: 543). However, at least for section 1, Young (1990: 542) addresses this discrepancy by stating that this section encompasses items “related to general foreign language class anxiety”. On the other hand, there is no reasoning given for the inclusion of seven items that are not related to speaking in section two, even though the scale was intended to measure FLSA.

A second measure focusing on communication situations was developed by Woodrow (2006). In order to get more precise results about different communicative situations and their effects, Woodrow (2006: 314) developed an instrument for measuring which discourse types are more anxiety inducing than others for second language users. She included eleven different communicative situations, both in-class and outside of the classroom. The ones relating to class-activities were *giving oral presentations, role-playing in front of the class, contributing to formal discussions, answering teacher questions, speaking to the teacher informally, and taking part in group discussions* (Woodrow 2006: 317). Even though Woodrow (2006: 309) specifically aimed to break away from the tradition of studying classroom-based speaking anxiety, the discourse types situated outside of classroom activities were limited and still partly concerned with communicative contexts that take place at university. She included *asking a lecturer questions, answering a lecturer's question, taking part in conversations with more than one native speaker, answering a native speaker's questions and starting conversations with native speakers* as communicative situations second language users might encounter (Woodrow 2006: 317). While the questions pertaining to communication with native speakers might indeed happen outside of classroom situations, conversations with lecturers are still most likely concerned with academic topics. Hence, they may not represent everyday communicative situations unrelated to their academic career that second language users would be likely to encounter in their everyday lives.

Following a different approach, Cheng (2017: 18) devised four brief scales measuring skill-specific anxiety, including FLSA. Each scale consisted of only nine items and measured three-dimensional factors of language anxiety, namely cognitive anxiety,

somatic anxiety and avoidance behaviour (Cheng 2017: 23). In addition, three items per scale were identified as matching these dimensional factors (Cheng 2017: 20). For speaking, these three items were “[w]hen speaking in English, I often worry that I will make language mistakes,” “[w]hen speaking in English, I often worry that my speaking performance is worse than others,” and “[a]s soon as I start speaking English, I begin to worry about not being able to express myself” (Cheng 2017: 20). Finally, it should be noted that the scales were intended to be used in combination with other research contexts that have a need for measuring language-skill-related aspects of anxiety, for example when measuring the effectiveness of anxiety reduction strategies (Cheng 2017: 23). However, Cheng (2017: 23) also explicitly states that these scales should not be used as an alternative to established and comprehensive language skill-specific measures when the research intention is to examine one skill-specific anxiety in particular.

While these measures for FLSA used new scales, the most commonly used instrument today in relation to FLSA remains the FLCAS (MacIntyre & Gregersen 2012: 106). A variety of studies have used adapted versions of the FLCAS (e.g. Teimouri Goetze & Plonsky 2019; Zhang 2019; Botes 2022; Veenstra & Weaver 2022), usually eliminating items that do not relate to FLSA. Thus, the adaptation of FLCAS to the specific research needs is the most frequently used method to examine FLSA (MacIntyre & Gregersen 2012: 106).

However, another way of adapting the FLCAS is to incorporate specific items into new scales. For instance, Apple (2013: 10) only uses select items from the FLCAS in combination with items from the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-20) (McCroskey 1978) to create his Foreign Language Classroom Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLCSAS). The FLCSAS consists of 15 items, including, for example, “I feel nervous when I can’t express my opinion,” or [s]peaking in a group of classmates makes me feel self-conscious (Apple 2013: 14).

Overall, most FLSA measurements today use either the FLCAS or instruments adapted from it and have thereby successfully and effectively assessed students’ levels of FLSA (Veenstra & Weaver 2022: 2). Typically, FLSA, as identified by these measures, has been reported as either a total score (e.g. Liu & Jackson 2008) or as a weighted or mean score (e.g. Dewaele & MacIntyre 2014). Furthermore, the scores were then assigned to different groups, usually termed low, moderate and high anxiety,

according to designated cut-points (Veenstra & Weaver 2022: 2). This study also divided the respondents' levels of FLSA into low, moderate and high anxiety, along the cut-off marks of below 2.5 for low anxiety, 2.5-3.49 for moderate anxiety, and over 3.5 for high anxiety based on their mean scores, following Khreisat (2022: 456). If divided into these levels, most studies report moderate FLSA (e.g. Liu & Jackson 2008; Dewaele & MacIntyre 2014; Liu, Huang & Lee 2011; Jiang & Dewaele 2019; Alnahidh & Altahab 2020; Khreisat 2022), even among advanced learner populations (Toubot, Hock Seng & Binti Atan Abdullah 2018; Botes, Dewaele & Greiff 2020b).

4.2. Factors affecting Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

FLSA is a complex phenomenon without one single identifiable cause. Instead, it has been hypothesised to comprise a number of factors that, in combination, may be the underlying causes of FLSA. While different variables and factors will be treated individually in these sections, it needs to be mentioned that they should not be seen in isolation. Instead, there is dynamic interplay of various factors to be taken into consideration when addressing FLSA. However, for analytical purposes, the categorisation of variables into separate factors is useful in order to get a more structured overview of how each different factor interacts with FLSA.

Therefore, in this chapter, the most commonly explored factors in FLSA research will be discussed. Firstly, in [section 4.3.1](#) research findings on the interplay of demographic factors and FLSA are described. Secondly, [section 4.3.2](#) elaborates on psychological factors and their connection to FLSA. Lastly, [section 4.3.3](#) provides an overview of linguistic factors identified by various studies, which are more specific and more narrowly defined than the factors covered in the previous sections. It should be noted that this section is meant as a brief overview of research on FLSA and factors that might inform it but cannot provide a complete list of studies.

4.2.1. Demographic factors

In the literature, a number of learner variables and demographic factors have been linked to FLSA, including age, educational background, language repertoire, socio-cultural background and gender. Thus, the following sub-section provides a summary of research indicating links between demographic variables and FLSA.

Firstly, age has repeatedly been linked to FLSA. Lower levels of FLSA have been shown to correlate with early age of onset of acquisition, as well as authentic language use during the language learning phase (Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham 2008: 947; Dewaele 2010a: 53). Dewaele (2010a: 68) also states that older foreign language users and foreign language learners who received higher education were found to be less anxious when using the target language than younger and less educated subjects. However, the correlation between age and FLSA is not clear, as earlier studies have shown a positive correlation between age of learners and levels of anxiety (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley 1999: 229). Accordingly, Zhang (2019: 774) also reports “a significant modulating effect of age on the anxiety–performance correlation,” showing a stronger correlation between performance and anxiety as the age of the subjects increased. Zhang (2019: 774) attributes these results to decreasing cognitive abilities of learners at an older age, noting that the majority of participants in the studies examined in the meta-analysis were “mature adults”. Although he did not define the age range for “mature adults”, Zhang (2019: 774) continued to relate higher levels of anxiety to diminishing language learning ability at progressing age, which may have a significant impact on the participants’ performance and degree of FLSA.

Another factor that has been linked to FLSA is a learner’s language repertoire. Research has found that subjects who have learned a higher number of foreign languages tend to experience less FLSA in both their foreign languages and their native languages (Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham 2008: 947; Dewaele 2010a: 63; Dewaele 2010b: 121). While it has been shown that, on the one hand, having a larger language repertoire can have a positive effect on anxiety, the levels of FLA and FLSA, on the other hand, were found to increase linearly from the L1 to the L5 of pentalingual subjects (Dewaele 2010a: 68). Additionally, a correlation between the typological distance of languages in the subject’s repertoire and the target language has been

found as well (Dewaele 2010b: 123). Thus, higher FLSA is linked to learning a new language in an unfamiliar linguistic family, whereas lower FLSA has been shown to occur when it comes to similar linguistic families in the target language (Dewaele 2010b: 123).

Further factors that have repeatedly been associated with lower levels of FLSA are frequent language use and exposure to the target language. For instance, Karairmak and Mede (2017: 126) reported that prior experience with the target language, for example through a friend who speaks the language or attending university preparatory school, was linked to lower levels of FLSA. Further, foreign language socialisation and a large network of interlocutors with whom the language can be used, as well as frequent use of the foreign language outside of or after language instruction have been found to relate to lower FLSA (Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham 2008: 947). In addition, Chou's (2018: 625) findings on English-medium instruction contexts showed that students who received instruction solely in the target language experienced lower levels of FLSA and were more confident in their English-speaking skills, as they generally reported more positive attitudes towards learning the language.

In addition to demographic factors, FLSA may also be influenced by a learners' socio-cultural context (Park & French: 468). Almost two decades ago, Woodrow (2006: 311) recognised that much of the research into anxiety in the language learning process was based in the United States, where studies were conducted in foreign language classes that are a part of undergraduate degree programs.

Research foci have changed since Woodrow's (2006:311) assessment of FLSA research being US-centric, as more diverse learner contexts have been included in studies over the last decades. Notably, a high number of studies were conducted in Chinese (e.g. Liu 2006, Mak 2011, He 2013, Jiang & Dewaele 2019) and Middle Eastern settings (e.g. Sadighi & Dastpak 2017 in Iran, Alnahidh & Altalhab 2020 in Saudi Arabia, Dewaele et al. 2022 in Kazakhstan). However, research was not limited to these populations and studies were also conducted in South America (e.g. Gregersen & Horwitz 2002 in Chile) and Europe (e.g. Dewaele 2002 in Belgium, Piniel & Csizér's 2015 in Hungary, Marzec-Stawiarska 2015 and Kruk 2017 in Poland). Specific learner populations from Africa seem to be underrepresented in the literature, as only two studies could be found (Gerencheal 2016 in Ethiopia; Toubot, Hock Seng & Binti Atan Abdullah 2018 in Libya).

As this study aims to expand research on FLSA in the Austrian context, an overview of previous studies in this specific learner contexts is pertinent. To this day, a total of four studies concerning FLA have been conducted in Austria, where this study is also situated; all of them being thesis projects (Tschida 2016, Janoschek 2023; Pabst 2023, Bruckner 2023). Only one of them specifically focuses on FLSA (i.e. Bruckner 2023), investigating FLSA in online-learning contexts.

The first Austrian study on FLA was conducted by Tschida (2016). Tschida (2016: 1) performed a replication of Steinberg and Horwitz's (1986) study, investigating the relationship between FLA and students' use of use of denotative and interpretive utterances in spoken language. Her participants were 12 vocational school students in Vienna, who had been studying English as a second language for at least eight years (Tschida 2016: 39). In accordance with the original study, Tschida (2016: 53) found that highly anxious learners did not produce significantly lower amounts of denotative and interpretive utterances. However, she also found that Austrian students were more likely to be anxious than the participants of the original study (Tschida 2016: 54). Tschida (2016: 49) linked the differences between her results and the results of the original study to the different contexts and participants of the two studies. In contrast to the original study's participants, who were ESL students at the University of Texas, Tschida's (2016: 39) participants were foreign language learners who had limited contact with the target language outside of school, while the original study's participants were second language learners who presumably had to speak the target language more often.

A second study in Austria that focused on anxiety, among other emotions, was conducted by Pabst (2023). Although Pabst's (2023) main focus was not on FLA or FLSA specifically, her study should also be mentioned as it does contribute to the understanding of FLA in the Austrian context. In her study, Pabst (2023: 3) investigated the effects of Positive Psychology on learners' emotions related to foreign language learning, such as enjoyment, engagement, boredom, and anxiety. She collected data from 328 upper secondary school pupils in Lower Austria and Vienna and found that, in general, participants reported that they experienced higher levels of FLE than FLA in the EFL classroom (Pabst 2023: 80).

Another study examining emotions in foreign language learning in the Austrian school context was carried out by Janoschek (2023). Janoschek (2023: 1) focused on lower-

secondary EFL classrooms, specifically investigating foreign language enjoyment and anxiety. She collected responses from 144 EFL students at a middle school in Vienna. Her results indicate that students experience less FLA than FLE in language learning contexts (Janoschek 2023: 39). Therefore, Janoschek's (2023) results coincide with Pabst's (2023) findings, showing that FLA is less prevalent in Austrian classrooms than FLE.

The most recent Austrian study is Bruckner's (2023: 2) examination of FLSA in online lessons during the Covid-19 pandemic and included responses from 146 lower and upper secondary Austrian EFL students. Bruckner's (2023: 2) results indicate that upper secondary students experienced higher levels of FLSA in their online English classes than younger lower secondary students (Bruckner 2023: 56). Furthermore, Bruckner (2023: 56) also found differences in the reported levels of FLSA between male and female students. According to her research, female students in both lower and upper secondary experienced higher levels of FLSA than male students (Bruckner 2023: 56).

Given the frequent mention of differences in cultural contexts in the literature (e.g. Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham 2008: 918; Alharbi 2021: 1552), it is important not to overlook the regional and cultural backgrounds of studies. Especially variations in findings regarding gender differences and FLSA have been attributed to differing socio-cultural contexts (Park & French: 468). It should be noted that gender, in the context of the studies examined, refers to the binary-coded biographical variable of male/female, in the way the concept is conventionally used in quantitative research on gender and language anxiety (Piniel & Zólomy 2021: 177). As gender has remained a controversial variable with regards to FLSA, different research results will be discussed in this section.

First of all, gender as a demographical factor of FLA has been considered in a number of studies, producing varying results (e.g. Dewaele 2010a; Çağatay 2015; Alharbi 2021). For instance, in a Saudi university context, Khreisat (2002: 463) reported no significant differences between male and female students. Additionally, Dewaele, Petrides and Furnham's (2008: 935) international study found only marginal differences between male and female participants. Accordingly, in his review of the literature Dewaele (2010a: 68) described that there were no significant differences in anxiety between genders.

Different results with regards to gender differences, however, have also been reported. For example, Öztürk and Gürbüz (2013: 663) found that female Turkish university students were significantly more anxious when speaking than male students. Çağatay's study (2015: 654) corroborated these findings, again in a Turkish context. In addition, Park and French (2013: 468) also reported higher levels of anxiety in female participants in a Korean university population. Conversely, Kitano (2001: 556) found that male US-American students were more anxious when they had to speak the target language than female students.

Lastly, a recent meta-analysis of 48 independent samples using the full FLCAS by Piniel and Zólomy (2021: 186) found no significant correlation between language anxiety and gender. Even though female subjects were shown to experience slightly higher levels of anxiety, the differences were too low to be statistically relevant. Linking back to older studies by Khreisat (2002) and Dewaele, Petrides and Furnham (2008), this meta-analysis thereby corroborated previous findings. Thus, research points towards minimal, statistically insignificant differences in FLSA levels based on the subject's gender.

In the Austrian context, the research pertaining to demographic factors is notably sparse. Even though Tschida's (2016), Pabst's (2023), Janoschek's (2023), and Bruckner's (2023) theses were valuable contributions, literature regarding demographic factors and FLSA remains limited. This is because the four thesis projects included insubstantial information on demographic data and its interrelation with FLSA. However, some demographic factors were included in the research. For instance, Janoschek (2023: 45) found no differences in FLA between male and female middle school students. Furthermore, she also reported no significant correlation between multilingualism and FLA (Janoschek 2023: 50). Bruckner (2023:56), on the other hand, found that female students reported higher levels of FLSA than male students. Neither Tschida (2016), nor Pabst (2023) examined demographic factors in their research projects. Thus, the project at hand could provide valuable insights into FLSA and its relationship with demographic factors in the specific learner population of Austrian EFL students at the Department of English and American Studies of the University of Vienna.

4.2.2. Psychological factors

Wide-ranging research into FLSA has been conducted to investigate possible reasons for speaking anxiety. The fear of speaking in a foreign language has been explored not only in relation to demographic factors, but also with regards to various complex psychological constructs, including social anxiety, communication apprehension and self-esteem or self-confidence (Young 1990: 540). In addition, constructs such as fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety have also been linked to FLA and FLSA (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 127).

Firstly, social anxiety, which has been deemed to be highly related to communication and communicative problems (e.g. Young 1990), can be defined as a type of anxiety that is aroused by the “prospect or presence of interpersonal evaluation in real or imagined social settings” (Young 1990: 540). Correspondingly, fear of negative evaluation, a factor proposed by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 127) encompasses this type of anxiety, while disregarding the general implications of being anxious in all social situations and instead focussing on the language learning context. Fear of negative evaluation will be described in more detail after communication apprehension and self-confidence.

Secondly, communication apprehension, a factor commonly associated with FLSA (Young 1990: 540), is significantly influenced by a person's “level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated oral communication” (McCroskey 1978: 192). McCroskey's definition emphasizes that this apprehension occurs in interactions with others. Thus, communication apprehension, not only poses a hindrance to language production and effective language learning (Gkonou 2014: 17) but also establishes a close link to FLSA.

The relationship between communication apprehension and FLSA is intricate. They are closely linked concepts, with the primary distinction lying in the nature of the anxiety they represent. Communication apprehension may manifest either as a general trait anxiety or as situation-specific anxiety (Holbrook, 1987: 554). Therefore, FLSA can be understood as either a component of a person's broader communication apprehension or as a situation-specific form of anxiety influenced by it.

A third factor that is often linked to FLSA is self-confidence or self-esteem. Although some researchers use the term self-esteem in relation to FLSA, others distinguish between two closely related concepts of self-esteem and self-confidence. Self-esteem in general relates to an individual's understanding of their ability to handle the challenges of life and "being worthy of happiness" (Branden 1995: 4). However, self-esteem as a global concept needs to be distinguished from domain-specific self-esteem (Szyszka 2022: 22). Thus, self-esteem related to language learning addresses a person's interpretation and evaluation of their own competence and their worthiness within this specific domain (Szyszka 2022: 22). Comparable to the difference between general anxiety and FLA, a learner might perceive themselves as competent in general and have a high belief in their self-worth but have low self-esteem in a specific area of evaluation, such as their speaking competence. This is important for FLA research as low self-esteem is often linked to higher levels of general anxiety, social anxiety and communication apprehension (Young 1990: 541).

While Young (1990) describes self-esteem as a factor affecting FLA, many other researchers use the concept of self-confidence instead (e.g. Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley 1999; Dewaele 2007; Marzec-Stawiarska 2015; Chou 2018; Botes 2022). According to Tengland (2007: 203), the difference between the two concepts is that self-esteem is seen as an attitude towards a person's self-worth, whereas self-confidence describes an individual's belief in their ability to handle problems and situations, especially in reference to specific tasks. In short, self-esteem is considered to describe a person's understanding of their self-worth, while self-confidence pertains to their belief in their own competence. For this reason, the concept of self-confidence will be used henceforth in this study to describe learners' belief in their competence.

In addition to the aforementioned factors, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) proposed another theory in relation to self-confidence, describing why foreign language students experience language anxiety. They contended that students' inability to express their mature thoughts through their immature grasp of the foreign language results in a feeling of self-consciousness and anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 129). Hence, students might feel as if they are unable to take part in communication while presenting their authentic and genuine self, as they are only able to communicate a "limited range of meaning and affect" (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 128). Thus, low self-confidence is often related to learners' self-perception of their abilities.

In general Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 127) theorised FLA to be closely related to three concepts, namely communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. In their description of these concepts, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 127) adhere to McCroskey's (1978) definition of communication apprehension in their study. However, even though they related FLA to self-confidence, it was not included in the factors related to FLA. While Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) examined FLA and not FLSA specifically, their measure, FLCAS, mostly consisted of items related to speaking.

In addition to counting communication apprehension as a concept informing FLA, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 127) include test anxiety as an important compound of FLA, as performance is evaluated perpetually by language teachers. They, therefore, define test anxiety as a type of performance anxiety that stems from a fear of failing a test, class or any other kind of assessment (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 127). Further, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 127) interpret oral tests and exams as being a source of both test anxiety and communication anxiety, thereby making these test situations even more stressful for anxious students. Thus, test anxiety can be seen as a factor informing students' FLSA.

The third component the authors proposed, fear of negative evaluation, is defined as an apprehension of other people's evaluations of the learner's skills and performance, which leads to avoidance of situations where they might be evaluated (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 127). In addition, fear of negative evaluation also gives rise to the expectation that other people would certainly perceive the learners in a negative way (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 127). Thereby, learners would feel anxious when speaking in front or to others in the target language, adding to their FLSA. Furthermore, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 127) also mentioned that foreign language learning might pose a threat to the learner's self-confidence, as they are sure to make mistakes while communicating in the target language which they have not yet mastered. This, in turn, would increase their FLSA again, as speaking in a language they are not proficient in might be considered face threatening.

Evidence of the factors described in this section, such as fear of negative evaluation and low self-confidence, has been found in a variety of studies. For instance, Price (1991: 105) found evidence of fear of negative evaluation being a significant factor in FLSA, as students who compared their own pronunciation with native speakers'

pronunciation were often afraid of being perceived in a negative light. Additionally, Kitano (2001: 557) reported a positive correlation between FLSA and fear of negative evaluation in university students taking Japanese classes. In a Chinese study, Liu (2006: 308) examined undergraduate students at three different levels of proficiency and found that the students reported feeling the highest level of FLSA when called on by a teacher in English or when they had to speak English in class as they were afraid of being negatively evaluated and viewed as being less competent than their classmates. Additionally, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002: 564) examined the reactions of eight highly anxious EFL university students to recordings of themselves speaking English. They observed that these students were heavily influenced by evaluation from others, as they were afraid of leaving negative impressions, while consistently linking their spoken mistakes to the possibility of being judged negatively (Gregersen & Horwitz 2002: 567). Furthermore, Mak (2011: 206) also investigated Chinese university students' sources of FLSA and identified a combination of variables he termed *speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation* as the most important factor affecting FLSA. Corroborating research previously mentioned, Gkonou (2014: 27) reports fear of negative evaluation as a source for second language speaking anxiety in Greek EFL classrooms. More recently, Alharbi (2021: 1552) also describes students fear of negative evaluation as a reason for them to feel anxious during oral presentations. In relation to self-confidence, Gkonou (2017: 142) mentions further aspects that play into speaking anxiety, including *peer pressure* and *significant others*.

In light of this research, a combination of communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, in addition to low self-confidence in the language learning domain, can be considered to be the main factors that contribute to FLSA (Karairmak & Mede 2017:126-127; Veenstra & Weaver 2022: 1).

4.2.3. Linguistic factors

In addition to the demographic and broader psychological factors examined in the previous sections, researchers have also found other specific factors that may influence FLSA. They pertain mostly to linguistic variables, such as lack of lexical or grammatical knowledge.

Thus, additional sources that have been identified as reasons for FLA and FLSA are *fear of making mistakes* (Young 1990: 545; Sadighi & Dastpak 2017: 113), *insufficient lexical and grammatical knowledge* (Alnahidh & Altalhab 2020: 62, Sadighi & Dastpak 2017: 113), and *lack of practice* (Alnahidh & Altalhab 2020: 62). Similarly, He (2013: 344) identified 14 major reasons for FLSA among university students in China. The five most important reasons given by students in this study were *lack of vocabulary*, *worrying about fluency*, *fear of being tested orally*, *being unprepared* (either by not having revised the needed vocabulary or not having enough time to think) and *having to speak about unfamiliar topics* (He 2013: 344). Additional factors leading to FLSA, according to He's (2013: 341) study were *fear of being looked down upon*, *getting stuck on individual words*, *fear of inadequate FL ability for future jobs*, *having to relay important information orally*, *inability to express oneself due to anxiety*, *speaking apprehension*, *using the language verbally versus thinking in the FL*, and *poor pronunciation and intonation*. These factors have in common that students seem to be afraid of negative evaluation, while also experiencing low self-confidence in relation to their linguistic ability and lexical knowledge. In accordance with He's (2013) findings, Cepon (2016: 156) also observed that the most commonly reported reason for FLSA in the English for specific purposes (ESP) context was *unfamiliarity with the specialist carrier content*.

In conclusion, this section has reviewed different factors that may inform a learner's level of FLSA. The most frequently mentioned variables are demographic factors and psychological factors. Thus, demographic factors that will be included in the study at hand are age, gender, educational background, and lastly language repertoire and the typology of the languages in the learners' repertoires and their first languages. Additionally, psychological factors tested by the questionnaires used in this study include test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and self-confidence. Furthermore, linguistic variables, such as fear of making mistakes, are also included in the questionnaire. These factors in particular are included due to their use in the FLCAS, which is the basis for the questionnaire used in this project.

4.3. Discourse types and their relationship with Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

The following section is concerned with the interplay between different communicative situations, termed discourse types in this project, and FLSA. Not all discourse types and communicative situations potentially arouse the same levels of speaking anxiety. Therefore, over the last decades researchers have been aiming to find out which discourse types might particularly trigger learners' FLSA.

Different approaches to FLSA and discourse types have been taken, sometimes focusing solely on classroom activities and interactions (e.g. Young 1990; Gregersen, MacIntyre & Meza 2014), or including communicative situations outside the classroom as well (e.g. Woodrow 2006). Other researchers did not examine classroom activities at all (e.g. Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham 2008), focusing instead on more general discourse types, such as speaking on the phone. Lastly, given the prevalence of online learning situations, more recent research (e.g. Alqarni 2021) also explores online spoken interactions and their relationship with FLSA.

During the early stages of FLA research, Young (1990: 545) already found that students reported higher levels of FLSA when they were singled out in class and had to speak in front of their peers, even more so if they had to do this without preparation. Conversely, they reportedly felt less anxious when they were not the only ones speaking, for example during pair or group activities, or when they had the chance to volunteer answers in class instead of being called upon (Young 1990: 545). Furthermore, they were more willing to participate in activities they found interesting (Young 1990: 545).

As another specific example of a classroom discourse type, presentations should be mentioned, as they can be extremely anxiety inducing (King 2002: 404). Gregersen, MacIntyre and Meza (2014), for example, specifically focused on FLSA during presentations. Through monitoring the students' heart rates during presentations in their foreign language, they found that even learners who were identified as low-anxiety experienced spikes of FLSA in this discourse situation (Gregersen, MacIntyre & Meza 2014: 580).

In an attempt to identify discourse types that may be FLSA inducing for ESL learners studying in Australia, Woodrow (2006) examined communicative situations taking place both inside and outside the classroom. On the one hand, in-class activities, for example, included *giving oral presentations, role-playing in front of the class, contributing to formal discussions* (Woodrow 2006: 317). On the other hand, discourse types supposedly situated outside of the classroom included *asking a lecturer questions, answering a lecturer's question, taking part in conversations with more than one native speaker, answering a native speaker's questions and starting conversations with native speakers* (Woodrow 2006: 317). The results of the study indicated that *performing in front of classmates and giving presentations in the target language* were perceived as the most anxiety inducing discourse types in class, while *speaking to native speakers* followed as the third highest stressor – albeit outside of class (Woodrow 2006: 319).

More generally, Dewaele, Petrides and Furnham (2008) investigated FLSA across five different discourse types that foreign language users might encounter. The communicative situations they examined were *speaking with friends, colleagues, strangers, on the phone, and in public* (Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham 2008: 931). According to their results, *speaking with friends and with colleagues*, then *interacting with strangers*, followed by *talking on the phone*, and lastly *public speaking* were “progressively more anxiety-provoking” (Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham 2008: 946).

Lastly, given the changes in learning contexts during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, research was also conducted on the differences between online and face-to-face learning contexts and their relationship to speaking anxiety. In one such study, Alqarni (2021: 71-72) found no significant difference between the two learning contexts. Thus, the results indicate that learners who are highly anxious in conventional class environments are also likely to experience FLSA during online classes (Alqarni 2021: 71-72).

This section provided an overview of discourse types both outside and inside the classroom. In-class activities that single out students have the highest tendency to be FLSA-provoking. Furthermore, for communicative situations taking place in a non-class related context, the personal relationship to the communicative partner and their perceived competence are important variables affecting a subject's FLSA.

4.4. Proficiency, Self-Perceived Competence and Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

As this study focuses on advanced learners of English, it is important to note that research on the correlation between FLSA and language proficiency is still inconclusive. However, various studies are pointing towards levels of anxiety being apparent at all levels of proficiency. Disregarding actual language proficiency, self-perceived competence and self-rated proficiency have been shown to significantly affect FLSA. This section, thus, provides a short overview of research in relation to language proficiency and perceived competence.

Early research hypothesised that less proficient students have higher levels of FLA. For instance, Gardner, Smythe and Brunet (1977: 253) outline that foreign language learners showed higher levels of anxiety at the beginning of their studies than students at a more advanced level. Additionally, a study by Baker and MacIntyre (2000: 88) supports those findings, as they found that students in immersion programs showed higher performance than students in nonimmersion programs. However, Baker and MacIntyre (2000:91) also indicate that students at higher levels of proficiency often feel pressured to perform at a high standard, which, in turn, may affect their FLSA negatively. Given the advanced proficiency of the current study's participants, Bachelor and Master students of English, and their presumed equally advanced speaking skills, advanced students could feel a substantial amount of pressure to perform well and, in turn, experience FLSA. Nonetheless, the two studies by Gardner, Smythe and Brunet (1977) and Baker and MacIntyre (2000) regard FLA as a problem almost exclusively affecting students at lower proficiency levels.

Different results, however, emerged in a study by Kitano (2001: 560), who found that more advanced students of Japanese experienced higher levels of FLA. Correspondingly, Ewald's (2007: 131) study also indicated moderate levels of FLA in advanced learners of Spanish. Another study focusing on Spanish students showed that advanced students reported the highest levels of anxiety, surpassing beginners and intermediates (Marcos-Llinas & Garau 2009: 101). Additionally, Gkonou (2014: 28) also describes raised levels of anxiety in advanced students, whereas Çağatay (2015: 654) found no difference in FLA and proficiency levels of Turkish university students.

Lastly, a recent meta-analysis by Zhang (2019: 776) reported that FLA levels remain stable across proficiency groups, including advanced learners. Thus, language learners at higher proficiency levels do not seem to be exempt from experiencing FLSA, as it constitutes the most salient skill-specific aspect of FLA.

Perceived communication competence has been one of the most important correlative factors of FLSA, according to MacIntyre (2018: 19). Several studies found significant correlations between the two concepts. For example, MacIntyre, Noels and Clément (1997: 278) proposed that a person's perception of their language competence could be negatively affected by their FLA. Their study revealed that learners with low levels of FLA overestimated their own proficiency, while anxious students underestimated their language abilities (MacIntyre, Noels & Clément 1997: 278). Dewaele, Petrides and Furnham (2008: 946) corroborated these findings. In addition, Baker and MacIntyre (2000: 90) also found that perceived competence was a strong correlate of willingness to communicate. Donovan and MacIntyre (2004: 420), however, report that the degree to which perceived competence influences willingness to communicate varies with gender and age.

In a study involving Turkish EFL learners, Aydın (2001: 113) found three overarching themes concerning the reasons behind FLSA, namely students' "personal concerns, the teachers' manner in the classroom, and the teaching procedures in speaking and writing classes". Personal concerns were the most impactful factors affecting FLSA. These concerns included *negative self-assessment of their abilities, comparisons to other students, as well as high expectations of themselves and misguided beliefs about language learning processes and the nature of language learning* (Aydın 2001: 112). Negative self-assessment of their speaking abilities, in particular, influenced the reported levels of FLSA heavily (Aydın 2001: 112). A study that corroborated the results about the interplay of FLSA and lower competence is Gkonou's (2014: 28), which found that perceived low competence affects FLSA. In addition, Marzec-Stawiarska (2015: 116) further consolidates this claim by reporting that only six out of 56 participants were satisfied with their speaking competence in the target language English, while at the same time showing high levels of FLSA among most of the subjects.

Thus, proficiency and perceived competence are both linked to FLSA. Being an advanced learner of a foreign language may not mean that one cannot be affected by FLSA. However, low perceived competence is highly likely to impact a learner's FLSA.

5. The study

This chapter serves as an overview of the methodological parts of this study. Starting with [section 5.1](#), the purpose of the study will be defined. The research questions are included in section 5.1. Secondly, [section 5.2](#) identifies the research methodology informing this study, before [section 5.2.1](#) describes the pilot study. Afterwards, [section 5.2.2](#) offers a detailed description of the instruments and the study procedure. Following in [section 5.2.3](#) is a brief description of the participants of the survey. Lastly, [section 5.2.4](#) elaborates on the analysis of the collected data.

5.1.Purpose

FLSA can have a significant impact on learners who need to use a foreign language, whether it be for planned or spontaneous communication. Advanced English learners, in particular, may face challenges that negatively affect their academic performance. The consequences could manifest as reduced participation in class, leading to a lack of practice in the target language. Over time, this may hinder their success in future professional roles where English proficiency is crucial, as FLSA could pose a substantial barrier to effective workplace communication.

While FLSA has already been investigated in various learner populations, the Austrian context, and advanced EFL university students in particular, have not been the subject of research studies yet. This study aims to fill this research gap by investigating the extent of FLSA among students at the Department of English and American Studies at the University of Vienna. It aims to identify demographic and psychological factors related to FLSA, as well as discourse formats that correlate with FLSA.

Additionally, this study further divides advanced learners into more specific groups: the required language level for beginner students at the Department of English and American Studies is B2, while Master students are expected to reach at least level C1.

Thus, a comparison of FLSA levels between Bachelor and Master students is drawn in this study. The differences between the two groups of students are analysed in order to find out whether more advanced students studying in the Master degrees are affected similarly to Bachelor students who presumably are less proficient speakers of English.

Therefore, the following research questions have been devised for this study:

1. To what extent do advanced EFL learners at the English and American studies Department at the University of Vienna report foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA)?
2. Which, if any, demographic factors correlate with the reported FLSA level of the learners?
3. Which psychological factors show a relationship with the learners' FLSA?
4. Which discourse formats show a correlation with the learners' FLSA?
5. Which, if any, differences in FLSA can be found between learners at the Bachelor level and learners at the Master level?

5.2. Methodology

This study utilises a cross-sectional quantitative approach, using a questionnaire to obtain data from an opportunity sample of students enrolled in a Bachelor or Master programme at the department of English and American studies at the University of Vienna. This chapter, therefore, outlines the process and procedures employed in the project at hand. First, the pilot study will be described in [section 5.2.1](#). Following, in [section 5.2.2](#) the instruments and procedure utilized in the study will be delineated. Thirdly, the participants will be described in [section 5.2.3](#). Lastly, the data analysis process will be explained in [section 5.2.4](#).

5.2.1. Pilot study

The questionnaire used in this study contains two adapted research instruments, the FLCAS (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986) and Woodrow's (2006) second language speaking anxiety scale, as well as additional questions gathering information on participants' demographic data. In order to ensure the validity of the questionnaire items, it was piloted with four university students. The purpose of the piloting was to ensure the simplicity and clarity of the items, to assess the length of the survey and to find duplicate items. To simulate the differing proficiency levels of the intended participants, two English majors and two non-English majors were asked to participate in the pilot study. None of the pilot subjects participated in the final study. However, their feedback helped in identifying weak points and administering modifications to the questionnaire. For example, two items with similar meanings were combined, as the participants did not understand why the same question had to be answered twice. Furthermore, some lexical items were unclear and had to be changed to increase item clarity.

5.2.2. Instruments and procedure

As most previous studies on FLSA used either the FLCAS or instruments adapted from it to assess students' levels of FLSA, this study also adapted the FLCAS. The full questionnaire can be found in the [appendix](#). Overall, the questionnaire consists mostly of close-ended questions with five-point response options in order to promote comparison across related studies, since most researchers used measurement instruments that also followed a five-point Likert scale, including the FLCAS (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986) that section 5 is based on, Woodrow's (2006) speaking anxiety scale that the discourse situations were adapted from, as well as Elkhafaifi's (2005) listening anxiety scale, and Saito, Horwitz and Garza's (1999) reading anxiety scale.

The questionnaire was distributed via social media channels and with support from lecturers at the University of Vienna. The survey was accessible between 23.10.2023 and 19.11.2023. Participation was voluntary and students had to give informed consent.

The questionnaire was structured into nine sections. Seven of these sections includes questions to be filled out by the participants. This chapter provides an overview of each section and its contents. The procedure of the study is described.

Section 1 includes a title and describes the study and the research goals, as well as giving general instructions. It is meant as an introduction to the study by identifying the “general domain of the investigation, provide the respondent with initial orientation, and activate relevant background knowledge and content expectations” (Dörnyei & Zoltan 2023: 21). This introductory section also informs the reader of the intended target audience, while at the same time assuring potential participants of their anonymity when taking part in the study.

Section 2 collects demographic information, including age, gender, first language(s), foreign languages that the participants are fluent in and their self-reported speaking confidence (on a scale of 1 – *very insecure* to 5 – *very confident*) as well as competence (according to CEFR levels A1 to C2). It should be noted here that students’ self-perceived competence does not necessarily reflect their actual speaking abilities, as Gkonou pointed out (2014: 29). Additionally, in the context of this study, the concept of gender refers to the binary-coded biographical variable of male/female, in the way the concept is conventionally used in quantitative research on gender and language anxiety (Piniel & Zólomy 2021: 177). However, in order to make the survey more inclusive, a third option was added for participants who do not identify within the gender-binary. Lastly, one question also asks for the frequency of English use outside of class (*less than once a month* to *every day*).

Section 3 gathers information about the participants’ educational background by asking for the type of secondary school they attended, which degree program they are enrolled in, and whether they have completed the speaking courses PPOCS 1, PPOCS 2 and/or ASSET. PPOCS 1, short for Practical Phonetics and Oral Communication Skills 1, is a course designed to improve students’ pronunciation and intonation skills and is a mandatory course for the Bachelor programmes at the department. PPOCS 2, on the other hand, focuses on interactive communication and presentation skills and is only mandatory for the programme Bachelor English and American Studies. Lastly, ASSET, which is the acronym for Advanced Speaking Skills for English Teachers, is a course in the Master Teacher Education Programme: English.

The questions about the speaking courses were embedded questions, forwarding the participants who answered that they had already completed either of those courses to section 4.

In section 4, the participants that had already completed at least one of PPOCS 1, PPOCS 2 or ASSET are asked to describe the impact either one of the courses has had on their speaking confidence in open-ended questions. Additionally, a third question was added, which asks participants to rate how much their speaking confidence had improved by taking these courses. The answers are arranged in a five-point Likert scale ranging from *Not at all* to *A lot* and also including *Not completed (yet)* as a fifth option. Section 4 is the only section of the main body wherein the questions are not set as required.

Section 5 is concerned with the factors that lead to FLSA. It is mostly based on the FLCAS (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986). The FLCAS is utilised in this study as it has a strong focus on oral performance (Aida 1994: 163) and, furthermore, remains one of the most commonly used instruments for measuring FLSA (Apple 2013; Teimouri Goetze & Plonsky 2019; Zhang 2019; Botes 2022; Veenstra & Weaver 2022). Additionally, the FLCAS has been repeatedly validated (Aida 1994; Park 2012). The original FLCAS consists of 33 questions, whereas the adapted scale used in this study features 22 items. Adaptations to the FLCAS are commonly reported in the literature, as eliminating items that are not concerned with speaking has been done by various researchers (e.g. Liu 2006; Öztürk & Gürbüz 2013; Marzec-Stawiarska 2015). In order to adapt the scale to the need identified by the research questions, 17 items from the FLCAS were deleted (items 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, and 30).

The following questions (as numbered in the original scale) were adapted: The first question that was rephrased is question 7 “I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am”, substituting it with “I keep thinking that the other students speak English better than I do,” so as to better reflect the speaking focus of the study. Question 8 was made to match the speaking anxiety focus more closely by specifying “I am usually at ease during tests in my language class” through the addition of the adjective “oral”. Additionally, question 14 was reformulated according to Dörnyei and Dewaele’s advice of avoiding negative constructions (2023: 44). It was changed from “I would *not* be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers” to “I am

nervous speaking English with native speakers". Another question that was updated is question 31 "I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language". It was changed to "I am afraid that the other students will have a negative impression of my skills when I speak English," in order to reflect both a more modern understanding of classroom atmospheres – as it is highly unlikely that someone would be openly laughing about a fellow student's English in class – and the nuanced self-perception of university students who are the respondents of this study. The final question that was adapted was number 32, deleting the word "probably" from the question "I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language". Lastly, all questions were rephrased so that the generic phrasings "the foreign language" and "language class" are substituted by "English" and "English classes", respectively.

Additionally, six questions were added to the instrument. Young (1990: 541) cautions that psychological phenomena that are related to the fear of speaking in general must be taken into consideration particularly when examining speaking anxiety in the foreign language. Thus the items "I generally like speaking English," "I am generally a talkative person," and "I generally like speaking in my first language" were included in order to determine whether respondents are communicative in general or only experience speaking anxiety when talking in English. The items "I feel less confident in my speaking skills when I know I am being graded," "I get anxious when I have to take an oral exam in my English classes," and "Taking an oral exam in English is more stressful than taking one in my first language" were inserted into the scale to ensure that multiple items could potentially test on the same factor, namely test anxiety. Finally, the item "I feel like I am expected to speak English well, since I am a student of English" was incorporated in order to find out whether advanced EFL students do indeed feel pressured to perform at high standards, given their expected high language proficiency, as such a link was indicated in a study by Baker and MacIntyre (2000: 91).

Section 6 pertains to potentially FLSA inducing discourse situations in class. The items were taken from Woodrow's (2006) study on second language speaking anxiety, which specifically includes items that focus on both in-class or academic and out-of-class or non-academic speaking situations. The items are formulated as statements and should be rated according to the degree of anxiety they would induce in the participants, formulated as a five-point Likert scale ranging from *not at all anxious* to *extremely*

anxious. Woodrow's (2006) scale is split into two parts, the first part focusing on in-class discourse situations such as "Taking part in a role-play or dialogue in front of my class," or "Being asked to contribute to a formal discussion in class." One additional item was included, namely "Speaking to a partner during pair work," as working in pairs is a common discourse format at the University of Vienna and is not mentioned in the original scale. Thus, section 6 contains a total of seven items.

Section 7 follows the same question format as the previous section and includes further items from Woodrow's (2006) scale, focusing on discourse situations outside of the classroom. Therefore, section 7 is comprised of nine items, detailing possible instances of having to speak English in a non-academic context. The first three questions are the last questions from Woodrow's (2006) original scale, which detail conversations with native speakers of English. The other six questions were added to adopt a more well-rounded picture of discourse situations that respondents might find themselves in, including conversations online, with friends or relatives, at work, while travelling (i.e. speaking to members of hospitality staff) or speaking English at a social gathering.

The penultimate section, number 8, is the last part of the questionnaire. It includes additional questions of interest to this study that are, however, not directly related to the research questions. The first two items in this section allude to the question of whether FLSA is debilitating or facilitating for EFL learners. Alpert and Haber (1960) developed two different scales to measure both debilitating and facilitating anxiety. However, due to the constraints of this study, they could not be included in the questionnaire. Instead, two items directly pertaining to the perception of the participants were devised for section 8: Item 8.1 "Do you feel that speaking anxiety helps you improve your performance?" and Item 8.2 "Do you feel that speaking anxiety negatively impacts your performance?". Both items used a five-point Likert scale (*never* to *always*). The third item in this section asks participants to choose from a number of options provided, which they think could be implemented in their English classes to reduce speaking anxiety. It lists eleven suggestions, such as *more/less peer feedback* and *more/less correction by teachers*. The last question is an open-ended item for respondents to include any further comments pertaining to speaking anxiety they might like to share.

Table 1 Items and corresponding numbers in the original and adapted FLCAS		
FLCAS	Item text	Adapted
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking English.	1
	I generally like speaking in English.	2
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in English.	3
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I know I'm going to be called on in class.	4
7	I keep thinking that the other students speak English better than I do.	5
8	I am usually at ease during oral tests in my English classes.	6
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my English classes.	7
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English classes.	8
14	I am nervous speaking English with native speakers.	9
18	I feel confident when I speak in my English classes.	10
19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	11
	I feel less confident in my speaking skills when I know I am being graded.	12
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	13
27	I get nervous and confused when I'm speaking in my English classes.	14
	I am generally a talkative person.	15
31	I am afraid that the other students will have a negative impression of my skills when I speak English.	16
32	I feel comfortable around native speakers of English.	17
33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	18
	I get anxious when I have to take an oral exam in my English classes.	19
	Taking an oral exam in English is more stressful than taking one in my first language.	20
	I generally like speaking in my first language.	21
	I feel like I am expected to speak English well, since I am a student of English.	22

Table 1: Items and corresponding numbers in original and adapted FLCAS

An overview of the items, combined with both the numbers in the original FLCAS, as well as the item numbers in the adapted version used in this study can be found in table 1.

5.2.3. Participants

The participants included 146 students at the Department of English and American Studies at the University of Vienna. Students from all degree programs offered at the department participated, including Bachelor English and American Studies (N = 42), Bachelor Teacher Education Programme: English (N = 63), Master English Language and Linguistics (N = 1), Master Anglophone Literatures and Cultures (N = 15), and Master Teacher Education Programme: English (N = 25).

The sample consisted of 73.29% (n= 107) females, 17.81% (n= 26) males and 11 people who identified as “other” or did not want to specify their gender identity (7.53%). This gender distribution is consistent with the gender distribution of the whole department (74.54% female and 25.46% male), the BA English and American studies students (79.11% females and 20.89% male), and the MA programmes English Language and Linguistics and Anglophone Literatures and Cultures (76.79% and 81.44% females, 23.21% and 18.56% males, respectively), based on enrolment numbers from the winter semester of 2019 (Referat für Reporting und Analysen 2020: 43-44).

Table 2 Gender distribution: sample vs. enrolment figures						
	Male		Female		Other or unspecified	
	Percentage	N	Percentage	N	Percentage	N
2023 sample	17.81%	26	73.29%	107	7.53%	11
2019 enrolment	25.46%	1168	74.54%	3419	NA	NA

Table 2: Gender distribution

For ease of comparison, table 2 illustrates the gender distribution within the data set and enrolment in 2019.

In order to ensure comparability with previous research, the 13 respondents who either did not identify within the gender binary or chose not to state their gender were eliminated from the subject pool during analysis regarding gender differences in reported levels of FLSA.

5.2.4. Data analysis

The data is analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 29.0.1.0. During data analysis and interpretation, it is important to exercise caution when working with scores on some items, as they were reverse coded. This means that high scores on these items indicated low anxiety, while high scores on all other items indicated high anxiety. The reverse coded items, items 2, 3, 6, 10, 15, 17, and 21, are thus reversed for data analysis.

The first measure which has to be taken is to test internal consistency reliability using Cronbach α of each scale used in this project. In order to answer the first research question, the results of the questionnaire are computed in terms of mean and standard deviation to investigate the students' FLSA levels. Following Khreisat (2022), the levels of FLSA are scored based on the mean and then divided into three groups: low, moderate and high anxiety, along the cut-off marks of below 2.5 for low anxiety, 2.5-3.49 for moderate anxiety, and over 3.5 for high anxiety. Descriptive statistics are also computed for ratings of self-perceived confidence, competence, and frequency of language use.

The second to fourth research questions are answered using similar approaches. Firstly, a t-test is performed for identifying differences between male and female participants' levels of FLSA. For continuous independent variables, Pearson product-moment correlations are used to determine correlations between FLSA and first, demographic factors, then psychological factors, and lastly discourse types.

In addition, a principal components exploratory factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation is performed to identify the underlying concepts of the adapted FLCAS, in order to answer the research question concerning psychological factors. While varimax rotation is most commonly used in previous studies (e.g. Aida 1994; Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert 1999; Kim 2002; Matsuda & Gobel 2004; Liu & Jackson 2008; Mak 2011;

Park 2012) as it maximises the variance of the squared loadings while simplifying the interpretation of factors, the study at hand uses direct oblimin rotation following Park's (2014: 270) suggestion, in order to identify correlated latent components of the adapted FLCAS. This factor analysis is computed before running Pearson product-moment correlations for this subset of data.

The last research question is answered by performing an additional t-test and ANOVA analysis to determine the differences in FLSA between the Bachelor and Master students, as well as the respective degree programmes for a more in-depth tabulation.

Lastly, the questionnaire contained items that are not directly related to the research questions but might still offer valuable insights into students' experiences with FLSA. Thus, the items regarding the speaking courses at the department of English and American studies, namely PPOCS 1, PPOCS 2, and ASSET are examined and regarded as additional information concerning their impact on students' speaking confidence and FLSA. Furthermore, participants' responses as to whether they felt that FLSA had a debilitating or facilitating effect on their speaking performance are examined. Lastly, students' suggestions on how to alleviate FLSA in class are also analysed.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1. Results

The internal consistency reliability of the three different scales used in this study are computed using Cronbach's α coefficient. The Cronbach's α coefficient of the adapted FLCAS is .914 ($N = 22$). For the discourse-types scales in combination the Cronbach's α coefficient is .883 ($N = 16$), with .863 ($N = 7$) and .833 ($N = 9$) for academic discourse types and non-academic discourse types, respectively. Thus, all scales used in this study achieve appropriate internal consistency reliability, as the Cronbach's α coefficients are over .80 (Dörnyei 2007: 207), without deletion of items.

6.1.1. Extent of FLSA

The level of FLSA is computed by measuring the mean scores of the 5-point scale (from 1 – *strongly disagree* to 5 – *strongly agree*) of the adapted FLCAS, before dividing the participants into groups of high, moderate, and low anxiety. First, the mean and standard deviation are computed for each item in the adapted FLCAS. The results can be found in table 3.

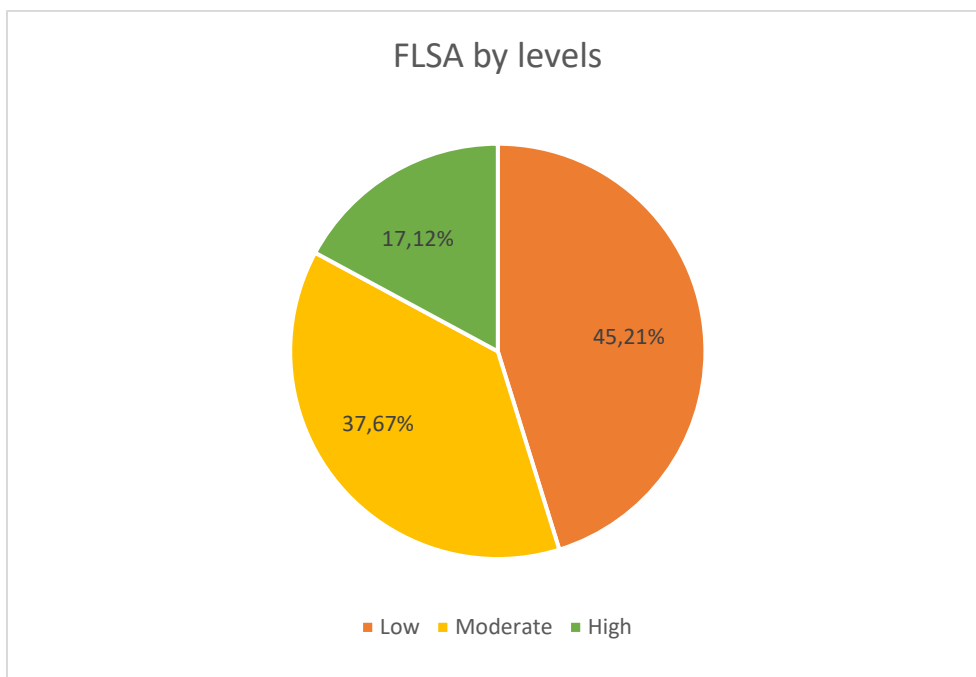


Figure 1: FLSA by levels

As can be seen in figure 1, most subjects report low (45.21%) and moderate levels (37.67%) of FLSA, followed by less than one fifth of the participants (17.12%) experiencing high levels of FLSA, along the cut-off marks of below 2.5 for low anxiety, 2.5-3.49 for moderate anxiety, and over 3.5 for high anxiety.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the adapted FLCAS		
Items	M	SD
1 I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking English.	2.50	1.23
2 I generally like speaking in English.	1.28	.60
3 I don't worry about making mistakes in English.	3.08	1.33
4 I can feel my heart pounding when I know I'm going to be called on in an English class.	2.79	1.42
5 I keep thinking that the other students speak English better than I do.	3.14	1.31
6 I am usually at ease during oral tests in my English classes.	2.99	1.38
7 I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my English classes.	2.36	1.29
8 It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English classes.	2.12	1.28
9 I am nervous speaking English with native speakers.	2.29	1.24
10 I feel confident when I speak in my English classes.	2.53	1.18
11 I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	1.98	1.18
12 I feel less confident in my speaking skills when I know I am being graded.	3.28	1.30
13 I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	2.53	1.34
14 I get nervous and confused when I'm speaking in my English classes.	2.13	1.16
15 I am generally a talkative person.	2.65	1.35
16 I am afraid that the other students will have a negative impression of my skills when I speak English.	2.80	1.37
17 I feel comfortable around native speakers of English.	2.08	1.01
18 I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	2.48	1.24
19 I get anxious when I have to take an oral exam in my English classes.	3.18	1.36
20 Taking an oral exam in English is more stressful than taking one in my first language.	2.73	1.47
21 I generally like speaking in my first language.	1.90	1.09
22 I feel like I am expected to speak English well, since I am a student of English.	4.62	.79

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the adapted FLCAS

Table 4 Distribution of FLSA across groups				
Level of FLSA	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Percentage	<i>N</i>
Low Anxiety	1.95	.33	45.21%	66
Moderate Anxiety	2.98	.25	37.67%	55
High Anxiety	3.76	.29	17.12%	25
Total	2.61	.74	100%	146

Table 4: Distribution of FLSA across groups

Table 4 shows the distribution between the three groups, including mean, standard deviation, percentage and total number of respondents for low, moderate, and high anxiety, as well as for overall FLSA.

6.1.2. Demographic factors and FLSA

An independent-samples t-test is performed in order to measure the differences between male and female participants. On average, female participants report higher levels of FLSA ($M = 2.72$, $SD = .75$) than male participants ($M = 2.21$, $SD = .58$). This difference is significant, $t(47.69) = 3.73$, $p = < .001$, representing a medium effect of $d = .72$.

Correlations between demographic variables and FLSA		
Variables	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Age	-.07	.386
Number of languages spoken fluently	-.08	.368
Highest completed education	-.12	.169
Frequency of target language use outside of class	-.35	<.001**

Notes: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$ (2-tailed)

Table 5: Correlations between demographic variables and FLSA

In order to explore the relationships between demographic variables and FLSA, a series of Pearson-product-moment correlation coefficients are computed. The results are summarised in table 5, which indicates that all variables negatively correlate with

FLSA. However, only frequency of target language use outside of class shows a significant relationship with the dependent variable.

6.1.3. Psychological factors contributing to FLSA

To examine the correlation between FLSA and psychological factors, a factor analysis is performed to detect the latent concepts underlying the adapted FLCAS. In order to get useful results from a factor analysis, Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999: 222) suggest that a sample size of about 150 is sufficient for a “good” solution. There are different methods of factor analysis, including exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, which could both be used to determine the latent factors of the adapted FLCAS from this study. The first method, exploratory factor analysis, establishes connections between variables that are often not evident in the original data (Hutcheson & Sofroniou 1999: 218). Here, the intention is to condense and clearly outline the data by pooling correlated variables. Once the factors are identified, the meaning of the factors is interpreted. Conversely, confirmatory factor analysis employs carefully selected variables to uncover hypothesized factors. It can be used to test whether relationships predicted by theory manifest in the data and to model these associations. Both methods of factor analysis have been used to model the FLCAS and adaptations, as previous research has determined different numbers of factors in this scale in exploratory factor analysis (e.g. Aida 1994; Park 2014). However, as there are additional items included in the adapted version of the FLCAS which were generated specifically for this study, I opted for exploratory factor analysis to uncover the latent factors in this specific scale, instead of performing confirmatory factor analysis on the expected factors based on the relevant research.

The values of skewness and kurtosis of the 22 items in the adapted FLCAS scale are within the range between 2 and -2, indicating the dataset has normal distribution. Therefore, a principal components exploratory factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation is performed on the 22 items to identify the underlying concepts of the adapted FLCAS. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is .89, while the chi-square of Bartlett's test for sphericity is 1609.44 ($p < .001$), indicating that the data are suitable for factor analysis. The result of the factor analysis indicates five latent factor

components in the scale, as identified by using eigenvalues greater than one and scree plot examination, which, in combination, explain 62.52% of the total variance.

However, according to MacCallum et al. (1999: 90), one factor should load at least three items to be considered a meaningful explanation of the total variance. In addition, Hair et al. (1998: 112) suggest the cutoff for factor loadings of .45 at a sample size of around 150. Thus, only two factors are extracted as underlying concepts of this adapted version of the FLCAS: factor 1 – communication apprehension and factor 2 – interaction confidence. The results can be found in table 6, which features the observed variables, the number of factors, the factor loadings, communalities, and the total variance explained by each factor.

Table 6 Factor components of the adapted FLCAS (N = 146)			
Items of the adapted FLCAS	Factor 1	Factor 2	h^2
4	.84		.62
7	.82		.48
6	.78		.51
8	.75		.66
18	.74		.66
14	.73		.67
1	.73		.68
19	.69		.57
10	.68		.66
3			.78
5			.80
21			.58
20	.47		.47
15			.70
17		.75	.39
9		.75	.74
2		.62	.59
11			.58
12			.71
22			.66
13			.68
16			.57
Variance explained	38.804	6.673	

Table 6: Factor components of the adapted FLCAS

The first factor, communication apprehension, features items 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 18, 19, and 20 and accounts for 38.8% of the total variance. This factor reflects the degree to which an individual experienced anxiety, nervousness, or confidence when engaging in spoken activities in the context of English classes. It, thus, encompasses feelings of self-assurance, nervousness, confusion, and concern about others' perceptions during verbal communication in English.

The second factor, termed interpersonal confidence, includes items 2, 9, and 17 and accounts for 6.67% of the total variance. In combination, the items convey attitudes towards speaking English in general and in the presence of native speakers.

It should also be mentioned that nine items do not load on any factor. Items 3, 5, 13, 15, and 16 do not reach the threshold of loadings above .45. In comparison, items 11, 12, 21, and 22 show significant loadings above that cutoff, but given that the corresponding factors each have less than three items loading on them, they cannot be extracted. In case of unclear factor loadings, Costello and Osborn (2005: 3) recommend dropping problematic items, if the integrity of the data will not be compromised by doing so. Thus, the items are not retained in the factor analysis.

Table 7 Correlations with FLSA		
Variables	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Communication apprehension	.95	<.001**
Interpersonal confidence	.57	<.001**
Perceived competence	-.22	.007**
Perceived confidence	-.60	<.001**

Notes: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$ (2-tailed)

Table 7: Correlations between psychological variables and FLSA

The two factors, as well as the variables *perceived English speaking competence* and *confidence*, are analysed through Pearson-product-moment correlation analyses. The results are summarised in table 7, which shows that communication apprehension and interpersonal confidence are positively and significantly linked with FLSA, while perceived competence and confidence significantly and negatively correlate with FLSA.

6.1.4. Discourse types inducing FLSA

The mean and standard deviation was also computed for the 16 items in the two discourse situation scales.

Table 8 Descriptive statistics for the discourse situations scales		
Variables	M	SD
<i>Discourse situations in class</i>		
The teacher asks me a question in class.	2.54	1.19
Speaking informally to my English teacher out of class.	2.21	1.25
Taking part in a group discussion in class.	2.11	1.14
Speaking to a partner during pair work.	3.12	1.33
Taking part in a role-play or dialogue in front of my class.	1.49	.87
Giving an oral presentation to the rest of the class.	3.41	1.25
Being asked to contribute to a formal discussion in class.	2.92	1.30
<i>Discourse situations outside of class</i>		
Taking part in a conversation out of class with more than one native speaker of English.	1.97	1.11
Starting a conversation out of class with a friend or colleague who is a native speaker of English.	1.71	1.02
A native speaker I do not know asks me questions.	1.69	.95
Speaking to someone online in English.	1.49	.81
Talking to a friend or relative in English.	1.32	.74
Having to speak English at work.	1.50	.78
Being asked for the way by a tourist.	1.25	.65
Talking to staff at a hotel/restaurant while travelling.	1.32	.66
Having to speak English at a social gathering (a party or at a bar. for example).	1.47	.84

Table 8: Descriptive statistics for discourse situations scales

Table 8 provides an overview of the mean and standard deviation of the responses regarding discourse types inside and outside of academic contexts.

Table 9 Correlations between discourse variables and FLSA		
Variables	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Discourse situations in class</i>		
The teacher asks me a question in class.	.69	<.001**
Speaking informally to my English teacher out of class.	.53	<.001**
Taking part in a group discussion in class.	.48	<.001**
Speaking to a partner during pair work.	.58	<.001**
Taking part in a role-play or dialogue in front of my class.	.32	<.001**
Giving an oral presentation to the rest of the class.	.54	<.001**
Being asked to contribute to a formal discussion in class.	.68	<.001**
<i>Discourse situations outside of class</i>		
Taking part in a conversation out of class with more than one native speaker of English.	.48	<.001**
Starting a conversation out of class with a friend or colleague who is a native speaker of English.	.45	<.001**
A native speaker I do not know asks me questions.	.36	<.001**
Speaking to someone online in English.	.29	<.001**
Talking to a friend or relative in English.	.26	.001**
Having to speak English at work.	.36	<.001**
Being asked for the way by a tourist.	-.06	.475
Talking to staff at a hotel/restaurant while travelling.	.17	.043*
Having to speak English at a social gathering.	.37	<.001**
Notes: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$ (2-tailed)		

Table 9: Correlations between discourse variables and FLSA

Another set of Pearson-product-moment correlation coefficients is computed for the discourse variables from the two discourse situations scales featuring in-class and out-of-class communicative situations. All of the different communicative situations are significant and positively correlate with FLSA, except for being asked for the way by a tourist, which is not significant and is negatively linked with FLSA, as can be seen in table 9.

6.1.5. Differences between Bachelor and Master students' FLSA

In order to find the difference between the level of FLSA in Bachelor and Master students, an independent-samples t-test is performed. On average, Bachelor students report slightly higher levels of FLSA ($M = 2.62$, $SD = .72$) than Master students ($M = 2.59$, $SD = .80$). However, this difference is not significant, $t(66.83) = .21$, $p = .835$. However, it represents a medium effect of $d = .74$. In addition, a one-way ANOVA is performed to compute the differences between the individual degree programmes. The analysis indicates that there are no significant differences between Bachelor English and American Studies ($M = 2.61$, $SD = .65$), Bachelor Teacher Education Programme: English ($M = 2.62$, $SD = .76$), Master English Language and Linguistics ($M = 2.63$, no SD as $N = 1$), Master Anglophone Literatures and Cultures ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.03$), and Master Teacher Education Programme: English ($M = 2.61$, $SD = .74$), $F(4, 141) = .06$, $p = .994$.

6.1.6. Speaking courses, effect of FLSA and suggestions for alleviating FLSA

Lastly, the items regarding speaking courses and their influence on students' speaking confidence are examined.

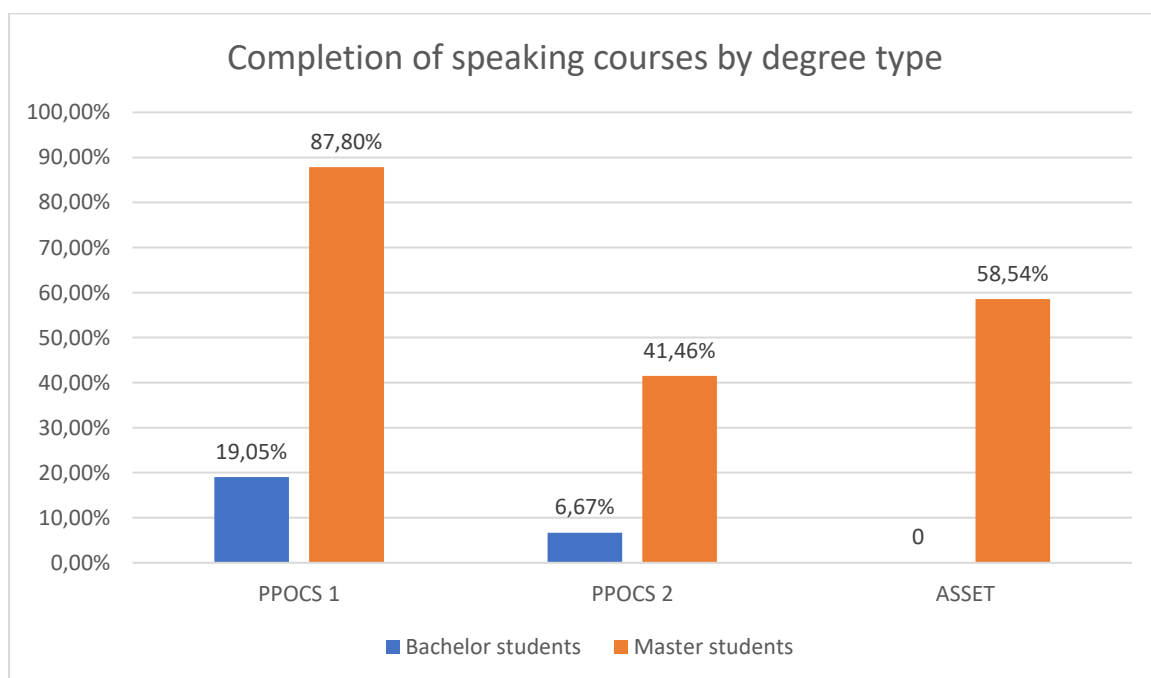


Figure 2: Completion of speaking courses by degree type

As can be seen in figure 2, PPOCS 1 was completed by 19.05% (N = 105) of Bachelor students and 87.80% (N = 41) of the Master students, while PPOCS 2 was completed by 6.67% of Bachelor and 41.46% of Master students. ASSET, which is only required in the teacher education programme Master was completed by 58.54% of Master students.

Students who indicated that they had already completed at least one of the speaking courses were asked to rate in how far these courses aided them in increasing their speaking confidence.

Table 10						
Increased confidence after speaking course						
	valid				missing	
	Not at all	Very little	Somewh at	A lot	No information	Total
PPOCS1						
Frequency	6	3	7	8	122	146
Valid Percent	25.0%	12.5%	29.2%	33.3%		100%
PPOCS2						
Frequency	2	4	4	3	133	146
Valid Percent	15.3%	30.8%	30.8%	23.1%		100%
ASSET						
Frequency	10	1	10	1	124	146
Valid Percent	45.5%	4.5%	45.5%	4.5%		100%

Table 10: Increased confidence after speaking course

Table 10 shows participants' responses as to whether they experienced increased confidence while speaking English after completing PPOCS1, PPOCS2 or ASSET.

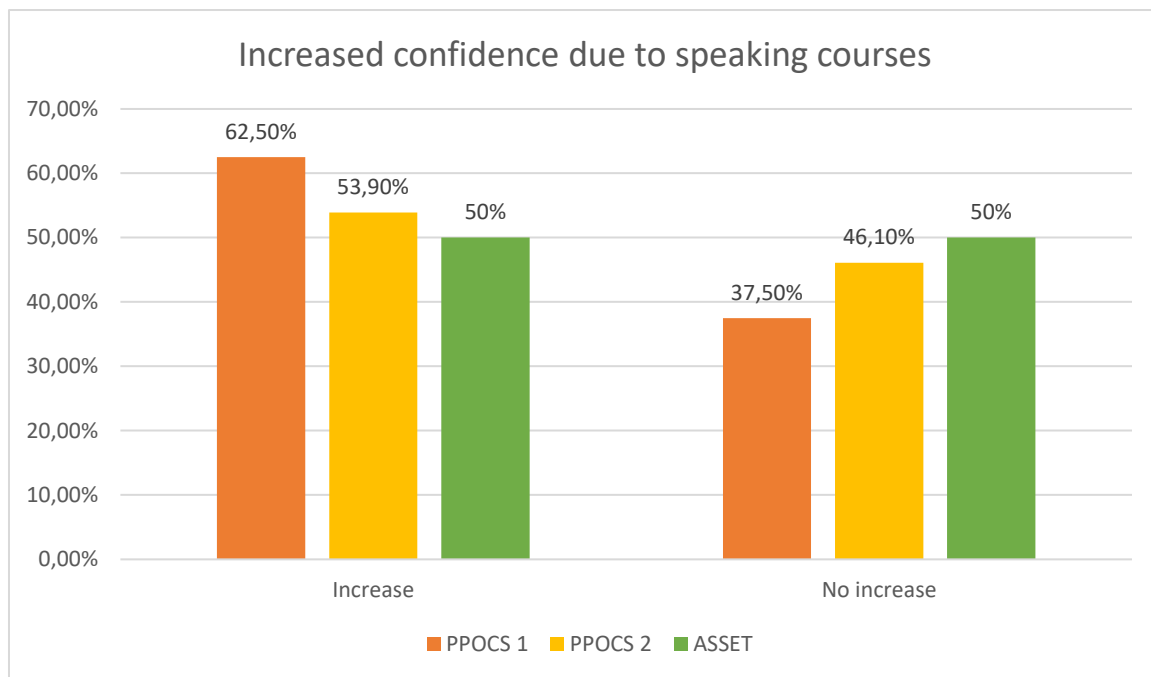


Figure 3: Increased confidence due to speaking courses

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution regarding whether students perceived any of the speaking courses as effective in enhancing their confidence or not. In total, 37.5% of students did not experience PPOCS1 as helpful in increasing their speaking confidence, while 62.5% felt more confident after completing the course. PPOCS2 was experienced as confidence increasing by 53.9% of respondents, while 46.1% disagreed with this. As for ASSET, responses were split in half: 50% expressed that found their speaking confidence increased, while the other 50% did not experience an benefits regarding speaking confidence after they had completed the course.

Furthermore, participants do not perceive FLSA as facilitating. The question of whether FLSA helps improve performance is answered negatively ('never' and 'rarely') by 82.2%, while the reversed question about FLSA negatively impacting performance is answered positively ('very often' and 'always') by 69.2% of the subjects.

Table 11 Measures for FLSA reduction		
Measure	N	Percentage
More speaking practice	97	66.4%
More group activities (discussions, etc.)	83	56.8%
More pair activities (discussions, etc.)	84	57.5%
More feedback from teachers	54	37.0%
More peer feedback	21	14.4%
Less correction by teachers	20	13.7%
More correction by teachers	17	11.6%
Less peer feedback	14	9.6%
Less group activities (discussions, etc.)	10	6.8%
Less feedback from teachers	6	4.1%
Less pair activities (discussions, etc.)	6	4.1%

Table 11: Measures for FLSA reduction

Responses to the question of what would help students reduce speaking anxiety are illustrated in table 11, which features the total number of responses and percentages. Multiple responses are possible for this question. The most common response is “more speaking practice” with 66.4% agreement, followed by “more pair activities” and “more group activities” with 57.5% and 56.8%, respectively. Most other responses gather less than 15% approval, except an increase in teacher feedback at 37.0%.

6.2. Discussion

The study at hand examines five research questions concerning FLSA, its prevalence in the student population of the English and American studies department, correlations between demographic, psychological and discourse factors and the levels of FLSA, as well as potential differences in FLSA levels between Bachelor and Master students. In the following section, the findings are interpreted and a relationship to previous research is established.

6.2.1. RQ1: extent of FLSA in levels of high, moderate and low anxiety

The first research question was concerned with the levels of FLSA reported by students of English at the University of Vienna. Almost half of the subjects report low levels of FLSA, as 45.21% of respondents' answers indicate that they usually do not experience FLSA. However, 37.67% of participants report moderate levels of FLSA and 17.12% even indicate high levels of FLSA, which may be of concern when designing in-class activities on a classroom level. However, the overall mean of reported FLSA is $M = 2.61$, $SD = .74$, which indicates that the general level of FLSA across the student population is in the lower moderate range of FLSA.

When compared to previous studies, this result does not come as a surprise. Examinations of various forms of FLA, including FLSA, most often found that students report moderate levels of language anxiety (Liu & Jackson 2008; Dewaele & MacIntyre 2014; Liu, Huang & Lee 2011; Jiang & Dewaele 2019; Alnahidh & Altahab 2020; Khreisat 2022). Even among advanced FL students, moderate levels are commonly reported (Toubot, Hock Seng & Binti Atan Abdullah 2018; Botes, Dewaele & Greiff 2020b). Thus, the results of this study align with previous findings with regard to FLSA and its severity.

Even though previous studies focused on a variety of contexts and research populations, moderate levels of FLSA appeared to constitute the norm across the board. For example, Dewaele and Macintyre (2014: 244) and Botes, Dewaele and Greiff (2020b: 286) collected responses from participants all over the world, irrespective of participants language proficiency or learning circumstances, while many other studies focused on university students who did not major in the target language (e.g. Liu & Jackson 2008; Liu, Huang & Lee 2011; Jiang & Dewaele 2019). Only Khreisat (2022: 454) and Toubot, Hock Seng and Binti Atan Abdullah (2018: 50) examined students majoring in the target language, which was English in both cases. Again, both studies report moderate levels of FLSA in their respective populations (Khreisat 2022: 454; Toubot, Hock Seng & Binti Atan Abdullah 2018: 50).

Even though the mean FLSA score across all participants in this study indicates a moderate level of FLSA, the results of this study are surprisingly positive, as less than one fifth of the participants report high FLSA and almost half indicate low FLSA. Still,

more than one third of the participants experience moderate levels of FLSA, which could be cause for concern, given the detrimental effects FLSA can have on language learning, classroom achievement and general performance.

6.2.2. RQ2 question: relationship between demographic factors and FLSA

The second research question examined the effect of demographic variables on learners' FLSA. As previous research established links between FLSA, a number of demographic factors, including age, gender, a learner's language repertoire, frequency of language use, and education, were taken into consideration in this study.

Age, the first variable, has repeatedly been linked to FLSA, with different results. For example, Dewaele (2010a: 68) reports that older language users showed lower levels of FLSA, while Zhang (2019: 774) found opposite results. The current study shows no significant correlation between age and FLSA, adding to the contradicting results surrounding this variable. This result may be due to the age range found in the participants, as almost 70% of participants were under 24 and another 25.3% were between the ages of 25-30 years old. Thus, it is unlikely that most of these participants would be categorised as 'older language users', even though no clear definition was given in either study investigating the effects of age on FLSA (Dewaele 2010a: 68; Zhang 2019: 774).

Another demographic variable often investigated in previous research is gender. A t-test revealed significant differences, showing that female participants report higher levels of FLSA ($M = 2.72$, $SD = .75$) than male participants ($M = 2.21$, $SD = .58$). These results match previous investigations, which also found that women show higher levels of FLSA (Öztürk & Gürbüz 2013; Park & French 2013; Çağatay 2015). However, a recent meta-analysis by Piniel and Zólomy (2021: 186) found no significant correlation between language anxiety and gender. These results, thus, add to the conflicting results regarding gender and FLSA. Park and French (2013: 468), as well as Çağatay (2015: 654), attribute these gender differences to socio-cultural contexts as both studies were conducted in male-dominated societies. As this is most likely not the case for this study, a more likely reason for this result is the imbalance in respondents. Therefore, it needs to be noted that female participants heavily outweigh male

participants in this study, which could have skewed the results towards statistically significant higher levels of FLSA.

The third factor associated with FLSA included in this study is learners' language repertoire, which is the number of languages the subjects speak fluently. In contrast to gender, the number of languages spoken by the participants shows no significant correlation with FLSA. This was another surprising result, given that previous research indicates a negative correlation between learners' language repertoires and FLSA in both their foreign languages and their native languages (Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham 2008: 947; Dewaele 2010a: 63; Dewaele 2010b: 121). A possible explanation for this finding could be that the languages spoken by the participants were diverse, while the questions regarding FLSA only concerned English and did not focus on any other known languages.

Another factor, which loads a significant correlation with FLSA, is the frequency of target language use. The data shows a negative correlation between FLSA and frequency of speaking English $r = -.35, p < .001$, which indicates that participants who spoke English frequently outside of class are less likely to report higher levels of FLSA. This finding agrees with previous research that also found similar links between frequency of language use and FLSA (Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham 2008: 947; Chou 2018: 625). A reason for this link might be that continuous exposure to anxiety arousing situations might acquaint the learners to the feeling and provide practice to overcome their potential FLSA. Further, exposure to the target language might even increase learners' speaking confidence.

Lastly, participants' levels of education also do not correlate with their FLSA. This result might be due the participants being quite homogenous in this respect, as most had a similar level of education with only about one third having already completed a Bachelor degree and more than two thirds listing completed secondary education as their highest educational qualification. Previous studies did find negative correlations between higher levels of education and FLSA (Dewaele 2010a: 68), however, this cohort showed no significant correlations between the two variables.

Overall, only gender and the reported frequency of target language use show a significant relationship with FLSA. Women reported slightly higher levels of FLSA than men in this sample with a medium effect size of $d = .72$, while a negative correlation of

$r = -.35$, $p < .001$ indicates that increased use of English and lower levels of FLSA are connected. However, two considerations need to be taken into account when interpreting these results: firstly, it needs to be reiterated that correlation does not equal causation, and thus, it cannot be inferred whether using the target language more often results in less FLSA or whether the opposite is true and being less affected by FLSA leads learners to use the target language more frequently. Correspondingly, the direction of causality between gender and FLSA remains equally unclear. However, both variables showed a medium effect, which reveals that the two variables are moderately related to FLSA. In summary, these findings indicate complex relationships between gender, language use, and FLSA.

6.2.3. RQ3: relationship between psychological factors and FLSA

The third research question was concerned with another set of independent variables: psychological factors and their relationship with FLSA. Extensive research on different forms of language anxiety, including FLSA, has explored a number of constructs related to this anxiety, as has been discussed in [section 4.2.2](#). In order to find out which constructs are latent in the scale used in this study, an exploratory factor analysis was performed. This analysis resulted in two factors, titled communication apprehension and interpersonal confidence. Factor 1, communication apprehension encompasses ten out of 22 items from the adapted FLCAS and reflects feelings of concern, nervousness, and confusion, but also confidence when engaging in spoken activities in classroom contexts. On the other hand, factor 2, interpersonal confidence, only consists of three items. This factor is related to attitudes in connection with speaking English outside the classroom and talking with native speakers.

A two-factor structure was found in other analyses of either the original FLCAS or adapted versions (Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert 1999; Matsuda & Gobel 2004; Park 2014), while other researchers retained up to five components from their analyses (Aida 1994; Kim 2002; Liu & Jackson 2008; Mak 2011; Park 2012). One reason for the different factor analysis results might be the subjectivity of factor analysis as a statistical tool. For instance, Park (2014: 270) mentions that researchers may choose different sets for factor extraction, factor rotation, and factor labelling. Even though the analysis for this study uses the same statistical methods as Park (2014), the results

still differ. These differences could be due to different versions of the FLCAS being used, including translations and adapted versions. This might also hold true for comparisons across studies with other results in their factor analyses.

Thus, the analysis shows that communication apprehension and interpersonal confidence are psychological factors that are related to FLSA. Both communication apprehension and interpersonal confidence show significant positive correlations with FLSA, at $r = .95$, $p < .001$ and $r = .57$, $p < .001$ respectively. In addition, both factors have a large effect size, which could indicate practical significance and might need to be examined further. Given the effect size, teachers and lecturers might want to take these concepts into consideration when planning speaking activities, in order to mitigate FLSA related to communication apprehension and interpersonal confidence factors. This finding coincides with previous research, which also found a link between communication apprehension and FLSA, as well as confidence and FLSA.

Furthermore, two individual self-rating items not included in the adapted FLCAS are also interpreted as psychological factors: self-rated or perceived confidence and competence. Both variables are significantly negatively correlated with FLSA. However, perceived competence shows a small effect at $r = -.22$, while perceived confidence seems to have a stronger relationship with FLSA at $r = -.60$, which constitutes a large effect. Again, the direction of influence cannot be established through these analyses, but it can still be said that language confidence and FLSA are clearly connected with each other, as previous research had already established (e.g. Dewaele 2007; Liu & Jackson 2008; Marzec-Stawiarska 2015; Kruk 2017; Chou 2018; Botes 2022). Nonetheless, this result provides an insight into the relationship between FLSA and psychological factors, as confidence appears to be highly related to FLSA. Thus, measures to counteract FLSA should include confidence-raising activities, so that students could feel more confident in their abilities and less anxious about having to speak in their foreign language.

In addition, an individual item in the adapted FLCAS should also be mentioned, as it is interesting to see that the item that gathered the most widespread agreement was one that was added to the scale in consideration of the research population. Item 22 “I feel like I am expected to speak English well, since I am a student of English” has the highest mean value among the 22 items of the adapted FLCAS at $M = 4.62$, $SD = .79$. The second-highest mean value is found in item 19 “I get anxious when I have to take

an oral exam in my English classes” at $M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.36$. Item 22 had been designed with Baker and MacIntyre's (2000: 91) findings of performance pressure experienced by proficient language learners in mind, and given the high rate of agreement, it seems to support this idea of added pressure due to higher expectations from advanced learners themselves.

6.2.4. RQ4: relationship between discourse types and FLSA

Research question four was the last question concerning factors in connection with FLSA, as it focuses on discourse situations. In two scales adapted from Woodrow (2006), spoken discourse situations had to be rated by participants in this study, divided into in-class and out-of-class interactive instances.

All seven in-class discourse variables, constituting a communicative situation each, are positively and significantly correlated with FLSA. The highest correlation can be found between item 1 “The teacher asks me a question in class,” at $r = .69$, $p < .001$, and item 7 “Being asked to contribute to a formal discussion in class” at $r = .68$, $p < .001$. This result is surprising, given that oral presentations are commonly reported as being most FLSA inducing in previous research (e.g. King 2002; Gregersen, MacIntyre & Meza 2014). While presentations are not among the items with the strongest correlation with FLSA, giving presentations still has a medium correlation at $r = .54$, $p < .001$. The lowest correlation found in this scale was $r = .32$, $p < .001$ for item 5 “Taking part in a role-play or dialogue in front of my class”. These results could indicate that students experience anxiety when being singled out and having to speak in front of an audience without ample preparation time, as they would have for presentations or role-plays. Similar conclusions were already drawn in the early stages of FLSA research, for example by Young (1990: 545), who found that instances of having to speak without preparation in front of the class was anxiety arousing.

The second scale which included communicative situations that do not take place in a classroom environment, such as talking to staff at a restaurant or conversing with work colleagues, showed that such discourse types also relate to FLSA. However, not all items were significant, as item 7 “Being asked for the way by a tourist” showed no significant correlation with FLSA. The other eight items, however, were positively

correlated with FLSA. Interactions with native speakers as mentioned in items 1 and 2 had the strongest correlations at $r = .48, p < .001$ and $r = .45, p < .001$, respectively. On the other hand, item 8 “Talking to staff at a hotel/restaurant while travelling” showed the weakest correlation with FLSA at $r = .17, p < .043$. If categorised according to Plonsky and Oswald’s (2014: 889) cutoffs for L2 research, three other items were just below the .40 mark for medium effect, including items 3 (“A native speaker I do not know asks me questions”), 6 (“Having to speak English at work”), and 9 (“Having to speak English at a social gathering (a party or at a bar, for example)”). Three of the lower ranking items, 3, 6, and 8, were connected by potential unfamiliarity with the interlocutors, while one was related to the workplace. This could indicate that anonymity might be related to the extent of FLSA experienced, as it could have mitigating effects. However, speaking to work colleagues might also be on the lower end of the spectrum due to a potential distance between the speakers, depending on familiarity with the colleagues.

None of the discourse types on either scale had a significant negative correlation with FLSA, which means that all of the communicative situations included in the scales are connected to higher levels of FLSA. Thus, pedagogical implications to be taken from these results include that discourse formats in class, which single out students often without giving them ample time to prepare a response, appeared to be more strongly connected to higher levels of FLSA. This means that including spoken interaction formats that avoid this might lead to students feeling less anxious. Thus, including more pair and group work instead of tasks that single students out could be effective.

6.2.5. RQ5: differences between Bachelor and Master students in FLSA levels

The last research question aimed to examine potential differences between Bachelor and Master students at the Department of English and American Studies. The results indicate only minor differences in the mean scores and are not significant. No significant differences could be found between the different degree programmes either. This is another surprising result, as previous research indicated positive relationships between education and FLSA (Dewaele 2010a: 68), with subjects who had completed higher levels of education reporting lower levels of FLSA. However, this result

coincides with the finding from the second research question, where no relationship between FLSA and level of education could be established in the sample.

One possible explanation for this might be similar learning environments, teaching methods, and exposure to language learning activities in the Bachelor and Master, albeit at different content levels. Even if the academic demand is different between the degree programmes, the instructional approaches and linguistic demands are comparable across programmes. This could contribute to the lack of significant differences in FLSA between student groups. Another explanation could be that both Bachelor and Master students possess relatively homogeneous levels of language proficiency in English. Both groups constitute advanced EFL learners, and proficiency levels may not vary greatly between Bachelor and Master students.

6.2.6. Impact of speaking courses and suggestions for alleviating FLSA

In addition to the scales and items related to the five research questions, the questionnaire contained items that asked the participants to give their opinion on the impact the speaking courses PPOCS 1, PPOCS 2, and ASSET had on their speaking confidence. First, students could rate whether the courses increased their confidence, before providing further information through an open question regarding their experience with the courses. Furthermore, students were asked to contribute to the discussion of whether FLSA can be seen as facilitating, debilitating or a mixture of both. Lastly, the questionnaire also included an item with suggestions for in-class activities that might alleviate FLSA, which participants could choose multiple answers from.

A total of 38.4% of participants had already completed PPOCS 1, 19.2% had completed PPOCS 2 and 16.4% had completed ASSET. PPOCS 1 is a mandatory course for all Bachelor students at the Department of English and American studies, while PPOCS 2 is only obligatory for BA English and American studies but not for students in the teacher education programme. ASSET is a mandatory course only for Master students in the teacher education programme and it can generally be assumed that the students who have completed ASSET also took PPOCS1, if they completed their Bachelor degree at the University of Vienna. However, describing the impact the

speaking courses had on the subjects was optional and very few people responded. The answers were sorted based on whether the content of these answers reported an increase or decrease in confidence, a mixture of both, or neither, and thus processed quantitatively despite being open ended items.

PPOCS 1 helped 62.5% of students who completed the course to feel more confident in their speaking skills, according to the quantitative data collected. Out of 146 participants, 22 answered the open question regarding a potential increase in speaking confidence after taking PPOCS 1. Half of these responses found PPOCS 1 to be beneficial for their speaking confidence. For instance, one participant (P141) responded that “[PPOCS 1] increased my speaking confidence greatly, as I could identify myself with the accent I had chosen,” while another respondent (P145) wrote that “[i]t helped me greatly in identifying my pitfalls and my weak pronunciation areas, which made me a little more confident in speaking”. Although a majority of respondents found PPOCS 1 to be helpful, negative sentiments were also raised. For example, one participant (P146) reported an increase in confidence, while also stating that PPOCS 1 “made [them] more secure about certain [language] features, but at the same time more insecure about others”. Thus, this mandatory speaking course in the bachelor programmes overall appeared to be helpful for students and indeed aided them in feeling more confident, while also presenting new challenges for them.

Similarly, PPOCS 2 was also received as improving students’ speaking confidence by 53.9% of the participants who had completed the course. The open-ended responses, provided by only 7 participants, paint a slightly different picture, though, as four out of seven people who wrote a comment mentioned neither an increase nor decrease in confidence. However, the other three responses indicated that the writers felt that the course helped them increase their speaking confidence, all of them highlighting improved pronunciation.

Lastly, ASSET was found to be the most divisive course, as half of the respondents who had already taken the course reported increased speaking confidence while the other half did not. The 18 comments shed some light on this split, as some respondents felt the course was “very artificial”(P11) and “did not resemble real situations” (P8). Conversely, positive experiences were also reported, as can be gathered from this response, for instance: “I felt confident in my speaking before taking ASSET, however

I believe it has given me additional stability and trust in my abilities, especially concerning talking freely when giving a presentation” (P141).

Thus, the speaking courses offer opportunity for students to practice speaking in their target language, which coincides with the suggestion of offering more speaking practice for alleviating FLSA. A total of 66.4% of respondents reported that getting more speaking practice would help them improve FLSA. In addition, almost 60% would also like to do more pair and group activities, which was in line with the strong positive correlations between FLSA and speaking activities that single students out.

In light of this research, implementing more speaking activities in class, which let students speak in smaller groups or pairs, could be advantageous even for advanced language learners. Students could benefit from such practices, as being singled out and having to speak ‘alone’ is linked to higher levels of FLSA. Indeed, the finding that levels of FLSA in general are moderate at the Department of English and American Studies could point to a need for more speaking practice, as foreign language students in particular could be at a disadvantage due to FLSA. More speaking practice might help students to overcome their anxiety and feel more confident when speaking, which could aid them in their studies or in future careers. Taking this into consideration when planning lessons on part of the lecturers or for curriculum specifications, FLSA levels could be decreased in advanced language learners.

7. Limitations of the study and outlook

The results of this study need to be interpreted cautiously. Given that this is a master thesis project, several limitations have to be acknowledged.

First, sampling needs to be accounted for when discussing the results of a survey. As this study was conducted in a limited timeframe and with no monetary resources, non-probability sampling in the form of convenience sampling had to be employed. Through contacting lecturers at the department of English and American studies and asking them to distribute the survey among the student body, a total of 146 of approximately 4600 students (Referat für Reporting und Analysen 2020: 43) participated. This approach means the participants in the study might not constitute a representative

sample of the population. Therefore, the results of this study should be tentatively interpreted.

Secondly, statistical data on students at the department was limited. While current total numbers of students in each programme are available on the individual websites for the course programmes on the university website, data about gender was not readily available. The last cohesive report on students is dated, being from the winter semester of 2019 (Referat für Reporting und Analysen 2020: 43). In this report, students in the BA and MA programmes are listed as individual groups, the students in the teacher education programmes are listed according to their individual subject combinations. No collective category for all students in the teacher education programme for English is available. Thus, it is impossible to calculate an accurate average of all students enrolled in the teacher education programmes for English. Similarly, an accurate representation of these students' gender was also not possible. This was due to the sum of the teacher education programme students, in addition to the number of BA and MA students, is higher than the total of all students at the department combined. This issue might be caused by students being inscribed to more than one programme, leading to them being counted multiple times. Thus, the gender ratio of the BA and MA programmes had to be used for a ratio comparison.

Another problem that arose during the project occurred during data analysis. After performing correlation analyses on the different factors which were expected to potentially show a relationship with FLSA, I had initially planned to continue the investigation with a multiple regression analysis. As correlation analysis only assesses the contribution of a single independent variable to a dependent variable (Dewaele 2002: 29), multiple regression analysis would have been the next step in order to find the best predictors amongst the different factor-groups and the level of FLSA reported by the cohort. However, while the software used for computing relevant statistical analyses, SPSS, was able to perform multiple regression analysis, it lacked the capability to calculate measures used for model selection. Without these measures, no fitting model could be selected, so the results of the multiple regression analyses performed were not interpretable and had to be discarded. Thus, only the correlations between the different independent variables, such as demographic factors, and FLSA could be computed. It was not possible to find out which of these variables was the best predictor of FLSA as found in this sample.

In addition, comparison between previous studies on FLSA and this study was not always straightforward, as different ways to calculate levels of FLSA and other forms of FLA were used in a variety of studies. While this study used weighted scores to group respondents into groups of low, moderate and high anxiety, as has been done by various researchers (e.g. Dewaele & MacIntyre 2014; Jiang & Dewaele 2019), other studies reported the level of FLSA as a total score (e.g. Liu & Jackson 2008). Using different approaches for measuring the scores lead to completely different results, which resulted in difficulties during the comparison of results between studies. However, the decision to use weighted scores was based on the fact that prominent scholars in the field, such as Jean-Marc Dewaele and Peter D. MacIntyre, used weighted scores instead of total scores in their studies.

Nonetheless, the insights gained from this study may be of assistance to lecturers or curriculum designers when planning the incorporation of activities and courses geared towards advanced language learners. In addition, future research could expand the examination of factors related FLSA in order to help pinpoint the causes for this anxiety and help alleviate it further. Given that moderate levels of FLSA seem to constitute the norm, future investigations could look further into the relationship of social anxiety, speaking anxiety unrelated to foreign language use or personality traits.

Another direction for research could be to examine different personality traits or social anxiety in relation to FLSA. It might also be interesting to see how the levels and prevalence of FLSA changes at the English and American studies department in the coming years, after the new curriculum has been implemented. Thus, a replication study or a related research project could shed further light on the subject. In addition, longitudinal studies investigating the potential changes of individual students' FLSA would provide insight into the development of FLSA.

8. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the levels of FLSA among the student body at the Department of English and American Studies at the University in Vienna. In addition to this, the relationship between demographic factors, psychological factors, discourse

types and FLSA was examined. Lastly, it was investigated whether there were any differences in FLSA between Bachelor and Master students.

In previous studies, FLSA was found to affect a majority of subjects on a moderate level, which this study supported. However, it was also found that almost half of the students reported low levels of FLSA and even fewer reported moderate FLSA, with less than one fifth of the participants experiencing high levels of FLSA. With regards to levels of FLSA, no significant difference could be found between Bachelor and Master students, or between students of the two Bachelor programmes and three Master programmes. Notwithstanding the relatively limited sample, this work offers valuable insights into the prevalence and intensity of FLSA among advanced learners of English.

Furthermore, connections previously established between demographic variables, including age, level of education, and language repertoire, could not be supported by the findings of this study. However, the most important finding related to this research question established a link between frequency of language use and FLSA. A significant negative correlation was found between the two variables, which indicates that using the target language more often is linked to lower levels of FLSA. In line with some previous studies, gender was found to have a significant relationship with FLSA, as women reported slightly higher levels. However, correlations between FLSA and the other demographic factors were not significant.

The second set of variables examined in relation to FLSA were psychological construct, as measured by the adapted FLCAS and two self-report questions targeting English speaking confidence and competence. A correlation was found between all four variables: communication apprehension, interpersonal confidence, perceived confidence, and perceived competence.

Discourse types, including communicative situations in in-class and out-of-class contexts, and their relationships with FLSA were also examined. All in-class speaking activities included in the questionnaire were found to be significantly positively correlated with FLSA. Two items, which were concerned with being singled out in class and having to speak without preparation, showed the highest correlation. In contrast, not all of the out-of-class discourse types were significantly correlated with FLSA. Here,

the strongest correlation was found with regards to interactions with native speakers of the target language.

Lastly, in addition to the research questions concerning FLSA and related factors, speaking courses offered at the department and their impact on students were also investigated in the study. Questions regarding their influence on increasing students' English-speaking confidence revealed that a majority of students experienced PPOCS 1, a course focused on improving pronunciation and intonation, to be helpful, while reactions towards the other two courses, PPOCS 2 and ASSET, were more mixed. PPOCS 2 was still regarded as helpful by more than half of the respondents who had taken the course, while ASSET was divided straight by half of the participants stating the course was helpful in increasing students' speaking confidence and half disagreeing with this assessment.

In addition to questions about the courses, participants were also asked to give their opinion on which actions they would consider to be beneficial for alleviating FLSA. Two thirds of participants indicated that increasing their speaking practice could mitigate potential feelings of FLSA. Additionally, more than half expressed a desire for more pair and group activities. This aligns with the notable positive correlations found between FLSA and activities that involve individual students singled out for speaking. This might explain why the speaking courses are generally received as helpful for improving speaking confidence, as they provide ample practice which might not be the case in courses not dedicated to improving students' spoken performance.

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10. Appendix

10.1. Englisch abstract

Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) impacts learners when they need to express themselves in a non-native language, which has potential negative repercussions for university students studying English, affecting their academic performance. Moreover, in the long run, such anxiety could have adverse consequences on students' future employment. Hence, examining the extent of FLSA at the Department of English and American Studies at the University of Vienna offers valuable insights for lecturers of university level language courses. This information can guide the implementation of teaching strategies aimed at easing FLSA among students. Additionally, programme designers can benefit from these findings as well when designing curricula, particularly with regard to emphasizing speaking practice in both Bachelor and Master programmes. This study, therefore, analyses the prevalence and intensity of FLSA among students at the department. Additionally, demographic, psychological, and discourse-related variables are also investigated in relation to FLSA. Lastly, differences between the levels of FLSA at Bachelor and Master level are examined. Data was gathered in online questionnaires and analysed quantitatively.

The findings reveal that, in line with prior research, a majority of students experience moderate FLSA. Notably, the study highlights a significant negative correlation between the frequency of language use and FLSA. While gender exhibited a significant relationship, other demographic factors, such as age or level of education, do not. Psychological constructs, including communication apprehension and interpersonal confidence, as well as self-reported confidence and competence, correlated with FLSA. In-class speaking activities, particularly being singled out and spontaneous speaking, showed significant positive correlations with FLSA. No significant differences between Bachelor and Master students are identified. Students expressed a preference for increased speaking practice and more group activities to alleviate FLSA.

10.2. Zusammenfassung/ German abstract

Xenoglossophobie, die Angst vor dem Sprechen in einer Fremdsprache, wirkt sich auf Lernende aus, wenn sie sich in einer anderen Sprache als ihrer Muttersprache ausdrücken müssen, was sich möglicherweise negativ auf die akademischen Leistungen von Englischstudenten auswirkt. Darüber hinaus könnte sich eine solche Angst langfristig negativ auf die künftige Beschäftigung der Studierenden auswirken. Die Untersuchung des Ausmaßes von Xenoglossophobie am Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik der Universität Wien bietet daher wertvolle Erkenntnisse für die Lehrenden des Instituts. Diese Informationen können bei der Umsetzung von Lehrstrategien helfen, die darauf abzielen, Xenoglossophobie unter den Studierenden zu verringern. Die vorliegende Studie analysiert daher die Prävalenz und Intensität von Xenoglossophobie unter den Studierenden des Fachbereichs. Darüber hinaus werden auch demografische, psychologische und diskursbezogene Variablen in Bezug auf Xenoglossophobie untersucht. Schließlich werden die Unterschiede zwischen den Niveaus von Xenoglossophobie auf Bachelor- und Masterniveau untersucht. Die Daten für diese Studie wurde durch online-Fragebögen gesammelt und quantitativ analysiert.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass im Einklang mit früheren Forschungen, die Mehrheit der Schüler mäßige Xenoglossophobie erlebt. Insbesondere zeigte die Studie eine signifikante negative Korrelation zwischen der Häufigkeit des Sprachgebrauchs und Xenoglossophobie. Während das Geschlecht eine signifikante Beziehung aufwies, war dies bei anderen demografischen Faktoren nicht der Fall. Psychologische Konstrukte, einschließlich Kommunikationsangst und zwischenmenschliches Vertrauen, sowie selbst eingeschätztes Vertrauen und Kompetenz, korrelierten mit Xenoglossophobie. Sprechende Aktivitäten in der Klasse, insbesondere das Aufgerufen werden und spontanes Sprechen, zeigten signifikante positive Korrelationen mit Xenoglossophobie. Es wurden keine signifikanten Unterschiede zwischen Bachelor- und Masterstudenten festgestellt.

10.3. Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety questionnaire

This is a study for my master thesis, which is concerned with students' experience of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety at the Department of English and American Studies. It won't take you longer than 10 minutes to complete. I am interested in your spontaneous, honest personal opinion. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers and the questionnaire is anonymous. The contents of this form are absolutely confidential. Information identifying the respondent will not be disclosed under any circumstances. Thank you very much for your help!

If you have any questions, you can reach me via e-mail at a01636976@unet.univie.ac.at.

Lilith Reiter

* Indicates required question

Demographical data

Please fill in the questions about yourself and your studies.

How old are you? *

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-30
- ☐ 31-35
- ☐ 36-40
- ☐ Over 40

What gender do you identify as? *

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Please tick your first language(s). *

This list is incomplete, please tick *Other* if you cannot find your first language and specify it in a comment. More than one answer is possible.

- ☐ Croatian/Serbian
- ☐ English
- ☐ French
- ☐ German
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Turkish
- ☐ Other: _____

Which languages do you **speak** fluently? *

This list is incomplete, please tick *Other* if you cannot find a language and specify it in a comment. More than one answer is possible.

- ☐ Croatian/Serbian
- ☐ English
- ☐ German
- ☐ Italian
- ☐ French
- ☐ Russian
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Turkish
- ☐ Other: _____

How would you rate your English speaking **confidence**? *

Please rate how confident you generally feel when you are speaking English:

1 - very insecure 2 - slightly insecure 3 - neutral 4 - slightly confident 5 - very confident

1	2	3	4	5		
very	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	very confident

How would you rate your English speaking **competence**? *

Please rate how competent you feel when speaking English:

1 - A1. Beginner

2 - A2. Elementary

3 - B1. Intermediate

4 - B2. Upper intermediate

5 - C1. Advanced

6 - C2. Proficient

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
A1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	C2

How often do you **speak** English **outside of class**? *

Please choose an answer that fits best:

1 - less than once a month 2 - once a month 3 - multiple times a month 4 - multiple times a week 5 - every day

	1	2	3	4	5	
less	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	every day

Educational background

Please answer the following questions about your educational background.

What is your highest completed level of education? *

Please tick one of the following options. If yours is not available, click other and specify.

- ☐ High school diploma (Matura)
- ☐ Trade/technical/vocational training
- ☐ Bachelor degree
- ☐ Master degree
- ☐ PHD/Doctorate
- ☐ Other: _____

What degree program are you enrolled in? *

Please tick the appropriate answer. You can choose more than one option.

- ☐ Bachelor English and American Studies (BA)
- ☐ Bachelor Teacher Education Programme: English (BEd)
- ☐ Master English Language and Linguistics (MA)
- ☐ Master Anglophone Literatures and Cultures (MA)
- ☐ Master Teacher Education Programme: English (MEd)

Have you already completed PPOCS 1? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Have you already completed PPOCS 2? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Have you already completed ASSET? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Speaking courses at the English department

If you have already taken one of the courses dedicated specifically to improve speaking skills at the department, please leave a short comment to tell me how they affected your confidence in your speaking skills.

Please describe the impact **PPOCS 1** has had on your **speaking confidence**.

Please describe the impact **PPOCS 2** has had on your **speaking confidence**.

Please describe the impact **ASSET** has had on your **speaking confidence**.

Do you think that any of these courses increased your **confidence in speaking English**?

	Not at all	Very little	Somewhat	A lot	Not completed (yet)
PPOCS 1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PPOCS 2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ASSET	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Foreign language speaking anxiety - factors

The following section is concerned with Foreign Language speaking anxiety and the factors that contribute to it. Please fill in the questionnaire spontaneously and honestly.

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking English.*

Please choose an answer that fits best:

1 - strongly disagree 2 - disagree 3 - neutral 4 - agree 5 - strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

2. I generally like speaking in English.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

3. I don't worry about making mistakes in English.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

4. I can feel my heart pounding when I know I'm going to be called on in an English class.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

5. I keep thinking that the other students speak English better than I do.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

6. I am usually at ease during oral tests in my English classes.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

7. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my English classes.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

8. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English classes.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

9. I am nervous speaking English with native speakers.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

10. I feel confident when I speak in my English classes.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

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

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

12. I feel less confident in my speaking skills when I know I am being graded.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

13. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

14. I get nervous and confused when I'm speaking in my English classes.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

15. I am generally a talkative person.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

16. I am afraid that the other students will have a negative impression of my skills when I speak English.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

17. I feel comfortable around native speakers of English.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

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

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

19. I get anxious when I have to take an oral exam in my English classes.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

20. Taking an oral exam in English is more stressful than taking one in my first language.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

21. I generally like speaking in my first language.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

22. I feel like I am expected to speak English well, since I am a student of English.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly disagree

Discourse situations - in class

Imagine you are in one of the following situations and think about how anxious it would make you feel. Then please rate the situation according to the intensity of anxiety it provokes.

1. The teacher asks me a question in class. *

1 – not at all anxious 2- slightly anxious 3- moderately anxious 4 – very anxious 5 – extremely anxious

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

2. Speaking informally to my English teacher out of class. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

3. Taking part in a group discussion in class.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

4. Speaking to a partner during pair work.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

5. Taking part in a role-play or dialogue in front of my class.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

6. Giving an oral presentation to the rest of the class.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

7. Being asked to contribute to a formal discussion in class.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

Discourse situations - out of class

Please put yourself in the following situations again and rate how anxious each one would make you feel.

1. Taking part in a conversation out of class with more than one native speaker of English.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

2. Starting a conversation out of class with a friend or colleague who is a native speaker of English.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

3. A native speaker I do not know asks me questions.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

4. Speaking to someone online in English.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

5. Talking to a friend or relative in English.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

6. Having to speak English at work.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

7. Being asked for the way by a tourist.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

8. Talking to staff at a hotel/restaurant while travelling.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

9. Having to speak English at a social gathering (a party or at a bar, for example).*

	1	2	3	4	5	
not at all anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	extremely anxious

Foreign language speaking anxiety - performance and improvement

Please answer the following questions about the impact that speaking anxiety has on your performance. The last question concerns measures you would like to see implemented in courses at the Department of English and American studies, in order to alleviate foreign language speaking anxiety.

Do you feel that speaking anxiety helps you **improve** your performance? *

Please tick the appropriate answer: 1 - never 2 - rarely 3- sometimes 4 - very often 5 - always

	1	2	3	4	5	
never	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	always

Do you feel that speaking anxiety **negatively impacts** your performance? *

Please tick the appropriate answer: 1 - never 2 - rarely 3- sometimes 4 - very often 5 – always

	1	2	3	4	5	
never	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	always

What would help you **reduce speaking anxiety in class**? *

You can choose more than one option.

- ☐ More feedback from teachers
- ☐ Less feedback from teachers
- ☐ More speaking practice
- ☐ More peer feedback
- ☐ Less peer feedback
- ☐ More group activities (discussions, etc.)
- ☐ Less group activities (discussions, etc.)
- ☐ More pair activities (discussions, etc.)
- ☐ Less pair activities(discussions, etc.)
- ☐ More correction by teachers
- ☐ Less correction by teachers

Is there something else you would like to tell me about foreign language speaking anxiety?

End of questionnaire

You have completed the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your help, this research project would not be possible without you!

Do you want to be informed about the results of this study?

If you want to receive an update about my findings, feel free to leave your e-mail address.

Once I have finished this project I will send you a quick reply.
