

## Reviewing the Anxiety and Motivation in Foreign Language Learning From the Perspectives of Definition and Classification

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**Abstract:** Many previous studies have identified “foreign language anxiety” and “motivation” as two important areas of applied linguistics. This study aims to evaluate the pertinent literature with also providing new information and justifications in past studies on learning anxiety and motivation. In this paper, the first section explains the concept of L2 anxiety and elaborates on the three most widely used classifications of learning anxiety: “trait anxiety,” “state anxiety,” and “situation-specific anxiety.” Furthermore, according to the anxiety’s impact on learners, it can be broadly divided into two types: “debilitating anxiety” and “facilitative anxiety.” Then, the second section of this paper explains the concept of L2 motivation from the abstract to the concrete, divides learning motivation into two categories (i.e., “integrative motivation” and “instrumental motivation”) by its importance to second language learning, and classifies them into two other different categories (i.e., “intrinsic motivation” and “extrinsic motivation”) by introducing new theories. The last section summarizes the relationship between the independent variables of L2 anxiety and motivation, along with the dependent variable of L2 learning, and also the relationship between learning anxiety and language motivation, which provides some constructive suggestions to the students and teachers of related majors. Therefore, the contribution of this paper is to empower faculty to adapt their instruction to the motivation and anxiety of different students in various classes, which enables learners to strike a balance between motivation and anxiety in order to achieve effective and fruitful learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, Motivation, Classification, Relationship.

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### Introduction

Language instruction and learning have identified anxiety and motivation as key elements influencing students' capacity to learn a foreign language. The overwhelming majority of linguists concur that nearly all EFL (English as a foreign language) students experience anxiety related to learning a second language to variable degrees. Additionally, people overcome their fear of learning by engaging in positive cognitive processes, commonly known as learning strategies (Litterwood, 1999). With the development of the history of the field of educational

research, motivation and anxiety have seemed to be intertwined and interconnected in a complex way, and previous scholars have thoroughly examined the connection between the success of language learners and these two affective factors, concluding that learning anxiety and motivation are, respectively, negatively and positively correlated with foreign language learning. The majority of the earlier study, however, concentrated on the relationship between anxiety or motivation on foreign language learning separately. For example, the impacts of motivation and learning anxiety on learning a foreign language were mostly explored independently in the earlier studies. However, the relationship between anxiety and motivation was rarely considered as their mutual influence on foreign language learning.

The research area for this field spans from the core of the prehuman to the periphery of particularity, and it simultaneously conducts a thorough literature review on foreign language anxiety and motivation, searches through the theoretical models explaining the definitions of language anxiety and motivation, investigates the effects of both on the usefulness of foreign language learning, and examines the relationship between the two independent variables. Additionally, it provides the overall suggestion that staff and students should take in light of the current circumstances in order to adjust to the needs of the drastically shifting educational growth.

## **Definitions and Classification of Anxiety and Motivation**

### **Anxiety**

In the literature, there are numerous definitions of language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 1999). According to Horwitz et al. (1986), foreign language anxiety is "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process." Similar to this, MacIntyre (1999) defines language anxiety as a sensation of stress, tension, emotional reactivity, and fear related to learning a second or foreign language. Since MacIntyre's concept is clearer and simpler to comprehend, we used it in this study (MacIntyre, 1999).

A variety of anxiety-related topics should be covered in order to comprehend foreign language anxiety in a wider context. Spielberger divides anxiety in psychology generally into three categories: 1) trait anxiety, 2) state anxiety, 3) situation-specific anxiety (Spielberger, 1983). Compared with the two-type classifications below, it is more comprehensive; also, when compared with the four-type classifications, it tends to be more brief.

**Trait perspective.** It happens when someone intends to feel nervous all the time (Scovel, 1978). It is a universal personality attribute that is unaffected from different situation. Trait anxiety, according to Sieber, O'Neil, and Tobias (Sieber et al., 1977), reveals consistent personality differences in anxiety tendencies. Because anxiety is a personality feature, this aspect of anxiety doesn't change over time. Trait anxiety, in Eysenck's opinion, interferes with memory and inhibits cognitive performance (Eysenck, 1979). In some ways, anxiety is a natural psychological condition of the human body, but when it builds up to a level beyond what people can tolerate, it will take a toll on psychological health, such as weakening memory and cognition,

**State perspective.** It is described as a condition of emotion. Spielberger defined state anxiety as the emotional response or pattern of response that occurs in a person who perceives a particular situation as personally dangerous or threatening, regardless of the presence or absence of objective danger (Spielberger, 1972). Another way to describe state anxiety is a feeling of tension that changes over time and fluctuates in rigour (Young, 1998). For instance, test anxiety is a prime example of state anxiety since it occurs when students are nervous before a certain examination, but it may also fluctuate over time. Compared with trait anxiety, state anxiety is more precise and subjective, and an individual's condition, cognition, and behavior will alter with time.

**Situation-specific perspectives.** It happens at a specific time and is the outcome of a specific circumstance (Spielberger, 1983). According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991), situation-specific anxiety is a special type of anxiety that always develops over time in a certain situation. An example of this anxiety is language anxiety. Learning a foreign language, according to language researchers, is linked to situation-specific anxiety rather than trait anxiety because the latter is a stable trait and anxiety is triggered by all situations, whereas the former is linked to particular circumstances (Oxford and Ehrman, 1992). The situation-specific perspective, according to MacIntyre and Gardner, is the ideal technique to investigate foreign language anxiety since language learners encounter worry in many contexts during language instruction. In short, situation-specific anxiety cannot be isolated from particular circumstances, focusing on specific types of anxiety that occur repeatedly over time.

Furthermore, there are additional categories of two-factor and four-factor in addition to the aforementioned three-factor classification. Alpert and Haber divided it into two different types: debilitating (harmful) anxiety and facilitative (beneficial) anxiety (Alpert & Haber, 1960), while the four variables proposed by Paredes and Muller-Alouf were communication apprehension, anxiety about foreign language learning processes and situations, comfort in using English inside and outside the classroom, and negative attitudes towards learning English (Paredes & Muller-Alouf, 2000).

### *Motivation*

In language acquisition, anxiety and motivation are negatively correlated (Liu & Huang, 2011), and the latter often plays a motivating and stimulating role in learning the second foreign language. In terms of motivation, Johnstone regards motivation as a stimulus for achieving a particular goal on an abstract level (Johnstone, 1999). Similarly, Ryan and Deci's view is that being motivated implies progress or active engagement in a task (Ryan & Deci, 2000); From the perspectives of second language acquisition, Cook found that learners' language acquisition is different in learners. Furthermore, he has suggested and advised that age, personality, and motivation are the three key characteristics that affect and have an impact on second language acquisition. He added that among the three factors mentioned above, motivation is the most crucial to learning a second language (Cook, 2000). According to Lightbrown and Spada, learners' communication apprehensions and attitudes toward the second language community could be used to describe motivation in second language acquisition as a multifaceted phenomenon (Lightbrown & Spada, 2001). In short, when L2 learners believe that

they have to speak a foreign language to interact with others or to fulfil and achieve their particular aspirations and aims, they are motivated to acquire expertise and skills in this area.

Apart from this, Gardner and Lambert carefully proposed two factors as integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). 1) **Integrative motivation:** It occurs when a student enjoys being a part of a particular group and culture, and it denotes learning the language in order to interact with the locals' way of life (Gardner and Lambert, 1972); 2) **Instrumental motivation:** It indicates and proposes that a student picks up a language in support of a goal related to job or another advantageous purpose, and it shows up when the learner predicts a number of benefits he plans to take advantage of when picking up a particular language. (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). Compared to integrative motivation, aims at understanding and integrating into the cultural environment of the second language acquisition, instrumental motivation focuses more on learners' acquisition on more practical and concrete knowledge or skills, thus making their goals become clearer and more concrete.

To comment on integrative motivation, Ellis contends that it is the best and most perfect form of motivation (Ellis, 1994). Based on his arguments, this kind of motivation is more competent and organized, while in the study and research of second foreign language, the two are complementary and indispensable. Tengku Sepora confirms that success in learning a L2 language depends largely on these two types of motivation, and Cook agrees that the two motivations suggested by Gardner and Lambert are valuable and successful components of learning a second language. It is clear that these two motives significantly enhance language learning. Students who are driven by these two goals may achieve twice as much with half the work.

Ryan & Deci's Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) provided yet another idea in the subject of motivation. According to Ryan and Deci, self-determination theory classifies and distinguishes several forms of motivation based on the various justifications, causes, or goals that support an action or an accomplishment. The most important distinction according to this theory is between (1) intrinsic motivation and (2) extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the desire and interest to undertake and participate in a particular activity because the individual finds it to be appealing and enjoyable. On the other side, extrinsic motivation is the tendency to engage in activities for reasons unrelated to the action. These justifications may include expectations of reward or punishment.

## **Relationships of Anxiety and Motivation with Learning**

### **Correlations between anxiety and motivation**

Anxiety and motivation, which are considered to be two crucial emotional factors, have been discovered to be closely associated to the learning of second or foreign languages.

The major finding of this area is foreign language anxiety is negatively correlated with foreign language motivation. For instance, it was shown in Liu and Huang's study that respondents with a higher anxiety level

tended to hold a lower level of intrinsic motivation when 980 Chinese undergraduate students were invited to complete a questionnaire consisting of the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale and the English Learning Motivation Scale (Liu & Huang, 2011). However, the findings were slightly different from Khodadady, Ebrahim, and Gholam Hassan Khajavy's study that intrinsic motivation and identified regulation were negatively connected with linguistic anxiety. It is important to note, however, that the study also came to the conclusion that both motivation and anxiety strongly influence the English achievement of language learners in an Iranian context (Khodadady & Khajavy, 2013).

One of the forms of extrinsic motivation that is most self-determined in this study is "Identified regulation", which was specifically connected negatively with two subscales of FL anxiety: a negative attitude about English class and comfort in English class. According to the three extrinsic motivation subscales, students who study English for personally relevant reasons to achieve a desired target do so with less anxiety than those who do so under internal or external pressure. The external and introjected regulations of the three extrinsic motivation subscales, with the exception of comfort in English class, had positive correlations with all FL anxiety subscales. As a result, pupils who learned English to get a benefit or escape punishment all had a dread of communicating in English, a worry of receiving a bad grade, and a bad attitude toward L2 English classes (Khodadady & Khajavy, 2013).

Intriguingly, studies have shown that L2 learners' motivation has little bearing on their anxiety related to foreign languages. In their investigation of foreign language anxiety among Indonesian undergraduates majoring in English, French, Japanese, Korean, and Arabic, one study came to the conclusion that students' motivation and their perception of teachers' behaviors do not simultaneously affect students' foreign language anxiety. Additionally, among Indonesian undergraduate students, motivation for language acquisition is not a predictor of language anxiety. One explanation for this is that for the majority of Indonesian students; external elements like the classroom atmosphere have a greater impact than internal ones like motivation (Djafri & Wimbari, 2018).

Meanwhile, in Jiang and his colleagues' paper, L2 anxiety was not directly associated with motivated behavior for either promotion-focused or prevention-focused learners. The lack of a connection between L2 anxiety and motivated actions for respondents who had either a facilitative orientation or a preventive orientation was also confirmed (Jiang & Mostafa, 2022).

#### *Correlations between L2 Anxiety and Learning*

One of the challenges affecting language acquisition is language anxiety (Ling & Wang, 2014). The majority of L2 studies has demonstrated a negative relationship between anxiety and Learning proficiency. For instance, in the study by Salehi and Marefat, 200 pre intermediate participants who learn English as a second language were invited in this study, with indicating that foreign language anxiety is negatively correlated with test performance (Salehi & Marefat, 2014).

There are numerous negative influences caused by anxiety on learning. For instance, anxiety has a detrimental effect on students' self-worth, confidence, communication abilities, and test performance. They worry about making errors in their oral, writing, and reading practices. They frequently avoid responding to queries because they are too shy, their responses are terse and vague, or they are even frightened to speak. They find it difficult to focus during the listening practice since they are anxious. In terms of listening, although they listened, their thoughts were blank. They struggle to learn since they are unable to enhance their overall learning capacities. Poor performance is caused by anxiety because it makes people tense and scared. This, in turn, makes the external factors cause even lower performance (Ling & Wang, 2014).

Foreign language anxiety is caused by a variety of factors. The six basic factors for learning a foreign language are influenced by three key sources: the learner, the teacher, and instructional practice based on Abdullah Nijr Al-Otaibi's classification (Djafri & Wimbari, 2018). These six factors are: 1) interpersonal and personal relationships anxiety; 2) learners' attitudes about learning a foreign language; 3) classroom procedures; 4) teacher-centered technique; 5) Instructors' ideas about language teaching; 6) language testing (Djafri & Wimbari, 2018). Another classification was proposed by Luo, which includes the classroom environment, learner characteristics, the target language, and the actual process of learning a foreign language that are crucial causes of experiencing foreign language anxiety (Luo, 2012).

However, not all of the anxiety would decrease learners' interests for the subject. In a 2007 study, Professor An showed that one classification named "promoting anxiety" helped people learn L2. It can inspire students to take on new learning challenges, focus on gathering strength and coping mechanisms to finish the work in a short amount of time. Even some of them might have more ideas when they meet the deadlines (An, 2007). Similarly, Liu and Huang's study suggests that the fear of negative evaluation may actually improve English learning performance (Liu & Wang, 2011).

Although L2 anxiety has become a significant barrier to language learning, it can be lessened through various ways as this study proposes. Firstly, in order to assist students to develop a proper value for learning a foreign language and acquire scientific learning methodologies, teachers should possess the proper understanding of both language learning and language teaching. Secondly, the goal of educators is to provide a welcoming, democratic, laid-back, and peaceful learning environment. In order to study in a relaxed environment free from coercion, students are encouraged to take certain calculated risks. Finally, students' abilities and improvements should be clearly understood by teachers, who should also be aware of their potential and assist in boosting their self-efficacy. A thorough, unbiased evaluation of the student should be offered.

#### *Correlations between L2 Motivation and Learning*

Motivation is one of the basic and essential components of learning (Brewer & Burgess, 2005). The majority of studies reveal a significant positive correlation between L2 motivation and learning. For instance, in a survey of English majors at seven institutions in Shaanxi province of China, Zhang, Dai, and Wang discovered that the

participants' integrative and instrumental motivations had a positive impact on their competency in a L2 learning (Zhang et al., 2020).

However, internal motivation factors will diminish or even disappear due to the influence of external factors, such as teaching methods, learning materials, and the learning environment. This may eventually result in demotivation (Dörnyei, Zoltán, and Ema Ushioda, 2011), which will ultimately have a negative impact on mastery of a foreign language.

There are a good deal of variables that play a significant role in motivating language learners. Firstly, it is important for teachers to encourage students more oftenly, thereby facilitating students' motivations. This is essential for both promoting the outcomes of multilingual education and learning sustainability after graduation. Second, given that EFL mediates the association between motivation and second language competency, teachers should work to enhance their students' curriculum experiences by enhancing the classroom environment and incorporating interesting learning activities. As Jiang and Dewaele note, teachers are more likely to cause FLE, so it is necessary to encourage teachers to provide a more relaxing atmosphere, as they hone their instructional abilities (Alshenqeeti, 2018). Finally, L2 learners should frequently provide themselves with more self-encouragement, and cultivate a strong enthusiasm in studying L2. Additionally, they might set up a system of incentives to reward each minor accomplishment with a present they hope to receive soon, which is their self-efficacy.

## Conclusion

To sum up, the above content shows that both foreign language anxiety and motivation are two of the most essential factors in the field of foreign language learning. For the potential readers of this paper, researchers should deal with this issue systematically and provide adequate understanding. Language instructors and teachers should identify, recognise and explore students' personalities, master the knowledge of the types and the importance of anxiety and motivation. These L2 learners should adapt to the language classroom and find a balance between positive anxiety and motivation. Furthermore, there is still a need for more research in the field to confirm and elaborate on the previous results on foreign language anxiety.

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