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ABSTRACT

The responses of four scholars in the field of second language education to questions about language anxiety in second language learners are presented. The four respondents were Stephen Krashen, Alice Omaggio Hadley, Tracy Terrell, and Jennybelle Rardin. The formats of the interviews included telephone interviews on questions presented beforehand, a personal interview, and responses made in writing. Although a variety of questions were asked, only four are discussed here. In response to the first, the interviewees discussed whether there are positive aspects to anxiety in the language learning context. The second question asked whether language learners experience an equal amount of anxiety in all four skill areas. In the third question, respondents were asked to identify ways in which learners might express their anxiety in the classroom. The final question asked for effective anxiety management strategies. The texts of answers to each question are presented together, and a brief summary analysis of the responses is also presented. A 41-item bibliography is included. (MSE)

Language Anxiety from the Foreign Language Specialist's Perspective: Interviews with Krashen, Omaggio Hadley, Terrell and Rardin

One can dissect a human body and find a heart, a brain, but one cannot locate objects that are properly called anxiety.

-Eugene Levitt (1980)

When the well-known anthropologist/sociologist, Oscar Lewis, attempted to document the way of life of the native Mexican, he interviewed one family over a number of years resulting in Children of Sanchez (19) . When American journalist Studs Terkel wanted to understand the working class American, he sought out and interviewed working people throughout the United States. His book Working devolves from those interviews (35). And when Mexican journalist/novelist Elena Poniatowska set out to document the October 2, 1968 massacre in the Plaza of Three Cultures in Mexico, she interviewed witnesses and survivors of the massacre. Her interviews form a collage of written testimonies in one of her best known works, La noche de Tlatelolco (27).

For years anthropologists, journalists, and novelists relied on interviews to provide the kind of in-depth information that allegedly more "objective" techniques cannot. [1] I chose to use this qualitative format in data gathering to gain insights of specialists on language anxiety . These individuals are involved in language teaching, well-informed and established scholars in the field, and also represent a variety of perspectives in their approaches to language teaching.

Language anxiety is a complex psychological construct requiring investigation

from a variety of perspectives and approaches. The student perspective on language anxiety has been well documented (in Bailey, 2; Koch and Terrell, 17; Price, 28; and Young, 40) and has provided much needed information about anxiety in language learning and performance. Other points of view yet to be tapped, such as those of these specialists/teachers, can help deveop a more complete understanding of this complex psychological phenomenon.

These language specialists are scholars as well as teachers, but they are not necessarily experts on language anxiety. The weight given to their observations stem from their reputation as established figures in second and foreign language learning theory and their daily experience as language teachers. Therefore, they are able to address theoretical and practical issues on anxiety, including the problem of conceptualization of anxiety and the role it plays in language learning, manifestations of anxiety, and suggestions for reducing anxiety.

The interviews presented are with Stephen Krashen, Alice Omaggio Hadley, Tracy Terrell and Jennybelle Rardin. Krashen, the originator of the Monitor Model, has almost single-handedly redirected the language classroom from a production orientation to a process orientation. He has taught English as a Second Language in Ethiopia and at the college level, and currently teaches courses in Second Language Acquistion and Fourndations of Language Education. He is also the author of numerous books and articles about second language acquisition. He is Professor of Linguistics at the University of Southern California.

Alice Omaggio Hadley is a nationally recognized expert on language learning and teaching, and the author of the best-selling book, Teaching Language in Context. Her ideas on language teaching, especially in orienting instruction toward proficiency goals,

have profoundly impacted foreign language teaching. She has taught a variety of levels of college French and is currently the Director of the basic courses in the undergraduate French language program at the University of Illinois, where she is an Associate Professor of French.

Tracy Terrell is well-known for his innovative language teaching practices, specifically The Natural Approach, created with Krashen. He also has experience teaching a variety of levels of Spanish to adults. He is well published in the areas of Spanish linguistics, language learning, and teaching. Terrell is a recently retired Professor of Linguistics from the University of California at San Diego.

Jennybelle Rardin is nationally and internationally recognized as an authority on The Counseling-Learning Approach to Community Language Learning based on her experience with Dr. curran in its original development and her years of teacher training throughout the U.S., Canada and abroad. She conducts annual teacher training programs for the TESOL Department at Teachers College, Columbia University and is developing intensive Spanish programs in Kansas and Mexico. She has introduced language teachers and language learners to this holistic approach since 1975 and is currently on Sabbatical. She is founder and a director of The Counseling-Learning Institute in East Dubuque, Illinois.

The format of each interview varies. Tracy Terrell and Alice Omaggio Hadley were sent a list of general questions prior to their telephone interviews that were approximately thirty to forty-five minutes long. Stephen Krashen's interview was conducted in person at a conference and last approximately one hour. Jennybelle Rardin opted to provide responses in writing to the interview questions. [2]

Although a variety of questions were asked, only four of the most important questions are offered here:

1. Can we attribute a positive aspect to anxiety?
2. Do language learners experience an equal amount of anxiety in all four skill

because they lead to theoretical and practical insights about language anxiety that merit recognition and further investigation. For the reader to gauge the responses offered by Krashen, Terrell, Omaggio Hadley, and Rardin, a review of the research on the questions is presented.

Research Related to Interview Questions

In the first question, interviewees discuss whether there are positive aspects to anxiety in the language learning context. Although much of the general anxiety research suggests negative effects of anxiety on learning and performance (Beier Gunter, 3; Deffenbacher, 8; Gynther, 12; Sarason and Ganzer, 29; Spielberger, 32; Verma and Nijhawan, 37; Wine, 38), Alpert and Haber (1) suggest that anxiety may have a debilitating or facilitating effect. In other words, some anxiety may actually enhance performance. They are the first to propose a positive aspect to anxiety. Based on their theory, they developed two separate anxiety scales -- the Facilitating and Debilitating Anxiety Scale-- to measure anxiety. Research also indicates that anxiety may be attributed to an unpleasant condition or emotional state, "state anxiety", or to a stable personality trait of an individual, "trait anxiety "(Spielberger, 32). In either case, anxiety may inhibit learning and performance.

In the context of language learning, research suggests that anxiety can negatively effect learning or performance (Chastain, 4; Gardner, Smythe, Clement, and Gliksman, 10; Madsen, Brown and Jones, 23; MacIntyre, 20; Swain and Burnaby, 34; Tucker and Genesse, 36; Wittenborn, Larsen and Mogil, 39). Kleinmann's study (16) is the only one to follow Alpert and Haber's anxiety theory. He examined the notion of avoidance in the context of second language learning. Spanish-speakers and Arabic-speakers were (on the basis of contrastive analysis) expected to avoid difficult structures,

but some structures that were predicted to be avoided were actually produced, depending on the affective state of the learner. Learners who scored high on facilitating anxiety tended not to avoid the predicted structure.

In the second question, interviewees are asked whether language learners experience an equal amount of anxiety in all four skill areas. Research on language anxiety has consistently indicated that students experience anxiety over speaking in the foreign language (Bailey, 2; Horwitz et al., 14; Phillips, 26; Price, 28; Steinberg and Horwitz,33; Young, 40). Conversely, reading in French was found to correlate negatively and significantly to anxiety in a study by Swain and Burnaby (34). Swain and Burnaby were interested in the effect of various personality characteristics on second language learning. Results of a personality test were correlated with French language competency scores. Anxiety was significantly related to reading skills but did not have a significant correlation, either positive or negative, to French listening comprehension, production, or achievement.

Language anxiety research suggests that students may experience less anxiety in some skills, such as in reading and writing (Young, 40) and in achievement tests (Tucker, Hamayan and Genesse, 36). Although some research examines the relationship between anxiety and language learning or performance, ittle research is available that investigates language anxiety as it relates specifiically to listening, reading, or writing.

In the third question, interviewees are asked to identify ways learners might express their anxiety in the classroom. In the language anxiety research, Bailey (2) and Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (14) identify a variety of anxiety-related behaviors unique to the foreign language classroom. Horwitz et al. suggest that students are anxious when

they avoid conveying difficult or personal messages in the foreign language; "freeze up" in role-play activities; report they "know" a certain grammar point but "forget" it in a test or an oral exercise when many grammar points must be remembered; complain of difficulties discriminating the sounds and structures of a foreign language message; confess they know the correct answer on a test but put down the wrong one due to nervousness or carelessness; and they over study without any improvement in grades (pp. 126-27).

Bailey identifies competitive behavior that leads to increased states of anxiety, such as obvious self-comparison to other classmates and personal expectations, hostile reactions toward other students based on comparisons, a desire to out-do other classmates, an emphasis on tests and grades with reference to other student performances, and a mental or physical, temporary or permanent withdrawal from the language learning experience.

The final question asks interviewees to offer effective anxiety management strategies. Most of the recent research on language anxiety has offered, directly and indirectly, suggestions for reducing anxiety in the classroom. These suggestions include having students work in small groups or pairs (Koch and Terrell, 17; Price, 28; Young, 40), using self-talk and participating in supplemental instruction and support groups (Cope-Powell, 6), dispelling student beliefs about language learning (Horwitz, 13), playing language games in class (Saunders and Crookall, 30), sensitizing students to their fears and anxieties associated with language learning (Crookall and Oxford, 7; Foss and Reitzel, 9), using relaxation techniques, deep breathing, meditation and music, discussing your feelings with someone else, and keeping a journal (Oxford, 25).

Interviews

1. Can we attribute a positive aspect to anxiety?

Krashen: Yes, there is something called facilitative anxiety. My hypothesis is that facilitative anxiety has a positive effect on language learning, not on language acquisition. Facilitative anxiety may, in general, have a positive effect on tasks that require conscious learning. Language acquisition, however, appears to work best when anxiety is zero, when it is directed somewhere else, not on language. As Frank Smith puts it, in order to acquire language, the acquirer has to assume that he or she will be successful. This is discussed in his book Understanding Reading. [3]

Smith presents another extremely interesting concept in his book Joining the Literacy Club .[4] He says that children learning to read need more than what I have been calling comprehensible input: They also need to consider themselves to be the kind of people who read and write - they have to be invited to join "the literacy club." When this happens, they automatically absorb or acquire the conventions of writing when they read.

The concept of club membership is very powerful. Smith points out that teenagers learn to dress like teenagers, learn to walk like teenagers, dance like teenagers, eat like teenagers, talk like teenagers. They have subconsciously acquired thousands of aspects of behavior that are extremely complex, that have been described and that could never be taught. They acquire these aspects of behavior by watching other teenagers, and because they consider themselves to be members of the "teenager club."

Smith's concept is related to the affective filter, in that club membership results in a lower filter. It is also related to Schumann's idea of acculturation and Lambert and Gardner's idea of integrative motivation. When you consider yourself to be a potential member of a group, you subconsciously acquire all the aspects of the group's behavior

that mark you as a member of the group. With respect to language acquisition, this means all the aspects of language that may not contribute much to communication, but that are very important as markers of group membership, such as accent and some parts of morphology.

What we need to do in language classes is to invite students into the club, into the "French speakers' club," the "Spanish speakers' club," etc. To join a club like this, a student need not become French or Hispanic - but he needs to think of himself as the kind of person who speaks French or Spanish very well. When this happens, students will begin to acquire, automatically, those aspects of language that mark group membership. The alternative route is to use the conscious Monitor, which is doing it the hard way.

Omaggio Hadley: I don't think it's good for people to feel anxious if it means apprehensive or fearful. I think, though, that in the real language use situation, many people feel some anxiety, such as when they use the telephone in another country, for example. For more reasons than just language, but for cultural reasons, telephone calling produces anxiety in a lot of people. They're not sure how the system works, they're not sure that they'll get their message across clearly. People whose language ability is fairly low in terms of their proficiency might feel anxious about making an inquiry or getting directions or going to a bank or whatever. So I think in the real language use situation, unless a person feels very proficient and comfortable in the culture, he or she may have a certain amount of anxiety at that time: some tension, some uncertitude or hesitancy. And I don't know that it would be necessarily a bad thing for students to experience that in the safe environment of a classroom before they have to do it in the culture.

But I also wouldn't want to see teachers trying to put students on the spot or

create an anxiety-producing situation just to give them coping skills. What I would personally like to see is that whatever anxiety students have be understood as fairly natural, given the situation, and that we try to minimize the anxiety for them.

Doug Brown wrote an article [5] where he talks about the role of anxiety in the classroom. He was in a group with Steve Krashen, and they were talking about the how important it was for the affective filter to be low in order for proficiency to develop. Doug made the point that there may very well be some benefit of having at least a little bit of an "edge," because students whose affective filters are way down may be so relaxed that they don't really take in anything new. They might not have enough of an "edge" to really acquire new things. That, I believe, was an opinion, but I think it's well worth pursuing. There may be a lower threshold of "tension" beyond which you don't want to go either.

You have to have a little bit of tension, I think, to create the desire to learn, to motivate, to get people to realize that, "Gee, this isn't perfect yet, and I do need to work on it." It's just like one of the ideas behind proficiency testing: the probing. If your anxiety level is such that people remain unchallenged, chances are that they will make slower progress towards a higher level proficiency. But yet, I don't really like to use the word "anxiety" for that, but rather something like an "incentive" of some kind to improve. But not a painful or a negative incentive. So there is a positive aspect to this idea of tension. There is a good kind of tension.

Terrell: Yes, except I wouldn't call the state "anxiety." What I call it is "attention," and specifically the verb I like to use is "to attend to" the input. If the teacher is too good at reducing anxiety and getting the students really relaxed into the Natural Approach and so forth, what happens with some of the students some of the time (and probably much more than I would like) is that they don't attend to the input very carefully. That is, they

learn to attend to the input just enough to understand what the question is, or what the comment is, and they ignore everything else. This essentially means they ignore almost all of the grammatical markers.

I'm not so sure that Krashen's filter hypothesis is all that accurate. His hypothesis, the way I see it, is that if you raise a filter, it will filter out some of the input, and the input won't get to the acquisition device and so you won't acquire certain kinds of things. I do think that there is something to that. But I have a different view of why people acquire grammatical morphemes. Krashen's hypothesis is based on the implicit hypothesis that if you get input and if you understand it, you will acquire--that the acquisition is automatic.

My hypothesis is that the acquisition isn't automatic. I propose that acquisition follows two underlying principles. One I call "communicative need" (that's very common and everyone accepts that): if they need it to communicate, then they'll acquire it. And unfortunately, in the classroom communicative needs are not particularly high.

The second principle is what I call "target language group identification." I believe children acquire their first language and a second language in order to identify and be a member of the group that speaks that language. And so what happens is that this strong motivation for identification, or assimilation, forces them to attend to the input very carefully, so that their output will match the input.

So in a sense, I'm positing a kind of positive drive that says a student has to search out in the input those details and reproduce them in the output. The acquirer actually has to make a positive effort to attend to the input. Krashen's position is that acquisition is an automatic process that happens unless blocked. My feeling is that automaticity is possible, and that the learner can have blocks. But acquisition needs more than that, it needs a positive drive to go after something.

Now if you look at the classroom situation, you have two problems. Number one is the students don't have that drive to go after the details, to assimilate. Number two, they also don't have any reason to attend to the input very carefully because they don't need all those details to comprehend. For example, the only reason you need to acquire gender agreement in Spanish is so you'll sound like a native speaker, because gender agreement isn't necessarily communicative. So there's no reason for our students in the Spanish classroom to attend to gender agreement, because there are no consequences to not attending to it and not acquiring it. There are no communicative-need consequences; they don't have any drive to identify with Spanish-speakers and to assimilate. And there's certainly no need to attend to it from an information point o. view. You can make a case that there's a subset of gender markings, like **amigo/amiga** that they do attend to, but the things like **mesa**, **bonita/bonito**, they don't attend to. So my hypothesis is that it's not the filter that's blocking that out, but rather that there's no motivation to attend to it.

So one might say that if the affective filter is too high it won't let in the input, and Krashen is right: if there's no input, you can't acquire it. If it is too low, then there's no motivation to attend to the input, and you won't acquire either. So that what one might want to say is that you need an optimal level of attention to the input of the classroom. The big question is, "How do you get that?" You want an optimal level of arousal that motivates the students to pay more careful attention to what you're saying. If you look back at L_1 acquisition and ask, "Do little kids have high levels of anxiety about learning language?", I think you would have to say, "No." But I also don't think that you could say that they are just relaxed, not really paying that much attention and going about their merry way. They have heightened levels of attention. And I think little kids, when they're

getting into it and interacting with language, they really do pay attention to what people are saying. There is a positive force that causes little kids to take language acquisition seriously, and they work at it. They listen to what you say, they watch the context, and they're actively working at making connections between meaning and form. When they try to pronounce things and they try to produce things, it's a great effort. And so it's not that it's anxiety per se but rather a heightened level of attention.

And this is not necessarily negative. You know, in the Natural Approach, when I walk into the class I want the students to say, "You've got to put effort out and pay attention and work at this thing." It's not like you just sit there and smile, enjoy yourself and say any old thing that pops into your head.

Rardin: There is a positive aspect of anxiety that is operative all the time; we only begin to talk about anxiety, tension and stress when the imbalance appears. In other words, when a learner is not prepared for the tension and is not given ways to constructively respond to it, then we can say that the tension shiftes from being a positive and constructive force to being a negative one which can block learning.

Let me give two examples which may clarify what I want to say. The first one refers to the learner's productive state of alertness in the learning process, while the other refers to a non-productive state of stress, tension or anxiety. When one is driving a car in traffic, we know that the best state to be in is one of alertness. Each individual driver has his or her own levels of alertness or thresholds of stress in traffic. Alertness to the car, the road conditions, the traffic one sees in the rearview mirror, the side mirrors, allows one to process all this information in an integrated and coordinated way which helps the person reach his or her destination safely. In other words, the driver must be able to remain open to various channels of data flow which create tension and operate constructively with

them. We can say that "alertness" is what is happening when the person is in a state of optimal tension, stress or anxiety. But what happens if the stress level becomes too great? What is another driver passes and cuts in too quickly causing a state of panic? Alertness may then move to anger, confusion, and possibly a drastic change in performance, such as a sharp swerve which causes an accident. Similar "disasters" can occur in the learning process which usually only reinforce a competitive and performance-oriented learning environment.

The second example is drawn from an experience most of us have had, namely, entering a room which is lighted with spotlights on a rheostatic control. If we were to conceive of the teacher, a native speaker of a second language, as an extremely bright light because of all the knowledge, both factual and operational, which he or she possesses, then we can easily imagine that a student flooded with this light could feel overwhelmed. We have all heard our students say, or as students of a second language ourselves we have said, that we felt "put on the spot" when called on by the teacher to answer a question. The usual reaction is to tense up and try our best to get through the experience with as few mistakes as possible.

So we can say that alertness, stress, and anxiety are more or less inherent in the adult/adolescent learning process. This source of energy will continue to flow constructively depending upon the level of threat to the self-concept. If the stress level is too great, if the light is too bright, ego-protective mechanisms which are designed to maintain the self intact, i.e., ward off change, are triggered and learning does take place, but is "defensive" learning in contrast to "non-defensive" learning.

2. Do language learners experience an equal amount of anxiety in all four skill areas?

Krashen: According to the research and according to what people have told me, speaking is particularly anxiety provoking. The reason for this, according to theory, is that we often expect people to perform beyond their acquired competence. In early stages, we force them to break the silent period before they are ready, and in nearly every stage we expect them to use aspects of language that they have not yet subconsciously acquired.

When listening is incomprehensible, it is also anxiety-provoking. Steven Sternfeld at the University of Utah has been working very hard on this problem, helping students regulate the input they receive using conversational devices. Many of these devices are quite teachable. Some people have, however, a hard time getting up the nerve to regulate input, to tell someone that they don't understand.

Probably pleasure-reading is the least anxiety-provoking. This is supported by research on self-selected reading, as well as recent second language research. Young [6] for example, found that silent reading was the least anxiety-provoking of all the activities students rated.

Omaggio Hadley: I think speaking probably makes people the most nervous because there's the most at stake: not only do you have to create your own utterances but most students feel they have to pronounce them properly. At least in writing you get to do some thinking and reflecting.

Terrell: Oh, speaking, absolutely. I had a student who did a lot of work on anxiety, enumerating the techniques that we use in the Natural Approach, and asking students, "What makes you more anxious and less anxious?" She included interest and all sorts of

what she called "affective factors." The students rated them. Some of the activities came out higher and lower than we expected. But I remember that, in spite of the fact that in the Natural Approach we don't correct and we encourage students to say what they want and so forth, they still reported relatively high anxiety levels for speaking in front of the class. That category had higher anxiety levels, but I recall that we decided that even though those were the highest anxiety levels, they still did not reach levels to worry about. You certainly could not conclude that, therefore, Natural Approach students, in general, are anxious about speaking. In fact, you would conclude the opposite: that students in general are not anxious about speaking in the Natural Approach, and they speak without high levels of anxiety. However, it is true that of all the activities that is the highest.

Rardin: Any particular learner can have anxiety around one or more of the four skills. A learner may evidence no anxiety around writing, for example, but considerable anxiety around speaking. If we conceive of learning as a birthing process of a new self, then whenever the new self has something to lose in the process of learning, we generally see some signs of anxiety. For example, an Afghan student who did not know how to write in his native language showed no signs of anxiety as he got up in front of his peers to transcribe his own sentence on the board. We can only hypothesize that, much like a child who had no expectations on him to perform, he had nothing to lose. He was simply there to learn how to write! In contrast, another student who was already pretty good at writing in Spanish showed more signs of stress and frustration when learning to write English. Again we can hypothesize that she knew she could write in Spanish and therefore "ought" to be able to write in English. Still another student, a Russian journalist, commented on an extreme state of anxiety in speaking English because she knew she could perform at a high level in Russian, and felt she "should" be able to do the same in

English before opening her mouth, even though she knew in her head this was not a helpful attitude to have about her learning self.

3. How do you see anxiety manifested in your language learners?

Krashen: When I discuss language acquisition in my public lectures, I often give a sample German lesson. Before I give the lesson, I typically leave the podium, walk up close to the first row, and ask it if is ok to give a short demonstration. The response is always the same. The back rows agree enthusiastically, but the front rows freeze. When this happens, I point it out, and ask people in the front row what went through their minds when I said I was going to give a demonstration lesson. Someone always says something like, "You're going to call on me and I'll make a mistake" or "I'll make a fool of myself."

The audience usually consists of language teachers. What this means is that language teaching, the way it is typically done, is anxiety-provoking even for professionals. It asks us to do things that are fundamentally unnatural.

Omaggio Hadley: Students experience performance anxiety when they are being called upon to perform in front of others in the class, especially in front of a whole group, when giving an exposé, or when they are just answering some questions. They may hesitate or stumble, or simply look uncomfortable and become silent. For this reason, I tend to avoid these types of instructional formats and opt for small group work.

Oral performance is probably the most obvious cause of anxiety, but I've also known some students who feel quite tense about going to the board among 6 to 10 other students to do exercises there, because they're going to be writing exercises in front of others. They sometimes will hesitate or look at others' answers before attempting to write their own.

Terrell: There are a lot of individual reactions: some people have nervous laughter,

some people look the other way, some people make jokes, they try to turn into clowns. Some students try to get away with the shortest answer possible.

Rardin: Evidence of negative anxiety in a defensive or non-defensive environment is manifested in various forms in the classroom. The most obvious forms are distortion of sounds, an inability to reproduce the intonation and rhythm of the language, a "freezing up" when called on to perform, forgetting of words or phrases "just learned", or simply refusing to speak and remaining in silence. (Remaining in silence, however, is not always a sign of negative anxiety!) At a more subtle level, learners can collude with one another not to learn, or to maintain a level of learning beyond which no one dares to go for fear of being alienated or breaking down peer solidarity. Oftentimes an almost compulsive need to analyze, hypothesize about, and talk about the language rather than speak it can be considered as evidence of anxiety or resistance to learning.

4. **What do you perceive as effective anxiety management strategies?**

Krashen: If pedagogy is consistent with the Input Hypothesis, that is, if input is comprehensible and interesting, if students are not forced to speak before they are ready and are not asked to perform beyond their acquired competence, this will do a great deal toward reducing anxiety.

Sometimes we need to do more. We need to do things to help students relax, to calm them down because of their previous bad experiences in language classes. I think Lozanov has recognized this - many of the relaxation techniques of Suggestopedia are probably very helpful for "battered students," students who have suffered in language classes that have forced them to try to learn language in an unnatural way.

Omaggio Hadley: In [an anxious] situation like that, we try to deal with anxiety by not putting anyone on the spot. With students that are anxious about class performance, I

think one of the things I've done over the last several years which has seemed to reduce anxiety has been to do a lot of small group practice in speaking and listening. I have students work in pairs a lot so that if they feeling that they're not very proficient yet, the only person who really gets to see how they sound is the partner, who sounds about the same. The anxiety level is considerably reduced, and yet the same purpose is being achieved in the sense of getting speaking practice. So I think that one thing we can do to reduce classroom anxiety is to have small group activities.

These small group activities can be monitored. We use here at the University of Illinois a lot of conversation card practice in the beginning French classes up through the fourth semester and have found it very useful. We have students in pairs, and they have cues for asking each other questions. And a third student in the group is there with at least the correct form of the questions that are being asked, so that she can serve as a group monitor and give feedback on the correctness of the other students' questions. I think much unnecessary anxiety for particular students can be eliminated that way.

If students work a lot in pairs, then when the time comes for them to actually do an authentic language-use task, they've had many opportunities to practice, so that they don't feel quite so self-conscious about their competence.

I also think that some teachers might inadvertently create anxiety in that board writing situation when the focus of the activity is on form by pointing out errors rather than pointing out correct responses. What I like to do is find an appropriate response, point it out and then make sure everyone looks at it and corrects his own work. So that the person making a mistake is not put on the spot. But there may be some people who don't think about that and who actually point out a wrong answer and therefore might possibly embarrass the student. That could cause anxiety.

I think one thing that might help, besides putting them in a smaller group to talk, or in a pair situation, is to allow for some flexibility. I think one of the main goals is to learn not necessarily to say a particular thing all the time, but to be able to have a range of options to use to express oneself. Activities that allow for a multitude of answers rather than only one "right" answer would probably be less anxiety-producing.

However, I had a friend who did some informal research where students said they were much happier with convergent responses because they were easier. When they were asked to think of something on their own or something creative, or where there was room for flexibility in the response, this divergent thinking activity caused, if not anxiety, at least more grief for students because they really knew that they had to create something on their own.

With respect to teacher correction and anxiety, I think we would be wrong to draw the conclusion that students would rather not be corrected at all. Many students say they prefer to receive corrective feedback, at least in more structured activities. They become more anxious when they don't know whether or not their language use is accurate. Other students prefer not to be corrected. Learning styles and preferences clearly differ from student to student. I think that when students know oral practice is going to be construed as a test-like situation, then the natural test anxiety that most people feel comes to the fore. And when they know that it's not going to be "counted against them" to express themselves with mistakes, the test anxiety aspect may be reduced considerably.

In a curriculum oriented towards proficiency goals, teachers will expect students to make errors and will accept student answers in a warm, non-threatening fashion. Communication of a message will be rewarded. Correct form will not be a primary concern, unless the activity is focusing on a particular feature to be practiced for mastery.

The warm, accepting person is going to probably instill more trust in students. Students know that they can take risks with this person and that they are not going to be penalized in any way. Someone who comes across as less accepting, more exacting, will undoubtedly make them feel more on edge to volunteer anything beyond the necessary.

One of the things that I feel particularly strongly about is respecting the differences in individuals for activity type. I figure there are enough people who, especially in adolescent years, feel uncomfortable in front of large groups, in front of peers, to warrant our sensitivity to this problem, so I really don't do a lot of exposés. It would make more sense to use such activities at an upper level; they might begin to start doing little debates, exposés, and skits in front of the large group. Skits are really anxiety-producing for some kids, and others just love them. I think we have to be aware of the individuals in the class and their own needs. Role playing a survival situation may be anxiety-producing and yet it might ultimately reduce anxiety when the real situation arises if students have had a chance to practice in a safe environment in the classroom.

Terrell: In early stages of Natural Approach the first thing we did was to simply stop error correction in free conversation. And that is, we never interrupted the student to correct. And that was a pretty strong thing, from two points of view, first from the perspective of anxiety and the other from research in this area. Research demonstrated that interrupting students to correct them didn't help anyway. So the big change was error correction. Next we tried to focus on topics the student was interested in and knew something about. Presumably he [or she] wouldn't have to think so much and would become interested in what he [or she] was talking about; consequently, the anxiety level would go down. It turns out that that is not necessarily the case. It is a mistaken idea that talking about what the student is interested in and the student's own experiences will lower his anxiety level.

I suspect it's the other way around: if you do rote drills, in which the student has no emotional investment at all, then there's no anxiety in getting the answer right.

When the topics become more personal, when they're putting themselves on the line, then it isn't as easy. We have the hypothesis that the more personal, the more interested, the more involved the student, the more they'll want to say something and the less anxious they'll be, but that's not necessarily the case.

The teacher doesn't always know what topics are best for the student. The teacher might be asking things like, "How many brothers and sisters do you have?" and "What kind of work does your mother do?" or "What would you like to do this weekend?" And we all think, "Oh, those are all the kinds of personalized questions designed to lower filters." But these questions don't necessarily lower filters. Some students would much rather talk about the Middle East than talk about their mother.

Rardin: To offset defensive learning and the negative, self-defeating behaviors and attitudes which too much tension can produce, counseling skills and awareness are introduced directly into the language learning experience. The language teacher, in the Counseling-Learning Approach, is trained as a language counselor as well as a language teacher. This means that the teacher consistently and intentionally listens to the inner process of each learner letting him or her know through words or actions that he/she has been heard and is respected. This creates an atmosphere of security in which learners can safely give up those ego-protective defenses that may be blocking a more holistic way of learning. The teacher's understanding of the students in their struggles can reduce the barriers to that capacity to identify with the teacher in his or her expertise. Such identification is essential to learning and giving birth to a new language self. It is in this kind of trusting experience, letting oneself go into the language, or letting the language

get into oneself, depending on the help and support offered by the teacher and the others in the classroom, that one is able to unselfconsciously focus on the language. All of one's energies can be directed toward being and learning rather than toward keeping an arsenal in reserve to protect oneself against making mistakes and appearing foolish.

In being able to depend upon the language counselor to sensitively give help when help is needed, and to leave space for learners to take their own learning, learners gain confidence in themselves, the teacher and the others in the learning experience. In this kind of non-defensive learning experience, there is evidence of a constructive tension between being dependent upon the teacher and moving towards the kind of independence that leads to a mutually creative and inter-dependent relationship between knowers and learners in the final stages of learning.

Activities which are not clearly structured or leave students guessing too much about what, how, and why they are to do something tend to produce anxiety. Learner security tends to come from being able to make choices with the languge and taking control of one's practice process. The Human Computer [7] practice is one good example. In this process the learner is given complete control over her own learning whereby she can channel her control needs in a positive directions towards the learning itself and not against the teacher, the other learners, or the textbooks.

While the control the learner has over the teacher in the use of the human computer facilitates the internalization of the language, it does so through creating the conditions for the learner to be internally honest in her own awareness of her learning process. This kind of internal congruence (i.e., the learner can be honest with felt inner needs) through choice and control reduces negative anxiety.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Each of these specialists offer unique observations. Their perspectives, coupled with existing research, offer clear directions for the kind of research needed to more fully and completely understand language anxiety. Although some of the insights these individuals have may stem from their own scholarship and theoretical expertise, other insights clearly come from their experience as language teachers, suggesting that teachers may have qualitatively refined perceptions on language anxiety.

Question 1: Can we attribute a positive aspect to anxiety?

Past language anxiety research has attempted to define anxiety using existing psychological constructs such as test anxiety, communication apprehension, and fear of negative evaluation (see 14). The language specialists interviewed here sensitize us to other aspects of language anxiety that need to be included in any theoretical model.

On the one hand, Terrell and Bardin believe that there may be a positive aspect to anxiety, if by anxiety we mean a state of "attentiveness" or "alertness." Terrell argues that learners need input, but they also need to be attentive to that input for successful language learning. Similarly, Omaggio Hadley believes that anxiety should be minimized but not to the point that students are so relaxed they do not absorb anything. Educational psychologists have identified a psychological phenomenon similar to the idea of "attentiveness" and "alertness" in the Yerkes-Dodson law which claims that level of arousal is related to performance. As arousal increases so does performance. Too much arousal, however, can lead to a decrease in performance. This curve-like relationship between arousal and performance changes depending on the complexity of the task.

Krashen, on the other hand, contends there is no positive aspect to anxiety in language acquisition (but there may be for language learning). Krashen believes that

the traditional language learning environment is already inherently anxiety-evoking at levels beyond the beneficial. Current research tends to support his view. There is evidence that students experience a considerable amount of foreign language anxiety in their classes (Horwitz et al., 14) and that anxiety levels may be higher in foreign language classes than in other classes. In a study by MacIntyre and Gardner (20), for example, French class anxiety was rated significantly higher as compared to math and English class anxieties (p. 13). MacIntyre and Gardner hypothesize that

> During the first few experiences in the foreign language, anxiety plays a negligible role in proficiency since, even if anxiety is present, it is not . . . specific to the language learning situation. Anxiety aroused in this context, as a result of early language experience, would best be called state anxiety. After several experiences with the second language context, the student forms attitudes that are specific to the situation - emotions and attitudes about learning a new language. If these experiences are negative, foreign language anxiety may begin to develop. As negative experiences persist, foreign language anxiety may become a regular occurrence and the student begins to expect to be nervous and perform poorly. (21: p. 19)

Any theoretical model of language anxiety may also want to consider other psychological phenomena specific to the foreign language setting. Krashen posits that anxiety in the language learning context is "wrapped up" in the phenomenon Smith refers to as "club membership." Terrell associates foreign language anxiety with what he calls "target language group identification," similar to Smith's concept of "club membership." For Terrell, however, "target language group identification" is not sufficient for successful language learning. He suggests, as does Rardin, that a certain amount of

attention to the input is also necessary.

Krashen and Terrell hold a view of language anxiety close to that of existential anxiety as explained by Rardin.[8] For Rardin, existential anxiety is a more profound type of anxiety inherently built into the language learning process, particularly for adolescents and adults, that "touches the core of one's self-identity, one's self image. . . " (p. 35). According to her, the learner's train of thought is somewhat as follows: "If I learn another language, I will somehow lose myself; I, as I know myself to be, will cease to exist" (p. 35). These psychological phenomena are particular to the language learning context in much the same way that is Schumann's (31) concept of "social distance," Guiora's (11) idea of language ego, and Clarke's (5) theory of "clash of consciousness" or cultural assimilation and merit consideration in any theoretical model of language anxiety.

Language anxiety is a developing field requiring further inquiry into its parameters and effects. Language specialists have identified a variety of issue related to language anxiety: Do we want to create an environment in language classes that is so anxiety-free that students do not take anything in? Terrell alludes to a state of attentiveness and Rardin a state of alertness neccessary for effective language learning, and Omaggio refers to Doug Brown who contends that some "edge" is necessary in language learning. Omaggio, Terrell and Rardin believe that some state of alertness or attentiveness is necessary to learn successfully the foreign or second language, but can these states be considered, as does Krashen, facilitative anxiety, or a cognitive/emotional phenomenon separate from language anxiety and linked to model language learning behavior? Does the language learning environment inherently provoke states of anxiety that are beyond beneficial? Krashen's comments suggest that language learning indeed is inherently anxiety-provoking. MacIntyre and Gardner's

recent research, however, suggests that a high level of language anxiety is more a product of the type of environment and the negative experiences learners undergo during language learning than an inherent state associated with language learning.

Question 2: Do language learners experience an equal amount of anxiety in all four skill areas?

All four respondents acknowledge that speaking in the foreign language probably produces the greatest amount of anxiety in language learners. This belief is confirmed by language anxiety research. Rardin does suggest, however, that any of the four skills can create anxiety in learners, depending on variables such as learner language experiences and the relationship between the first and second language. Although Krashen also acknowledges that speaking produces much student anxiety, he believes that listening can be highly anxiety-provoking if it is incomprehensible. His comments are noteworthy and merit further study given the increased importance paid to listening comprehension in beginning language classes--witness the acceptance of The Natural Approach currently employed in textbooks in three languages. [9]

Krashen further contends that pleasure reading produces the smallest amount of anxiety. Krashen's observations are timely in light of an increasing strategy-oriented approach [10] to reading and use of authentic reading material in language classes. Since Swain and Burnaby (34) indicate reading in French can evoke significant levels of anxiety, Krashen's observation suggests that the issue in foreign language reading may involve more than the difference between reading an edited text (usually written to practice specific vocabulary and structures for the purpose of conveying culture information) and an authentic text (an unsimplified text written for native speakers). An additional factor in foreign language reading is the difference between required and optional reading.

Future research should examine student frustration levels when reading required edited passages and required "high interest authentic material" as compared to either sort of text as unrequired readings.

Again the perceptions of these language specialists are noteworthy. Their observations offer directions for future research required to understand fully language anxiety as it relates to language skills.

Question 3: How do you see anxiety manifested in your language learners?

Recognizing manifestations of anxiety is an important step in reducing language anxiety. Behaviors cited by Krashen, Terrell, Rardin, and Omaggio Hadley as manifestation of language anxiety range from the physical (freeze up, clown-like behavior) to the verbal (short responses, nervous laughter) to the psychological (feelings of making a fool of themselves\ or making a mistake). The manifestations of anxiety identified by Krashen, Terrell, Rardin and Omaggio Hadley are similar to what has been reported in language anxiety research. Perhaps language teachers have accurate perceptions of anxiety behavior in students. Often we tend to not trust those perceptions. The first challenge for language teachers, then, is to a) be sensitive to the signals students provide, b) recognize the behaviors for what they are, c) trust your perceptions, and d) work to reduce language anxiety.

Question 4: What do you perceive as effective anxiety management strategies?

The suggestions offered by these language specialists range from theoretically-based insights to common sense practice. Krashen's thoughts on managing language anxiety are framed within his theory of second language acquisition. He contends that anxiety is effectively managed when language is taught in ways consistent with the Input Hypothesis. For Krashen, the affective filter goes down for students, for example, they

are less conscious about acquiring the language, they are not required to speak before they are ready, and the focus is on interesting information. Furthermore, high interest information can involve students to such an extent that they become less conscious about learning the language. In an earlier response, Krashen discusses what he perceives to be a psycho-social phenomenon related to language learning and language anxiety--the concept of "club membership." If we can contribute to students' feeling a "member of the club," they may experience less inhibitions and less anxiety, and also be better language learners.

Rardin's suggestions for responding to language anxiety, like Krashen's, are theoretically-based, but derived from different principles of psychology. She contends that teachers are also learning counselors, and as such, one of their purposes is to create a secure atmosphere by building trust between the teacher and student and providing activities with the space for learners to make choices and be true to their inner learning experience. The real issue becomes one of how we go about doing this. Omaggio Hadley and Terrell's responses offer a variety of practical, common sense suggestions for reducing anxiety, thereby creating that secure atmosphere Rardin advocates and reducing the affective filter that Krashen believes to be essential.

Omaggio Hadley's suggestions for managing language anxiety include avoiding putting students on the spot or focussing on their errors, allowing open-ended responses in addition to discrete-point responses, encouraging small group practice, placing emphasis on what students say instead of just on how they say it, and changing instructor attitudes toward mistakes. She also believes that using techniques that can aid students in speaking, such as using conversation cards or having student cues for asking each other questions, may reduce their anxiety.

Omaggio Hadley raises an interesting point on anxiety and the type of responses students can provide. She believes that students are more anxious when they are called on to use the language in an integrative way, when they have to "create" novel utterances in the foreign langugae, or when they are asked to process at higher cognitive levels, such as in divergent thinking. In essence, she implies that anxiety increases as students take risks. Although some risk-taking may be necessary for successful language learning, the same task may be a greater risk for one student over another. For example, a task could be achievable for one student and not another, therefore, the risk for one student is calculated but not for the other. The question becomes one of the teacher calculating the risk involved for each student. Future research is needed to better understand the necessity of risk-taking in the language learning context and its effects, positive and negative, on anxiety in this context.

Terrell believes that by being aware of individual differences in learners, or being sensitive to personalized statements that may evoke anxiety in some students, we can reduce language anxiety. In other words, like Omaggio Hadley, he suggests that teachers get to know each class of students well and be sensitive to their needs and their affect.

In their insights on managing language anxiety, all these language specialists have identified some of the sources of language anxiety documented in research. [11] They imply that language anxiety arises from a) personal and inter-personal anxieties, such as in self-esteem and the idea of group membership; b) instructor beliefs on language teaching, such in their belief that it is necessary to correct every mistake students make; c) instructor-learner interactions, such as in instructor's harsh manner of correcting students; d) classroom procedures, such as in requiring students to speak in

the target language in front of the class and personalizing statements irrespective of individual student differences. In an extensive review of the language anxiety research, Young (41) these same sources of language anxiety can be identified with two additional categories - - language testing and student beliefs. Many of the suggestions these language specialists offer for managing language anxiety can be found in recent language anxiety research (see 15), and are particularly interesting in light of MacIntyre and Gardner's recent (21, 22) hypothesis on foreign language anxiety in which they suggest language anxiety is probably a product of students' negative foreign language classroom experiences. If MacIntyre and Gardner's hypothesis is correct, then most of the problem is not in the student but in the methodology. Student anxiety might be an indication that we may be doing something fundamentally unnatural in our pedagody. [12]

CONCLUSION

Language anxiety is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. Its impact on the learning experience is not easily assessed. In other studies using interviews, questionnaires, and diaries in the language anxiety research, language learners have provided insight on language anxiety from their own perspective. Now, interviews with four language teachers/specialists have offered insight on language anxiety from a different perspective. In most instances, their perspectives have corroborated findings based on the student's perspective, indicating that language anxiety, its sources, effects, and manifestations are rooted in a psychological phenomenon, particular to language learning. In addition to supporting the language anxiety research, their perspectives have offered insights for a growing field of research in language anxiety. Because we are only beginning to understand language anxiety, and because much of what we currently know

comes from the student's perspective, other perspectives merit consideration as additional sources of understanding.

NOTES

1 The interview technique has a long history of use in the social sciences. Refer to Essentials in Interviewing by Anne Fenlason, Harper and Row, 1952 and Qualitative Sociology by Howard Schwartz, The Free Press, 1979

2 All individuals interviewed in this article consented to be interviewed and to publish their interviews with Foreign Language Annals.

3 Published by Erbaum, 1988, 4th edition.

4 Published by Heinemann, 1988.

5 (I think it was associated with the Monterey symposium that took place back in '83, and the article appeared in Foreign Language Annals).

6 In Foreign Language Annals, 1990 (see 40).

7 See Chapter VII in Rardin, J. et al., Education in a New Dimension, E. Dubuque, Illinois: Counseling-Learning Publications, 1988.

8 The thoughts on existential anxiety expressed by Rardin are in the original interview and are not cited in the responses that comprise this report.

9 We are currently using Dos mundos at The University of Tennessee. In the Natural Approach, much more emphasis is given to listening comprehension in class and in their grades. When students express frusration because the instructor "talks too fast," "only speaks Spanish," "can't be understood," or when they claim to not be "good at understanding Spanish," I register these frustrations as student anxiety over listening comprehension. Moreover, because tests include a substantial number of listening test items, my perceptions are that students are experiencing more anxiety specifically during the listening comprehension

component of the test versus other components. One possible explanation for student anxiety over listening comprehension is that they have certain expectations about what or how much they are suppose to understand. If we can help them set more realistic expectations and also help them listen strategically, perhaps their frustrations and anxieties would go down.

10 A strategies-oriented approach to reading focusses on teaching students reading strategies to improve reading comprehension and perhaps compensate for a lack of language proficiency. Students learn, for example, to use their background knowledge, guess words according to their context, and use the dictionationary effectively and only as a last resort.

11 Young (41) documents various sources of language anxiety as gleaned from the language anxiety research.

12 Although a classroom setting and grades for language performane is an unnatural setting, the methodologies within this setting can emphasize a more authentic approach to language learning. When it does not, such as in cases where there is a harsh manner of error correction, a constant spot-lighting of students in front of the class, and an emphasis on grammar versus meaning, then the method has become even more unnatural than necessary.

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