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Lasting Effects of Foreign Language Anxiety with Adults Working in International Organizations

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Abstract

Foreign language anxiety (FLA), the pervasive feeling of mild to severe apprehension when faced with communicating in a foreign language, is universally quite common. The manifestation of FLA in Thailand, where English is taught as a foreign language in secondary schools, is no exception. By employing descriptive phenomenology, this study sought to corroborate the existence of FLA at some stage during Thai secondary EFL classes and discover if FLA continues to trouble Thai adults working in international organizations. The population of this study is 12 Thai adults who are working as office workers, management, and administrative staff in an international organization in Thailand. The participants shared accounts of experiencing negative or harsh feedback from Thai teachers and Thai classmates, doubting their English language proficiency, persistent fear of embarrassment

when making mistakes in English, and a prolonged feeling of guilt from limited grammatical and vocabulary knowledge while in secondary EFL classes. In the end, all participants disclosed that FLA, which they corroborated began when they were students in secondary school, has continued to plague them in adulthood. The study recommends that to diminish FLA in Thai secondary EFL classrooms, education stakeholders must implement sound language policy changes, progressive educational development, and most importantly, sufficient teacher education and teacher support focused on producing qualified Thai teachers of English.

Keywords: *Foreign language anxiety, Thai adolescents, Thai adults, English as a Foreign Language.*

Thai secondary EFL students are highly motivated and keen to learn and improve their English ability, yet they continually experience anxiety issues when using English as a foreign language (Imsa-ard, 2020). Most teachers fail to grasp that overcoming anxiety when using English as a foreign language depends on exposure to and practice of the target language, not on rote memorization and grammar indoctrination (Kongkerd, 2013; Nicholls & Apiwattanakorn, 2015; Stainton, 2017). Studies have shown that the attitude and motivation of Thai secondary EFL students to learn English are significantly determined by the Thai teachers' English language competence and proficiency and their attitude towards English as a foreign language (Deveney, 2005; Imsa-ard, 2020; Thadphoothon, 2017).

Unfortunately, teacher education programs are not encouraging Thai teachers of English to be linguistic role models for Thai students, seeing as the vast majority of teachers (96%) only possess a minimal English proficiency level (Imsa-ard, 2020; Noom-ura, 2013; Pechapan-Hammond, 2020). With weak language policies (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017; Kaur et al., 2016), limited educational development (Carter, 2015; Fry & Bi, 2013; Marques, 2020), and a lack

of sufficient teacher education and support focused on producing qualified Thai teachers of English, solutions to promote better attitudes and motivation and reduce foreign language anxiety of Thai secondary EFL students are doubtful (Imsa-ard, 2020; Kiatkheeree, 2018; Kirkpatrick, 2012; Noom-ura, 2013).

Consequently, the attitude of the Thai secondary EFL students towards English is impaired by the teacher's deficiency in the necessary linguistically specific knowledge about problematic English speaking and writing practices. It has been shown that Thai teachers of English lack the skills to evaluate English oral performance professionally, sensitively, and objectively. They also lack the competency to help Thai secondary EFL students overcome foreign language anxiety when using English as a foreign language (Anantapol et al., 2018; Böttger & Költzsch, 2020; Sipe, 2011).

Foreign language anxiety (FLA), the pervasive feeling of mild to severe apprehension, fear, nervousness, unease, or worry when communicating in a foreign language, is globally prevalent (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Schumann, 1999). These negative emotional displays, although varied according to culture and language proficiency, are commonly displayed by biological indicators such as fight-flight-or-freeze responses, communication limiting, withdrawal or avoidance behaviors, and physical manifestations such as response latency, perspiration, shivering, or even crying in more extreme debilitating cases (e.g., Dewaele, 2011; Horwitz, 1986; Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz, 2016; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Tran et al., 2013). The manifestation of FLA in Thailand, where English is taught as a foreign language, is no exception.

The general identification and substantiated existence of FLA experienced by Thai adolescent students in secondary EFL classrooms has been written about extensively (e.g., Akkakoson, 2016; Basilio & Wongrak, 2017; Chinpakdee, 2015; Imsa-ard, 2020; Loo & Kitjaroonchai, 2015; Palaleo & Srikrajang, 2018; Partridge & Eamoraphan, 2015; Sankueana & Sucaromana, 2018; Tanielian, 2014; Vo et al., 2017). Previous quantitative studies utilizing self-report questionnaires, such as the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

(FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986), have looked at the effects of FLA on performance in Thai secondary EFL classrooms. Although Horwitz et al. (1986) based the FLCAS on three related effects of FLA (communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation), it has been shown that these three elements may not make up the entirety of FLA experienced by Thai adolescents in typical secondary EFL classrooms, nor do they reveal the cause of FLA (Park, 2014; Servaes, 2017; Sipe, 2011; Tran, 2012).

Horwitz et al. (1986) has played a vital role in language anxiety research, with many studies using their concept as a theoretical framework (Tran, 2012); however, this theory propagates that the above effects of FLA are more likely to be consequences rather than a source of FLA. Böttger and Költzsch (2020) analyzed and interpreted neuroscientific findings in a fundamental pilot study to help answer central questions as to the sources of FLA. They speculated that FLA sources might likewise be associated with additional psychological, cognitive, social, affective, and methodological factors. Therefore, we believe to better understand the effects of FLA, a greater awareness of the sources of FLA is needed.

Upon reviewing the literature, we considered that the potential sources of the emotional and physical factors, as mentioned earlier, maybe generally linked to four interrelated categories: negative criticism, self-doubt, fear of embarrassment, and feeling of guilt (Böttger & Költzsch, 2020; Dewaele, 2011; Kongkerd, 2013; Stainton, 2017).

Sources of Emotional and Physical Indicators of FLA

The first related category (psychological), ‘concern about negative criticism,’ regarding Thai secondary EFL students, has been linked to stress regarding negative teacher or classmate feedback. Likewise, Thai adults may experience the same stress regarding negative evaluation from a listener regarding foreign language production (Basilio & Wongrak, 2017; Imsa-ard, 2020; Sankueana & Sucaromana, 2018). In addition, individuals who experience

apprehension about negative criticism also tend to feel uncertainty or self-doubt about their foreign language proficiency (Dewaele, 2011).

The second related category (cognitive), ‘self-doubt,’ has been linked to concerns about one’s language proficiency in using a foreign language, mainly in verbal or written form. Like the first category, the Thai secondary EFL students are concerned with being ridiculed by their Thai teachers or Thai classmates for lacking English language proficiency. As a result, they experience a feeling of anxiousness, even to the point of the emotional response of fear or crying, when called on to speak in front of their fellow Thai classmates (Akkakoson, 2016; Loo & Kitjaroonchai, 2015; Palaleo & Srikrajang, 2018). Likewise, Thai adults who believe they are not very proficient in English may also feel a significantly greater fear of being embarrassed or ridiculed by their Thai coworkers, especially in international office settings where they work with native English speakers (Horwitz, 1986; Schumann, 1999).

The third related category (social affective), ‘fear of embarrassment,’ has been linked to the distress of being humiliated by delays or errors in spoken English language production, which leads to a lack of dedication and practice, and is often detrimental to foreign language acquisition and production, as with Thai secondary EFL students (Chinpakdee, 2015; Palaleo & Srikrajang, 2018). As a result, Thai adults may experience delays or errors in English language production as indicators of limited grammatical and vocabulary knowledge (Horwitz, 2016).

The fourth related category (methodological), ‘feeling of guilt,’ has been linked to a sense of remorse felt by the Thai secondary EFL students stemming from a lack of dedication and practice earlier in the English language learning process, which relatedly stems from limited grammatical and vocabulary knowledge (Partridge & Eamoraphan, 2015; Tanielian, 2014; Vo et al., 2017). The adverse emotional and physical reactions associated with the four categories mentioned above have led to foreign language anxiety when faced with communicating in English.

Although studies employing self-reported retrospective data have explored the effects of FLA among Thai adolescents, studies

corroborating the source of FLA and addressing the lasting effects of such on Thai adults working in international organizations seems to be limited (Aoibumrung, 2016). Therefore, by utilizing descriptive phenomenology (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Christensen et al., 2017; Giorgi, 1986), this study sought to corroborate the existence of FLA during adolescence and discover what effects FLA experienced during secondary EFL classes continue to have on Thai adults working in international organizations.

Materials and Methods

Ethical Approval

The Institutional Review Board, Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, granted Ethical Approval (COA. No. 2021/02-019) for this study before data collection commenced.

Participants

The participants of this study, determined by purposive sampling, were twelve Thai adults (N=12) currently working as office workers, management, and administrative staff at an international organization in Bangkok, Thailand, where they are required to use English when interacting with international visitors. The participants also completed an initial English for Communication for Professional Purposes course where they were casually observed displaying varying traits of foreign language anxiety during the course.

All participants were female; evenly distributed between pre-intermediate and intermediate English proficiency levels; from varied socioeconomic backgrounds; 24 to 55 years old with an average age of approximately 40 years; attended government secondary schools and universities; and were equally divided by those who held bachelor's and master's degrees.

The all-female study sample is relevant when considering employment segregation by gender in Thailand. International organizations predominantly employ females, as much as 95%, in office and administrative positions where interaction with international guests is a job requirement (Son, 2010; Wailerdasak, 2020).

Data Collection

This qualitative study employed confidential individual structured interviews with open-ended guiding questions (See Appendix). The guiding questions were reviewed by three academics, suggestions were given for clarity and interpretation, and adjustments were made accordingly. Considering that gathering data is a time-consuming and laborious process, the interviews were conducted at convenient times during the first quarter of 2021 in a secured location at the place of the participants' employment. Furthermore, to prevent additional feelings of FLA due to language barriers and to allow the participants to express themselves articulately enough, the structured interviews were conducted in Thai by a qualified and trained Thai research assistant of similar status as the participants (e.g., age, gender, educational background, employment level). Thai versions of the Consent Form and the Participant Information Sheet were also provided.

The interviews were recorded and professionally transcribed. The transcripts were then translated into English, and the translation was verified for context and content by two Thai scholarly users. The English translations were then edited by a professional English copyeditor.

Data Analysis

This study utilized descriptive phenomenology, considering the small sample of participants (N=12), to describe the retrospective lived experiences of the Thai adult participants to corroborate the existence of FLA during adolescence in secondary ELT classrooms and to discover the continued effects of FLA in adulthood. Descriptive phenomenology, first introduced by Edmund Husserl (Bloor & Wood, 2006), is a commonly used rigorous approach to data analysis involving a small sample of participants to understand and describe subjective experiences of individuals involving emotion or feeling, imagination, memory, perception, and thought that could be applied and adjusted to many situations (Christensen et al., 2017; Giorgi, 1986; Gutland, 2018; Neubauer et al., 2019). As a point of distinction, emotion is

operationalized for this study as being associated with automatic bodily reactions, whereas feeling is the conscious experience triggered by external stimuli (Farnsworth, 2020). If adequately implemented, descriptive phenomenology allows researchers to generalize how data from a specific phenomenon is perceived or experienced by the participants (Deakin University, 2022; Giorgi, 1986).

In keeping with the approach and procedures of descriptive phenomenology, the following strategies were applied to ensure scientific rigor and phenomenological validity of the data (Sundler et al., 2019). Details and aspects of textual meaning were explored by two academic coders to gain familiarity with the data and discover meanings and themes. Meanings and themes were identified in the data, and the original data was compared with the descriptive text of derived themes. The findings have been illustrated with actual quotes to ensure the content and meanings are consistent and demonstrate how the derived descriptions were grounded in the text (Christensen et al., 2017; Gutland, 2018; Neubauer et al., 2019).

Thus, by applying descriptive phenomenology, once the data had been systematically collected and analyzed and the early existence of FLA during adolescence was corroborated, the analysis sought to discover to what extent FLA affects Thai adults when using English in international employment settings.

Limitations of Retrospective Studies

Although retrospective studies are advantageous in some circumstances, critical problems within this type of research design are apparent. Recollections are subject to confounding substantiation of evidence where other factors associated with a lived experience may be present, and only association can be determined rather than causation (Talari & Goyal, 2020). To overcome the main drawback in recall analysis design, in this study, the participants were asked to recall longtime past events from adolescence only to confirm, not substantiate by supplying evidence, the existence of instances of FLA.

Results

The study sought to corroborate the existence of foreign language anxiety and discover what effects previously experienced FLA continues to have on Thai adults working in international organizations. The four categories corresponding to previous literature were confirmed upon the systematic data analysis. The four identified categories (e.g., concern about negative criticism, self-doubt, fear of embarrassment, and feeling of guilt) are presented by 'order of mention' or a suitable order of importance for salience (Böttger & Költzsch, 2020; Kaiser, 2019).

Negative Criticism

The first mentioned category, 'negative criticism,' included the dimension of concern about negative or harsh feedback from the Thai teacher when the participants were Thai adolescents or undesirable responses from the listener now as Thai adults. The participants expressed the fear and intimidation they felt from the Thai teacher when using English in secondary ELT classrooms. It emerged that when the participants were adolescents, the behaviors exhibited by the Thai teachers when the participants made mistakes in using English were verbal bullying or physical abuse, which frequently resulted in bodily injury, including broken skin, bruising, or some swelling (OECD, 2017, 2019; Office of the Council of State of Thailand, 2003).

The majority of participants recalled similar horrifying memories, such as the following participant:

I liked learning English in primary school because my teacher was fun, but I met a very aggressive teacher when I learned in high school. They spoke with a frightening voice to humiliate students, making them feel like a clown. Everyone felt very afraid of the teacher.

Another participant shared an even more extreme case of discipline as an adolescent Thai student:

If my homework was not done, I would be punished. When I learned English class at that time, I felt a lot of pressure. Because there were times when I did not know the answer,

then I would be hit on the hand with the rod very hard [resulting in swelling of the skin].

It also emerged that now that the participants are Thai adults, the thought of an undesirable response from the listener — especially if they were a foreigner — continued to trigger FLA. This notion was exhibited in accounts of communication limiting, withdrawal, or even avoidance behaviors. In an extreme case, one participant began to cry when faced with a situation where they had to respond to a question asked by a foreigner. The participants shared similar accounts:

Because when I meet foreigners, I will greet them by smiling first and using short and simple sentences. But I will never welcome foreigners first because I do not speak well. I fear foreigners will not understand me when I communicate.

Another participant shared that the experiences they faced as an adolescent in secondary school still affects them today:

The issues that prevent me from having good skills in the English language may be the thought I will speak incorrectly or say wrong sentences. This has been a concern since childhood, so I rarely dare to talk, and as a child, I was punished by the Thai teacher for wrong answers. Therefore, I rarely dare to speak English.

Self-Doubt

The second mentioned category, ‘self-doubt,’ included the dimension of self-doubt in English language proficiency when the participants were Thai adolescents and continued to experience it as Thai adults. The participants expressed that the FLA felt that using English in secondary ELT classrooms has led to a prolonged doubt of their English language proficiency well into adulthood. This notion was also exhibited in communication limiting, withdrawal, or even avoidance behaviors.

One participant who has been interacting with foreigners for more than ten years stated that even after many opportunities to work together with foreigners, they still felt that their English communication ability was insufficient for foreigners to understand them.

I thought I was not good at English and afraid of the Thai teacher because they were too fierce, thus making the distance between myself and the Thai teacher since childhood. So, even after many years, when I coordinate with foreigners, I try to communicate in English. But before the conversation, I will inform foreigners that my English language was not very good.

Another participant shared experiences they faced when having to communicate with foreigners while working in an international office setting: “I was terrified of foreigners. I didn’t want to get close to foreigners because I was afraid they would come and talk to me. Because I thought I could not respond well to the English language with them.”

Fear of Embarrassment

The third mentioned category, ‘fear of embarrassment,’ included the dimension of fear of ‘losing face’ or being embarrassed by delay or errors in English language production when the participants were Thai adolescents and continued to experience as Thai adults. The participants expressed that the experiences surrounding FLA they felt when they were adolescents led to a prolonged doubt of their English language proficiency, which has led to a fear of losing face or embarrassment when making mistakes when using English as Thai adults. This observation was also exhibited in communication limiting, withdrawal, or even avoidance behaviors.

One participant who has also been interacting with foreigners for more than ten years stated that they feel embarrassed when speaking with a foreigner because they are worried about making mistakes when using English.

When I was in secondary school, the teacher asked, but I did not want to answer because I was afraid to give the wrong answer, and I did not dare ask the teacher. If the answer were wrong, the teacher would hit my hand with a ruler or make me stand with a ruler in my mouth in front of the class. Now I am still worried about the English language because I rarely use it to communicate with foreigners, so I worry about speaking and making mistakes because I forgot vocabulary.

Another participant shared experiences of being embarrassed when having to communicate with foreigners while working in an international office setting:

The Thai teacher [in secondary school] taught the English language by techniques to memorize vocabulary and practice pronunciation by listening to audio clips from foreign-native speakers and not practicing how to interact with foreigners. Because there are no friends who speak English, so no opportunity to use the English language to communicate. I am still very nervous about using English now.

Feeling of Guilt

The fourth mentioned category, ‘feeling of guilt,’ included the dimension of feeling guilty from a lack of earlier dedication and practice of the English language during adolescence, which led to limited grammatical and vocabulary knowledge as Thai adults. The participants expressed that the experiences surrounding FLA they felt when they were Thai adolescents led to a prolonged doubt of their English language proficiency, then to a fear of losing face or embarrassment when making mistakes when using English, and now in hindsight, feeling guilty from a lack of earlier dedication and practice of the English language has ultimately led to limited grammatical and vocabulary knowledge. Just as the previous perceptions, this view is exhibited in communication limiting, withdrawal, or even avoidance behaviors.

The majority of participants shared similar experiences of feeling guilty now that they cannot remember vocabulary and use incorrect grammar when communicating well in English. In addition, they shared experiences of harsh discipline when making mistakes when

reciting vocabulary that made them not want to practice English in secondary school:

When I studied English in secondary school, some Thai teachers who taught the English language scolded the students. If students wrote incorrectly or recited the wrong word, the teacher would scold them with a loud voice. This put pressure on me because I was already afraid of the teacher. But I tried to make it. I didn't want to be scolded by the teacher because I didn't like being scolded, so I learned how to recite the vocabulary, but I had a short memory. I could only repeat the words to the teacher each day to collect scores only. I would soon forget.

Another participant shared experiences of feeling guilty about their limited grammatical and vocabulary knowledge due to a lack of desire to learn English earlier in life:

When I was in senior high school, a teacher commanded me to write English vocabulary on the blackboard in front of the class. But I could not write because I didn't know the vocabulary, so my friends laughed at me, and I felt very embarrassed. When I studied in the following classes, I would sit down and not dare to look in the teacher's eyes because I was afraid the teacher would call me to write vocabulary on the blackboard again. I still feel embarrassed because I didn't want to learn the English language in secondary school.

The data analysis confirmed the four previously disclosed categories: concern about negative criticism, self-doubt, fear of embarrassment, and feeling of guilt. Although the backgrounds of the participants varied, they all revealed similar experiences of FLA during their adolescence period when having to use English in Thai secondary EFL classrooms. The participants shared overall experiences of negative or harsh feedback from the Thai teachers and Thai classmates, continued doubt in their English language proficiency, ongoing embarrassment when making mistakes in English, and a prolonged feeling of guilt from limited grammatical and vocabulary knowledge. In the end, all participants shared that FLA, which began

when they were adolescents, has continued to plague them well into adulthood.

The participants further believed that their related lived experiences might be the underpinning of the reluctance of Thai adolescent EFL learners to take responsibility for their learning and to feel free to use English in the Thai secondary ESL classroom (Chinpakdee, 2015; Dewaele, 2011; Imsa-ard, 2020; Kiatkheeree, 2018; Sankueana & Sucaromana, 2018; Stainton, 2017).

Discussion

By utilizing descriptive phenomenology, this study aimed to corroborate the existence of foreign language anxiety at some stage during adolescence and discover if previously experienced instances of FLA continue to affect Thai adults currently working in international organizations. Although the findings of this study corresponded with previous analyses of FLA, it is essential to point to the differences between these previous studies and the categories presented in this paper. The results showed that the participants not only experienced FLA during adolescence in Thai secondary EFL classes, as demonstrated in prior studies, but that FLA continues to haunt the participants as Thai adults (Böttger & Költzsch, 2020). Likewise, the four interrelated categories (e.g., concern about negative criticism, self-doubt, fear of embarrassment, and feeling of guilt) as discussed earlier were substantiated through analysis of the data and are considered significant to this study's aim.

The participants suggested that the FLA they experienced as Thai adolescent students and the FLA that they have felt throughout their lives may very well be attributed to the authoritative nature of Thai teachers and a deep-seated sense of obligation towards someone in authority on the part of the Thai students (Deveney, 2005; Komin, 1990; Nicholls & Apiwattanakorn, 2015; Persons, 2016). The participants exclaimed that this archaic 'top-down' power system within Thai secondary education continues to perpetuate the viewpoint that the hubris 'Thai teacher knows everything and can do no wrong' and the 'Thai student must blindly obey the commands of the Thai

teacher without question’ (Akkakoson, 2016; Fry & Bi, 2013; Pechapan-Hammond, 2020).

The behaviors exhibited by the Thai teachers when the participants made mistakes in using English ranged from verbal bullying to physical abuse, which seems to be a typical response of Thai teachers and Thai students in Thailand (OECD, 2017, 2019; Office of the Council of State of Thailand, 2003). Several participants also felt that the aggressive behavior of Thai teachers might be the basis for the fear and intimidation they experienced when having to use English in Thai secondary EFL classrooms (Komin, 1990; Servaes, 2017). The participants stated that the FLA they experienced in adolescence continues to be a crippling factor well into adulthood when using English in global office settings (Dewaele, 2011).

The participants disclosed that the lack of confidence they felt when using English in Thai secondary ELT classrooms stemmed from the actions of the Thai teachers and their Thai classmates (Anantapol et al., 2018). This self-doubt has led to despondency about their English language proficiency well into adulthood (Komin, 1990). The participants felt that most Thai teachers of English tend to have a hubristic view of their English proficiency (Medgyes, 1994; Thadphoothon, 2017). Considering the conduct of Thai teachers, criticizing a Thai student who they feel is a less proficient user of English or criticizing a Thai student who they think is a higher proficient user of English than themselves tends to deceptively elevate the self-esteem of the Thai teacher (Farrelly, 2016; Pechapan-Hammond, 2020; Persons, 2016).

The participants felt embarrassed by delays or errors made when faced with using English during adolescence. They revealed that the humiliation they often felt when using English when they were adolescent students has led to a fear of embarrassment when making mistakes when using English as adults. The participants also attributed the fear of making errors when using English to the former behavior of their Thai teachers in secondary ESL classrooms (Basilio & Wongrak, 2017; Partridge & Eamoraphan, 2015).

The participants equally felt guilty for having limited English grammatical and vocabulary knowledge (Loo & Kitjaroonchai, 2015; Palaleo & Srikrajang, 2018; Tanielian, 2014). They conveyed that their experiences of harsh responses or feedback from volatile Thai teachers, as well as bullying from Thai classmates, during adolescence resulted in a prolonged cycle of doubt in their English language proficiency, a fear of losing face or embarrassment when making mistakes when using English, and an unhealthy feeling of guilt from limited English grammatical and vocabulary knowledge.

As shown from the above discussion, the substantive causes of FLA in most Thai secondary EFL students are associated with punitive and harsh encounters in secondary EFL classrooms (Böttger & Költzsch, 2020; Imsa-ard, 2020). Therefore, the Thai Ministry of Education should implement sound language policy changes (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017; Kaur et al., 2016) and progressive educational development (Carter, 2015; Fry & Bi, 2013; Marques, 2020) aimed at reducing or eliminating FLA. However, without sufficient teacher education and teacher support focused on producing qualified Thai teachers of English, solutions to eradicating FLA are doubtful (Imsa-ard, 2020; Kiatkheeree, 2018; Kirkpatrick, 2012; Noom-ura, 2013).

Limitations

The study does have its limitations, such as the participants all attended government secondary schools where Thai teachers are believed to have full authority over Thai students. Additional studies are needed with participants from private secondary schools to investigate if private educational institutions affect the behavior of the Thai teachers and the experiences in the learning of the Thai students. Next, considering both the sample size was small and that all participants were females, additional studies should be conducted with more participants across several workplaces and a more balanced ratio of women to men.

Conclusion

By employing descriptive phenomenology, this study discovered particular recalled events where the participants felt foreign language anxiety at some period during adolescence in Thai secondary EFL classrooms. Even though the sources of FLA are an inadequately addressed area of learning and teaching foreign languages, this study has shown that the prolonged existence of FLA continues to hamper the English communicative ability of Thai adults working in professional organizations. The interrelated negative emotional and physical responses associated with foreign language anxiety were found to be detrimental to a language learners' acquisition, production, and retention of English as a foreign language remains until adulthood. This study likewise offered a significant recommendation that teacher education programs must focus on training Thai teachers of English on how to create opportunities for positive EFL learning experiences with neutral or rewarding learning outcomes for the successful verbal and written performance of Thai secondary EFL students with threatening tasks, to avoid FLA in the secondary EFL classrooms.

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Appendix

Guiding Questions

1. What was your attitude towards learning English when you were an adolescent in secondary school?
2. What is the reason for the (positive or negative) answer? If negative, what do you think could have been done to resolve the issue?
3. When thinking back to how English was taught to you by your Thai English teacher in secondary school, were there different ways English could have been taught to make it easier or better for you to use English?
4. Did you experience any feelings of anxiety when using English in secondary school?
5. How about now? If yes, what is your primary cause of anxiety when using English?