

Investigating Iranian University Students' perception of Foreign Language Anxiety

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to investigate the nature of perceived sources of foreign language anxiety of Iranian English language learners studying at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), School of Foreign Languages (SFL). The study, also, was aimed to examine the possibility of newly generated anxiety making factors, and the order of priority of those factors in terms of participants' level of anxiety as well as their gender.

The study was performed in the 2012-2013 academic year with a group of eight students who were purposefully selected through applying FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) among the entire (38 Iranian students) population of the Iranian English language learners in School of Foreign Languages in EMU. Based on the results of the FLCAS, four high anxious and four low anxious students were asked to express their opinions about the sources of foreign language anxiety in the format of open-ended written questions scales (Affinities) included eleven factors contribute to foreign language anxiety.

A mixed-method research design was employed in the study with a qualitative orientation in all stages of research development. Grounded Theory Analysis was used. The results revealed that Self-Regulation, Generic Anxieties, Teacher Characteristics, and Genetic and Personal Characteristics are among major anxiety making factors for Iranian language learners whereas Motivation and Interests, Individual Learning

Approach, Influence of the First Language, and Assessment was not among the serious cases of anxiety producing for the participants. The findings also indicated that females (58.13%) tended to be more expressive than males (41.86%). Additionally, great differences were observed between high and low anxious learners regarding their perception towards the sources of foreign language anxiety. The content analysis of learners' expressions pointed towards the possibility of the existence of idiosyncratic differences for each individual in their preferences implying that foreign language anxiety is a relative term and its sources that has to be re-observed in terms of learners' personal characteristics.

Keywords: Foreign Language Anxiety, Affinity

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi (DAÜ) Yabancı Diller Okulunda İngilizce eğitim gören İranlı Üniversite öğrencilerinin olası yabancı dil öğrenme kaygılarını algılanmalarının yapısını/doğasını araştırmak amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışma, kaygıya neden olan faktörlerin ihtimali, katılımcıların kaygı seviyesi ve cinsiyetlerini de göz önüne alarak bu faktörlerin öncelik sırasını araştırmayı da amaçlanmıştır.

Çalışma 2012-2013 akademik yılında Yabancı Dil Sınıfı Kaygı Ölçeği uygulanarak DAÜ Yabancı Diller Okulundaki tüm İranlı İngilizce öğrencilerine (38 kişi) uygulanmıştır. Anket uygulamasından sonra anket sonuçlarına dayanarak 4 yüksek ve 4 düşük kaygılı olmak üzere 8 kişilik seçilmiştir. Bu öğrencilerden yabancı dilde yaşadıkları kaygı nedenleri hakkında kendi fikirlerini ve kaygıya neden olan Yan ve Horwitz'den (2008) adapte edilmiş 11 faktörlük yazılı mülakat uygulanmıştır.

Çalışmada, ağırlıklı nitel olmak üzere karma yöntem kullanılmıştır. Yapılan fenomenolojik analizlerden elde edilen verilere göre, Kendikendini Düzenleme, Genel Kaygılar, Öğretmen Tutumları, Genetik ve Kişisel Özellikler İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen İranlı üniversite öğrencilerinin yaşadıkları kaygının en önemli etkenlerini oluşturmaktadır.

Bunun yanında, motivasyon ve ilgi, anadilin etksi, ve değerlendirilme gibi etkenler bu araştırmada herhangi bir önem arz etmemektedir. Çalışmadaki bulgular bayanların

erkeklere göre kendilerini daha rahat ifade edebildiklerini göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte yüksek ve düşük kaygılı öğrencilerin kaygılarını algılamaları ile ilgili önemli farklılıklar gözlemlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı Dil Kaygısı, benzeşme

TO MY MOTHER:
With whom everything began

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Presentation

This chapter starts with offering a background on the study, followed by statement of the problems, significance, objectives of the study, and it ends with the definition of the key terms.

1.2 Background to the Study

Learning a new language, whether it is a foreign or a second, encompasses a wide range of factors, procedures and processes. Capturing such a complicated phenomenon in an academic research has been the focus of many scholars since 1960s. While learning a language does initially concern to be behavioral reactions to the environmental stimuli; the field witnessed drastic changes with the introduction of humanistic approaches to the study of second language acquisition. Humanistic approach considers the language learners as a whole person, including his/her emotions and feelings (the affective realm) as well as linguistic knowledge and behavioral skills (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

The study of affective domains of human language learning is a formidable task because of the multiplicity of the factors. As Brown (2007) states that “The affective domain is difficult to describe scientifically. A large number of variables are implied in

considering the emotional side of human behavior in the second language learning process”(p. 258).

Anxiety, as an important affective variable in second/foreign language learning has long been the subject of interest for many scholars and its direct relationship with learner achievement have increasingly been discussed (Horwitz, 2001; Gass & Selinker 2001, Dornyei, 2005). Three major types have been considered for anxiety; trait, state, and language anxiety (Spielberger et al, 1983, Endler, & Kocovski, 2001). Another view provides a distinction between debilitating and facilitative anxiety emphasizing the fact that anxiety may not be considered as a restrictive factor.

Also, from a new perspective anxiety has the potential to be studied through the perception of learners as a complementary notation to the psychometric analysis of learners’ anxiety. Parallel with quantitative research on anxiety, one important implication could be performing qualitative studies in the mentioned area. Yan and Horwitz (2008), in a ground- breaking work examined how learners’ perception of anxiety interacted with personal and instructional factors that might influence learners’ achievements in English. The study involves precious implications on how discourse analysis of the written interviews could be used in revealing the basic source of anxiety.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

This study will examine the Iranian university students’ perception of foreign language anxiety in the context of Eastern Mediterranean University in North Cyprus. It is believed that such stimulating results worth to be analyzed comparatively in other

educational contexts for the purpose of verification. In addition, the necessity for cross-cultural validation requires the research to conduct this study in an international university with a group of Iranian English language learners in the context of EMU in Cyprus. Moreover, best to the researchers' knowledge, no studies have been conducted among Iranian second language learners examining their perception of foreign language anxiety.

Although current literature pays relatively minor attention to how a) to evaluate anxiety level based on learners' voices, b) to analyze learners' perceptions of anxiety out of their self-reflections, and c) to determine a wider scope of the sources of anxiety, what could be abundantly found is a great number of studies with a quantified and number based approach towards measuring anxiety which justify the necessity of establishing two novel directions: shift in methodology and shift in basic conceptions (Gass and Selinker , 2001).

Dörnyei (2005) refers to lack of direct analysis, one-sided nature of questionnaires, and non-progressive and longitudinal profiles attributed to quantitative exploration in the measurement of foreign language anxiety as some of the drawbacks of current studies on foreign language anxiety.

It is highly probable that one of the barriers of embarking of on inclusive exploration of anxiety sources is the difficulty of eliciting raw and diverse information from learners to link the types of discourse they use to express their feelings to the elements that provoke nervousness. Only a limited amount of knowledge is available about which design could

best reach to an acceptable justification. To the researcher's best knowledge Yan and Horwitz (2008) is among the few frames of references which incorporate discourse analysis technique in the evaluation of anxiety level of second/foreign language learners. Classroom experience, most of the times, limits or delimits the performance of second language learners, is assessed through some measuring methods that take narrowed variables (psychological, cultural, educational, and personal) into account while current research refers to interconnectedness and comprehensive nature of anxiety as a variable. What is missing is an approach which takes broader account and does not confine itself to a series of statistical analysis with limited implications for scholars and teachers (Yan and Horwitz, 2008).

The present study focuses on the following research questions:

- 1: What are the perceived sources of foreign language anxiety of Iranian English language learners?
- 2: What other anxiety provoking themes could possibly be discovered in addition to those in Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study?
- 3: What affinities do Iranian English language learners prioritizes compared to learners in Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study?
- 4: How do high and low anxious Iranian English language learners perceive foreign language learning anxiety?
- 5: How do learners' perceptions of foreign language anxiety towards learning English differ with respect to gender?

6: How do participants' senses of anxiety differ in terms of their learning features?

1.4 Definition of the Key Terms

Definition of the key terms includes a more comprehensive description for those concepts which plays the main role in this study.

Foreign Language Anxiety:

According to Horwitz et al, (1986,) foreign language anxiety is regarded as a “distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feeling, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p.31).

Grounded Theory Analysis (GTA):

GTA is a specific approach in qualitative research which develops and infers logical conclusions while analyzing the gathered data.

Affinity:

Affinity refers to categorization under which topic-based expressions are grouped with relevant themes.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study may have both theoretical and practical significance. Initially from the theoretical point of view, Yan and Horwitz (2008) stated that “although a negative correlation between foreign language classroom anxiety and achievement seems to have been established, it is also clear that anxiety does not work in isolation” (152). Thus, the

results of this study are expected to display the role of anxiety in a discourse-analysis based method.

Therefore, different approaches toward anxiety sources might be challenged by the findings of this study when multiple, categorized, and classified affinities leading to feeling of stress among second/foreign language learners.

Furthermore, since completely a new context and participants are included, the current research has the potential to generate new affinities added to those applied by Yan and Horwitz (2008) which can be a reliable reference for those teachers and scholars who are concerned about looking for contextualized and ethnic based sources of anxiety.

From a practical point of view, the results of such particular analysis would enable the English language teachers to trace the sources of stress among learners by monitoring their comments in a portfolio-fashion inquiry. Once such data is collected for every single learner, effective syllabus could be designed to address the learners' needs.

Studying learners' perception of anxiety, also has practical implications: The results of the study might be useful to make Preparatory School teachers aware of a series of factors existing in the context which lead to learners' anxieties including inconsistent distribution of new comers in terms of their age and proficiency levels as well as the confusions created as a result of using Turkish language on the part of native teachers.

The findings of the study could be of benefit when the results of FLCAS and learners' comments are compared. This will enable the researchers to figure out differences

between what learners believe to be the sources of anxiety (through comments) and their actual anxiety level (FLCAS)

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITRATURE

2.1 Presentation

This chapter starts with background information about anxiety in general and followed by explanatory account of its types that have been discussed in the literature. Then, it follows by looking at major findings of a number of studies in the area of foreign language anxiety. And finally, the findings of the most relevant and similar studies related to foreign language anxiety are reported.

2.2 Introduction

Among a host of factors which could be influential in assisting second language learner to reach a certain point of achievement, it could be stated that traditionally a dichotomized approach is considered; language influences and non-language influences (Gass & Selinker, 2001).

On the other hand, scholars in the field are aware of the fact that the process of second language learning goes on accumulatively when being exposed to foreign or second language, while what matters most is the extent to which we accelerate this process (Widdowson, 1991). Therefore, we could roughly speak of language influences as those which can be controlled, modified, and intervened but non-language influences as those which only lend themselves to further research and investigation.

In nature, non-language influences are linked to genetic predisposition (aptitudes, personality factors, gender, learning style, and age), psychological features (motivation, anxiety, belief and entity, and attitude), and sociocultural factors (classroom environment, peer pressure, parental support) (Brown, 2007).

However, the importance and necessity of discovering causal relationships among psychological factors, despite thorough literature, remains open to further challenges some of which are identifying the nature, role, and interconnections of anxiety with other factors. In this regard, it will be attempted to provide a principled account of major concerns of such variables with reference to current studies.

Anxiety is among those non-language influences that have been seen as one of the key affective factors in second or foreign language learning (Brown, 2007). The following section presents various types of anxiety.

2.3 Types of Anxiety

Anxiety has been regarded as an important factor in individual's lives. It can easily influence any kinds of performance. Some scholars believe that anxiety has a long history but short past (Endler & Kocovski, 2001).

A growing body of literature has investigated to provide a rather unique categorization for the concept of anxiety. This can be seen in a group of definitions about the nature of anxiety such as what has been stated by MacIntyre (1999) that "even if one views language anxiety as being a unique form of anxiety, specific to second language contexts, it is still instructive to explore the links between it and the rest of anxiety

literature” (p.27). Though, many scholars including MacIntyre& Gardner (1989) have arrived at a general consensus over three major categories for anxiety: trait, situation-specific, and state anxiety.

2.3.1 Trait Anxiety

Many psychologists and linguists have attempted to define trait anxiety. Along with the high range of definitions among scholars in both fields, anxiety has been viewed in a similar way. Akiskal (1998) defined anxiety in a comprehensive manner as “an uncontrollable disposition to worry about one's welfare and that of one's immediate kin” demonstration of which is generally included “arousal, vigilance, tension, irritability, unrestful sleep, and gastrointestinal distress” (p.67).

In fact, there have been many attempts to specifically define trait anxiety by scholars in the field. Levitt (1980) defined Trait anxiety as a stable circumstance without any boundary in time or Trait anxiety according to Spielberger et al (1983) is referred to as a constant tendency to worry in any time and situation. Also, trait anxiety has been defined by MacIntyre and Gardener (1991c) as a feeling of a person who is anxious permanently in every possible situation.

The results of a group of studies performed by some scholars in the field of second language acquisition implied that feeling of anxiety can be experienced at different levels (Horwitz, 2001). In fact, Trait anxiety, in a deepest level is seen as a more stable tendency to be nervous, the sign of which can be noticed in those people who are usually worried for many things (Brown, 2007).

Since Trait anxiety is obscure in its nature, according to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991c), its existence is not effective in the progress of second/foreign language learning.

The term state anxiety has been assumed to be connected with some other anxiety categories that the representation of which might include an increase in other members of the anxiety group. This can be clearly observed in the description of Tovilovic et al (2009) that stated “trait anxiety refers to stable individual differences in a tendency to respond with an increase in state anxiety while anticipating a threatening situation” (p.492). Therefore, due to the assumed connection between trait and state anxiety that argues “trait anxiety tends to moderate the levels of state anxiety, which are provoked by certain situational demands (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1980, P.192), it seems to be essential that we define the term State anxiety.

2.3.2 State Anxiety

State anxiety is a temporary negative feeling which is seen as a short and strange emotion by Spielberger et al (1983) and its level was reported to be various among each individual. State anxiety has been defined by many scholars in the field such as Young (1991) who believes that a group of personal feelings as worry and apprehension as well as nervousness are among the signs of the state anxiety. According to Young’s (1991) definition about state anxiety, it can be concluded that people with high trait anxiety demonstrate more state anxiety in stressful situations (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991 c).

MacIntyre and Gardner (1985) believed that the process of foreign/second language learning hardly initiates with any sorts of foreign language anxiety. As a result, if students feel nervousness, it is state anxiety.

In reality, State anxiety is seen in a temporary or impermanent situation which is mostly associated with a specific event or condition (Brown, 2007). There is a common agreement among a group of scholars (Horwitz et al., 1986; ; Williams, 1991; Young, 1991) who believe foreign/second language learning anxiety can be in the same category as state anxiety. However, there are others (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994 a; AbuRabia, 2004) who believe language anxiety has to be placed in a rather new category, known as situation specific anxiety. Therefore, the definition of Situation-specific anxiety is provided below.

2.3.3 Situation-Specific Anxiety

Situation-specific anxiety is very similar to trait anxiety with only one slight difference. A Situation-specific anxious person, as the name suggests, refers to the one who feels this kind of anxiety in a single context or situation; whereas, for a trait anxious-person, there is not any context or time limitation. Tallon (2009) have recently declared that some examples of situation specific anxiety have been seen in math anxiety, test anxiety, stage fright, and language anxiety.

In another definition, Situation-specific anxiety was referred to the case in which every individual can specify the moments they feel anxious (Alpert and Haber, 1960). In a very clear statement about situation-specific anxiety, Alpert and Haber (1960) declared that situation-specific anxiety provides plausible answer to questions such as “what is

the role of aroused anxious feeling on learning process?” This anxiety can negatively interfere with learning and, as a result, hinders the learning process or positively facilitates learning process (Alpert and Haber, 1960).

Facilitating and debilitating anxiety are most considerable issues in anxiety studies that are distinctive in definition. The following section provides the definition of facilitating and debilitating anxiety.

2.3.4 Facilitating and Debilitating Anxiety

One of the controversies about anxiety is the distinction between debilitating and facilitative anxiety or “harmful” and “helpful” anxiety, according to Oxford (1999), and emphasizes the fact that anxiety may not be considered as a restrictive factor.

Facilitating anxiety is referred to as those kinds of anxious feelings that lead to improvement of the second or foreign language. In contrary, debilitating anxiety will result in very poor and insufficient performance on the part of learners (Spielberger et al, 1983).

Brown (1973) stated that “the notion of facilitative anxiety euphoric intention is that some concern- some apprehension over a task to be accomplished is a positive factor. Otherwise, a learner might be inclined to be Wishy-washy”, lacking that facilitating tension that keeps one poised, alert, and just slightly unbalance to the point that one cannot relax entirely.”(p.240)

Among the scholars who initiated the research about the effects of anxiety on foreign language learning, Alpert and Haber (1960) were the first. Also, the second attempt was

made by Kleinmann (1977) and Scovel (1978). The results of their studies proposed that facilitating anxiety has positive effects on foreign language performance an increase on which will positively help learners improve their language performance (Young, 1992). This anxious feeling that speeds the process of language learning has been called facilitative anxiety by many scholars such Alpert and Haber (1960), Levitt (1980), MacIntyre and Gardener (1985).

2.3.5 General vs. Academic Anxieties

Anxiety has been defined by many scholars as an emotional, psychological, and mental response to known and unknown factors that may cause a totally normal reaction to extreme dysfunction (Alpert & Haber, 1960; Akiskal, 1998.; Eysenck, 1972) It was also expressed as the feeling of uneasiness which has been seen as an umbrella term for several disorders that cause nervousness (Eysenck, 1972; Levitt, 1980).

General anxiety is believed to include as “worry, which is negative expectations and cognitive concerns about oneself, the situation at hand, and possible consequences, and emotionality, which is one’s perception of the psychological affective elements of the anxiety experience, that is, indication of automatic arousal and unpleasant feeling states such as nervousness and tension” (Moris et al, 1981, p. 548).

2.4 Anxiety in Language Learning

In the early 1980s, the conception of trait anxiety by some scholars such as Horwitz et al (1986) was regarded as the regular subject in any exploration for anxiety and language learning anxiety. According to what was declared by (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a) Language-learning anxiety is described as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second-language contexts” (p.284). In a similar attempt

accomplished by MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) to distinguish the kinds of apprehension associated with language learning, language anxiety was examined as a form of situation-specific anxiety and it had to be measured in the context of language learning.

There have been frequent investigations on the concept of foreign language anxiety by various scholars. For example, Horwitz et al (1986) defines it as a “distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p.31). In addition, there is a great body of literature suggesting that high levels of anxiety hinder foreign language learning (Scovel, 1978., Spielberger et al, 1983., Horwitz et al, 1986., MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991 b, 1991c, 1994 b). Therefore, it is necessary to examine anxiety in the context of foreign language learning.

2.5 Foreign Language Learning Anxiety

What we know about anxiety is largely based upon empirical studies that have been initiated by work of some scholars such as (Brown 1973), Chastain (1975) that argued the importance of anxiety as one of the factors that influence second/foreign language learning. The research on anxiety had always been combined with the essential aim of the research that aimed to measure either one single variable or a combination of variables such as anxiety, motivation, self-esteem, and etc. In these studies, the concept of anxiety was not been solely concentrated. Among the influential research on foreign language anxiety, Horwitz et al, (1986) were the primary group of scholars who firstly measured anxiety as a separate variable in second/ foreign language learning.

The very beginning studies on language learning (Albert and Haber, 1960) revealed a rather confusing finding about the concept of anxiety; meanwhile, the interesting results of a study being performed by (Horwitz, et al, 1986) suggested that this type of anxiety is different from its other types. Therefore, research on foreign language anxiety focused on examining it more specifically. The following section presents different studies on foreign language anxiety.

2.6 Studies on Foreign Language Anxiety

A growing body of literature has investigated foreign language learning anxiety. In fact, a very general assumption of the related literature about the anxiety would suggest that previous studies can be put into three groups: a) Measuring the anxiety level of the language learners, b) examining possible relations among anxiety and other variables, and c) identifying the sources of foreign language anxiety.

Considering the first group of studies on foreign language anxiety, it is worth mentioning that Horwitz, et al. (1986), firstly, developed a tool for measuring foreign language anxiety of the language learners. This tool is called The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), (See Appendix C), and is regarded as the primarily instrument to measure the level of foreign anxiety based on learners' experience in the classroom. The following section explains a group of studies in which FLCAS was applied to measure the level of foreign language anxiety.

2.6.1 Measuring Foreign Anxiety Level of the Learners

The first group of studies about foreign language anxiety in literature can be traced back to a report-study anxiety in which many scholars only examined the existing level of anxiety among the participants of a specific group in various parts of the world.

What follows is a chronological representation of a group of studies that attempted to examine anxiety in most of which FLCAS was applied as the measuring tool. A considerable number of investigations (Horwitz et al, 1986., Aida, 1994., Tallon, 2009) has been published on measuring the anxiety level of those who study English as their second or foreign language.

The first study to measure the anxiety level of the learners was conducted by Horwitz et al (1986). The results of their study revealed that almost every learner shows some level of anxiety. In the study by Horwitz et al (1986), they distributed the FLCAS scale that evaluates learners' level of anxiety based on an individual's foreign language learners' experience in the classroom to a group of 75 students studying at the University of Texas. The Strong evidence of mean score of the participants' anxiety level which was 94.5 indicated that all participants experienced some level of anxiety.

Since the concept of anxiety has been considered as one of the affective roles in second language acquisition, numerous studies have attempted to explain the relationship between anxieties and other factors, such as motivation, achievement, reading difficulties, and etc. Consequently, Young (1991) with the purpose of finding out the relationship between language anxiety with oral skills, conducted a study in which anxiety was measured during oral performance. Sixty novice language teachers from

University of Texas participated in the study. Their anxious feeling was being under investigation while they were being interviewed to be selected as qualified enough to be a language teacher. The results of the study argued that high anxiety level can negatively affect the quality of eagerness of the participants in performing in their interview.

Another work on anxiety was undertaken by Aida (1994) in which she attempted to examine how anxiety could interfere with language learning process. She administered Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which was developed by Horwitz et al, (1986) to a group of learners who were studying in second year of language education at the University of Texas, Austin. The most striking result to emerge from her study was that those concepts such as fear of negative evaluation, failing the course, and negative attitudes towards foreign language classes were considered to be the main sources of anxiety for those learners.

Another study was carried out by Truitt (1995) on a group of Korean English foreign language students to measure their anxiety level. The researcher, similar to the studies mentioned earlier, administered FLCAS scale to investigate their anxiety level. The results of the research found a mean score of 101.22 which is a representation for a rather anxious group of language learners.

Also, Kunt (1997) conducted a study at Eastern Mediterranean (EMU) and Near East University (NEU) in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The study attempted to discover the amount of foreign language anxiety that exists among Turkish English Foreign Language (EFL) learners in EMU and NEU. The primary instrument of

this study was Horwitz et al's (1986) FLCAS scale to all Turkish EFL learners in EMU and NEU. The results obtained from the preliminary analysis of the mean score of the anxiety level of the two universities showed that students in both universities experience some levels of anxiety. Although the results of this study declared that students in NEU with the mean score of 90.79 were more anxious compared to students in EMU with the mean score of 89.48, almost all students were reported to be anxious.

In a recent study conducted by Tallon (2009), the anxiety level of a group of Spanish language learners were researched in both qualitative and quantitative designs. This group involved 413 Spanish students categorized as heritage students consisting 209 and non-heritage students in the other group with 204 students. The participants were selected from 27 different sections of Spanish learners and the study involved a wide range of varieties including geographical selection as well as the proficiency level of the students. In a quantitative approach, before their anxiety level was measured, they were required to self-identify as heritage or non-heritage students by asking some questions about the competency, ability, proficiency, and etc. The researcher administered FLCAS to measure anxiety. The results showed a higher mean score of anxiety for non-heritage Spanish language learners (94.66) compared to heritage students (78.78). The qualitative phase of the study in which the participants were asked to reflect on an open-ended question was included after FLCAS, asking students to include any additional information they liked. Furthermore, the qualitative phase of the study included four open-ended questions planned to elicit information from the students about their feelings while using Spanish.

Furthermore, MacIntyre (1999,) argued "... we can define language anxiety as the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language", (p.27) those four open-ended questions in Tallon's (2009) study mostly required students to express their unpleasant opinions and emotions either inside or outside the classroom as well as pointing to specific situations in which they were comfortable in Spanish classes. In addition, the research sought to discover if the students had any prospective goals for using Spanish in future. Also, a group of data was qualitatively gathered by 37 heritage students in a phone interview to discover the students' view about language anxiety. Besides comparing the anxiety level of heritage and non heritage Spanish language learners, a very general finding of the this study, supported the previous results making it clear that no matter how proficient language learners are, there is a great possibility of having fairly anxious students in language learning classes that highly requires instructors to be aware of that and attempt to make it less stressful (Tallon, 2009).

2.6.2 Examining the Relationship between Anxiety and other Factors

The second group of studies on foreign language anxiety attempted to examine the relationship among anxiety and many other factors. The focus of such studies, in almost recent period of time, has shifted to the possible relationship between the level of anxiety and other factors. Scholars became more curious to examine anxiety in relation to other factors such as anxiety and language learning achievement, language performance, motivation, classroom anxiety, reading anxiety, study habit, and etc.

The studies on the relation between anxiety and other affective factors revealed that these concepts are linked together; therefore, identifying the existing interrelations

among them is not an easy task (Gardner et al, 1991). Sometimes, scholars attempt to associate certain presumptions with learners' anxiety level based on their personality factors. For instance, Brown (2007) reported introvert students as more anxious than extrovert students. In fact, introvert students preferred to be a part of individual works rather than group works; therefore, they felt more anxious when they were put in the context of classroom. On the other hand, extroverts possibly were not comfortable when participating in a group work context (Zheng, 2008).

However, those elements that contribute to language anxiety were not directly addressed in the studied reviewed so far. In fact, all of the previously mentioned studies attempt to discuss the nature of anxiety and its relation with other factors. Yet, what really need to be discovered are the possible sources of language anxiety.

Therefore, this research was aimed at providing a rather comprehensive view to the possible sources of anxiety and identifying of which can positively accelerate the foreign language learning process. The following section is a representation of a group of studies in which the sources of foreign language anxiety were examined.

2.6.3 Sources of Language Anxiety

The third group of studies on foreign language anxiety is those in which the sources of anxiety were examined. Due to the shift to learner-centered approaches in second language teaching, the attention of the studies, consequently, altered to learners' perception rather than simply measuring and reporting anxiety levels.

One of the investigations on the sources of language anxiety in oral performances was the work of PuI (2003) where he made an attempt to identify general sources of language anxiety as well as those which are directly linked to speech anxiety. This study was performed through a mixed method research design including questionnaires, experiments, and interview with 42 Chinese students at Hong Kong institute of Vocational Education. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of this study argues that there are six crucial factors contributing to the speech anxiety: learners belief about the nature of language learning, lack of confidence in themselves, facing with language test, lack of exposure to English, lack of language learning experience, and familiarity among students. The most noticeable result to emerge from the qualitative analysis of the data clarified that the attitudes of the teachers were significant in two extremes. In other words, teachers' attitudes could positively affect feeling of apprehension among students and decrease their anxiety level or it could create an anxious environment. Interestingly, the proficient students believed that the test anxiety was the disturbance factor whereas others suggested lack of confidence was the main reason for their anxiety.

The nature of the language anxiety has been argued as a complex and multi-faceted psychological phenomenon by many scholars (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989., 1991c., Williams, 1991). In a research by Tanveer (2007), the researcher attempted to examine variables causing foreign language anxiety both inside and outside the classroom. The study was carried out with 20 students from department of education at University of Glasgow who enrolled in English learning program. The research followed through the application of a mixed method research design including semi-structured and focus-group interviews. The analysis of the study reported major results. The most important

one pointed out that the initial source for anxious students was nothing except their own sense of self.

Furthermore, Tanveer (2007) showed that language learning difficulties, diversity among learners' and their culture, and their social class positions are among significant cases that contributed to language anxiety.

In a comprehensive study conducted by Yan and Horwits (2008), learners' perceptions of how foreign language anxiety can be connected to other variables were examined through a mixed method research design. The participants in this study were first year students in Shanghai University in China. FLCAS was administered to 532 students and they were grouped as high, moderate, and low anxious students. Three students were randomly selected from each anxiety group and the year of study as the participants of the main data collection. Six other students were selected for the pilot study. They were also asked to express their experience in learning English with the specific attention to their achievement in learning language and all the possible factors that have influenced their anxiety. The results of their response were collected under 11 major themes and applied as the questionnaire of the main data collection. The major variables suggested by the participants of the Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study, were factors that contribute to their foreign anxiety including Genetic and Personal Characteristics, Socio Cultural element, anxieties, class arrangement, Teacher characteristics, test types, motivation and interests, Individual Learning Approaches, first language, and language achievements. The analysis of the data in Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study reveals the fact that foreign language anxiety is seen as the consequence of other factors some of which have

immediate effects on language learning such as comparison with peers, learning strategies, and learning interest and motivation; whereas other variables had minor roles in provoking their anxiety levels. One of the striking results from Yan and Horwitz's (2008) research, in consistent with the previous works of Phillips (1992) and Samimy and Rardin (1994), suggested that there is a mutual relationship between language anxiety from one side and motivation from the other side.

In a recent study by Mak (2011) with 313 first-year Chinese students, the nature of the speaking-in-class anxiety was examined. The researcher followed a mix-method research design. The quantitative phase was performed with the application of FLCAS and the qualitative design included semi-structured interviews and observation for the purpose of examining participants' level of speaking-in-class anxiety level each of which contained a statement aimed to draw out the possible variables contributing to anxiety while speaking in the classroom. The results of the quantitative phase of Mak's (2011) study presented 5 major reasons that leading to speech anxiety. They were reported as the speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, uncomfortableness when speaking with native speakers, negative attitudes towards the English class, negative self-evaluation, and fear of failing the class and the consequences of personal failure. On the other hand, the qualitative phase of the Mak's (2011) study revealed some variables to be positively related with the level of speech anxiety, such as lack of wait-time- a sudden task of speaking in the classroom without prior preparation- being corrected while speaking in the class especially by the peers, and finally not being allowed to use their native language in class.

the researcher scrutinized through the literature to find studies which examine the anxiety from learners' point of view. related to her results.

2.7 Predicators of Foreign Language Anxiety

In this section, the researcher tried to present the sources of foreign language anxiety from learners' perspective. Although there were little research has been carried on, the researcher noted and reported even minor findings of other studies.

2.7.1 Sense of Perfectionism

Speaking in another language is naturally intimidating. Students are afraid that they might make mistakes due to what was referred to Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) as 'perfectionism', which is fear of producing incorrect language utterance. Mistakes has regarded as a significant source of learners' worries about language learning. In fact, this feeling makes language learners to be worried about losing their self-image in front of the teacher and their classmates.

In a study by Gregersen and Horwitz (2002), it was revealed that some students feel anxious because they like to be perfect in all steps of language learning. The results of the study demonstrated a great amount of similarities between perfectionists and high anxious language learners who are not pleased with their own performance at all in none of the levels of achievement if there is any.

2.7.2 The Concept of "Self"

Tanveer (2007) defined the concept of self as self-related cognitions. This is apparent in Foss and Reitzel's (1988) work who stated that "the recognition of students' irrational beliefs or fears and their unrealistic expectations can help students interpret anxiety-producing situations more realistically and adopt an approach rather than avoiding behavior" (p.439). In justifying the place of "self" in foreign/second anxiety research, it

is important to refer to a group of valuable studies in which metacognitive elements have been reported as a hindrance in the process of language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Regarding the importance of time as one of the aspects in Self-Regulation affinity, it is worth mentioning the study that was carried out by Peter and Gardner (1991) where it was pointed out that based on the result of the qualitative research on anxiety, some students complained that English classes move so fast that they are afraid that they might be left behind. Similarly, the major findings of the study conducted by Onwuegbuzie et al (1999) support the importance of time management in dealing with foreign language anxiety.

2.7.3 Genetic and Gender Differences

There has been little research on the possible relationship between gender and foreign language anxiety. In fact, the only available data dealing with gender differences are the various learning strategies that include both genders in learning foreign language. For instance, according to Bacon (1992), males mostly follow bottom-up reading rather than females.

The outcomes of a group of studies indicated that some language learners believe people are different in their level of capability regarding learning a new language. For example, the participants of Horwitz's (1986) study believed that some people, compared to others, naturally were more capable of learning a new language.

There is a large volume of published studies describing the differences between male and female language learners. For instance, Abu-Rabia (2004) published a paper in

which he explained his female participants showed higher anxiety than male students. As a result, his male subjects were more successful than females. Also, it was declared that males like challenging situations; whereas, females prefer simple assignments accompanied by feeling of achievement.

2.7.4 Teacher Characteristics

Teacher Characteristics or instructor variables have been mentioned as very important predictors of foreign language anxiety which involves a combination of factors. For example, the sources of anxiety that could be initiated from the interactions between teacher and students have been suggested by Horwitz et al (1986) and Young (1990), instructors' belief (Young 1991), or even the way they deal with students' errors (Brandl 1987).

2.7.5 Class Arrangement

In an attempt by Young (1990) to discover basis of foreign language anxiety, 244 Spanish students participated in a research. 135 of them were elementary college students while 109 were high school students. The results of the study showed that more than half of the whole group (68%) felt more comfortable when they were not obliged to speak in front of the class.

Young (1990) who considered classroom as a context full of nervousness for students tried to publish an article in which state-of-the-art studies on decreasing the level of class anxiety were demonstrated. In the study, it was suggested that anxiety, not only is related to class arrangement, but also is the result of unnatural classroom methods. She came up with a solution and suggested teachers to provide such a stress-free context so

that learners can easily involve in learning a new language and be more motivated to pursue the process of learning.

Based on the discussions on teaching English as a second or foreign language, Young (1991) concludes that one can refer to the role of the classroom procedures and attempt to create low-anxiety classroom

2.7.6 Achievement

There is a considerable body of literature on the connection between achievement and foreign language anxiety. For instance, in a study that was conducted by Onwuegbuzie et al (1999), the factors contributing to foreign language anxiety with 210 university students were examined. The multiple regression analysis of the result offered a group of factors as the predictors of foreign language anxiety. These factors were age, achievement in learning a new language, experience of visiting, and traveling to an English speaking country. The results showed that the ways students see themselves as learners can both influence their anxiety level and achievement.

Later on, Abu-Rabia (2004) put great emphasis on exploring the connection between foreign language anxiety and achievement. His subjects were sixty seven learners studying in seventh grade. They filled a series of questionnaires and tasks, such as anxiety, reading comprehension, and writing. Finally, the findings suggested that anxiety, in all sorts of the foreign language tests, is in negative correlation with foreign language achievement. Also, teachers' attitude and gender have been reported as the only factors that act as predictors of foreign language anxiety.

2.7.7 Motivation and Interests Factors

Motivation has always been taken as a factor in close relation with learners' anxiety level. Liu (2012) attempted to discover the relationship between foreign language anxiety with motivation, autonomy and language proficiency. The study was performed with a group of 150 first year undergraduate students who were studying English in various proficiency levels in Taiwan. Two major instruments for this study were FLCAS developed by Horwitz (1986) for anxiety measurement and AMTB developed by Gardner (1985) as a tool for measuring motivation. The findings of the study revealed that among motivation, autonomy and language proficiency, motivation ranked the first in having the highest correlation with foreign language anxiety.

2.7.8 Individual Learning Approach

Little has been done in examining the relationship between foreign language anxiety and learning style in terms of learners' perception. Among those, one can refer to a study by Bailey et al (1999) that examined 146 students in order to discover the possible link between learning styles and foreign language anxiety. The results of their study revealed that responsibility and peer-orientation are related to foreign language anxiety. The results, also, suggested the levels of anxiety have been observed in students unwilling to participate in assignments and group work.

Bearing in mind the limited body of research available in examining the relationship between foreign language anxiety and learning style, we can refer to the narrow findings of a study by Oxford (1999) where she noted that some skills such as writing or listening can also produce nervousness for a group of learners whose learning style is different.

2.8 Summary of the Literature Review

Attempts were made to present rather comprehensive coverage of the bulk of literature on Foreign Language learning anxiety. This chapter initiated with addressing the widening conceptualization of the nature of anxiety with reference to well-known field scholars (Horwitz, 2001; Oxford, 1999; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). However, what seems to be less emphasized and more needed in terms of learning progress, is the missing learner's voice. Therefore, current debates on foreign language studies were grouped into three major discussions on a) how to measure students' anxiety level (Horwitz et al 1986; Young, 1986; Aida, 1994; and Tallon, 2009), b) examine anxiety links with other factors (Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002; Brown, 2007; and Zheng, 2008), and c) to include learners' voice to discovering the sources of language anxiety (Tanveer, 2007; Yan and Horwitz, 2008; Mak, 2011).

The outcomes of a group of studies examining the possible sources of learners' anxiety produced a rather similar result which highly corroborates the findings of a great deal of the previous works in this the field such as Yuk PuI (2003), Tanveer (2007), and Mak (2011). However, the generalizability of much published research, especially in the area of anxiety which is looking for the sources of foreign language anxiety, is a complicated task. Therefore, it is crucial to do more research in order to identify the sources of foreign language anxiety from learners' point of view from a variety of contexts so that we might be able to reach at some commonalities among the findings of all studies in this area.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Presentation

This chapter starts with the presentation of the research questions and contains the research design; context of the study as well as a detailed account of the pilot study. Then it presents the procedures in purposeful selection of the participants. Also, this chapter demonstrates the data collection instruments, procedures and the stages in content analysis of the gathered data.

3.2 Research Questions

The present study focuses on the following research questions:

- 1: What are the perceived sources of foreign language anxiety of Iranian English language learners?
- 2: What other anxiety provoking themes could possibly be discovered in addition to those in Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study?
- 3: What affinities do Iranian English language learners prioritizes compared to learners in Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study?
- 4: How do high and low anxious Iranian English language learners perceive foreign language learning anxiety?

5: How do learners' perceptions of foreign language anxiety towards learning English differ with respect to gender?

6: How do participants' senses of anxiety differ in terms of their learning features?

3.3 Research Design

This study employs a mixed-method research design which includes both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The description of the research design includes the rationale for data collection, data procedure, and the steps in analyzing data which are presented in this research.

3.4 Assumptions for Qualitative Research

Most of literature on foreign language learning anxiety entails quantitative approach to measure or compare the existing level of anxiety among language learners. Due to the nature of the anxiety, known as a subjective construct among learners and considerable level of fluctuation on one specific learner with the others, it seems crucial to examine it from different perspectives.

Since in qualitative study the focal point is on the perceptions and experiences of the participants and it "begins with individuals and sets out to understand and interpret their experiences of a particular phenomenon" (Cohen et al., 2007: 469), it appears that performing a qualitative study to examine anxiety and reporting the qualitative analysis of their comments will have practical implications.

Providing the chance for student to express their experiences, being able to discover how students perceive anxiety in learning process and knowing what they believe, either consciously or unconsciously, would make them be anxious, will best achieve through adopting qualitative approach.

The rational for selection a qualitative approach and specifically grounded theory is a multidimensional issue. First, based on the subjective nature of the anxiety as a behavior which deals with people's sensation in different situations, it is believed that following a qualitative approach would draw the attention more effectively to the actual reality of how the phenomenon is perceived by the individuals.

Secondly, according to the definition of anxiety as “a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system” by (McIntyre & Gardner, 1994 b. P.5) and dealing with questions such as “how”, it can be realized that anxiety is not a matter of quantification which can be easily studied through numbers and statistics and it requires an approach of research which makes the participants express their feelings freely.

Finally, it can be stated that since the researcher does not carry any particular theory in her mind about the topic, the grounded theory would be selected as the best option to analyze participants' personal expressions regarding foreign language anxiety. As Johnson and Christenson (2012) stated, according to the nature of qualitative research, at the moment, most scholars equate qualitative research with grounded theory. By taking all these assumptions and statements into consideration, it is vital for this study to search

for a theory or hypothesis that could shed light on the general perception of language anxiety.

3.5 The Context of the Study

This research was performed in the Foreign Language School of Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) in North Cyprus. EMU is an international university where many students from different countries receive academic education. Since EMU is an international university, the initial requirement for being a student is the knowledge of academic English. Therefore, a faculty called School of Foreign Languages (SFL) has been determined specifically for teaching English to the speakers of other languages.

As the focal point of this study is to identify the possible sources of language anxiety, it is hoped that the results would be beneficial in providing some suggestions regarding language learning anxiety in order to lower the level of anxiety in language learners for the purpose of effective English learning classes.

The minimum passing grade of the English proficiency test of the EMU is 70 out of 100, therefore, those whose score are less than 70 are put into different classes each gathers a rather homogenous language learners regarding their proficiency level. There are four levels of English classes in SFL: 101 (Beginner), 102 (Elementary), 103 (Pre-Intermediate), and (104) Intermediate. Every eight weeks students participate in a placement test and those who receive minimum 60 out of 100 will have the chance to go to the next level.

The participants of this research are selected from the entire population of Iranian English language learners who are studying in SFL from all the proficiency levels. However, the main participants of the study, under a very detailed and purposeful procedure, selected from all Iranian students.

3.6 Steps taken for the Pilot Study

The researcher, in this study, aimed to investigate the Iranian English language learners' perception of foreign language anxiety based on the pre-defined affinities that were generated in Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study (See Appendix F) for the purpose of cross-cultural validation, the researcher conducted this study in a non-English speaking country in Cyprus.

As the theoretical model of Yan & Horwitz's (2008) study was generated on the basis of Chinese' perception towards language learning anxiety, the researcher attempted to contextualize those affinities , for the purpose of cross-cultural validation, to be ready for her study in the context of EMU with a group of Iranian English language learners. The researcher modified the Yan and Horwitz's (2008) affinities before and after the pilot study. The following section provides detailed information about these modifications.

3.6.1 Modifications before the Pilot Study

What follows is a list of modifications and adjustments that researcher applied to the Yan and Horwitz affinities's (2008) before the pilot study:

A) Since these affinities were generated on the basis of Chinese English foreign language experience towards the language learning process, one of the affinities was

directly related to the mother tongue of the students. The affinity was called “Influence of First Language (Chinese)” that the researcher, for the purpose of contextualization, changed it to the “Influence of First Language (Persian)”. This affinity includes four questions which made students reflect their idea about the role of the first language in their second language learning.

The questions were 1) How do you feel one’s level of Chinese can help or interfere with English learning?, 2) How similar do you think Chinese and English are?, 3) What are some of the errors you or others make because of the influence of Chinese?, and 4) Some people say that because their Persian is very good, they can't tolerate the fact that their English is not as satisfactory, and therefore they decide to give up. What do you think about this?

The researcher changed these four questions by writing the name of the first language of the participants’ mother tongue. She replaced the word ‘Chinese’ with ‘Persian’ so that the participants could share their opinions about the influence of their native language with their second language.

B) Since this study was aimed to examine the perception of Iranian English language learners about anxiety in the very clear and specific context of EMU, it seems that more detailed questions are required; therefore, the Regional Differences affinity was divided in two parts and replaced with Situational Differences and Contextual Differences. The Regional Differences affinity includes these four questions:

1) How (and how much) do you think one’s dialect could affect his/her English?

- 2) Which regions produce better language learners?
- 3) What is your dialect? How does it affect your foreign language learning?
- 4) Where are you from? How well do you think people from your area can learn the language?

The researcher made four questions for each affinity the first two of which were directly linked to the Situational and Contextual Differences while the second two were indirectly aimed to extract information from the participants. Situational Differences includes the following questions:

- 1) What are the differences between learning English in Iran and Cyprus?
- 2) What are the similarities between English in Iran and in Cyprus?
- 3) What are the learning situations in Iran and Cyprus that bothers you?
- 4) Do you think the lifestyle in Iran and Cyprus has different effects on your learning English?

Whereas, Contextual Differences affinity includes these questions:

- 1) How would you see learning English in the preparatory school?
- 2) How do you feel about learning English in the preparatory school?
- 3) Do you have any problem in adapting yourself with learning and teaching in preparatory school?
- 4) Do you think other people in preparatory school learn English in a different way?

C) The third modification refers to the affinity that was related to teachers. For the purpose of contextualization, the researcher made an effort to specify these affinities for her research. To accomplish such purposes, researcher changed the first question from ‘How are your western English teachers compared with your Persian English teachers?’ to ‘How do you compare your Cypriot teachers either native or non-native with your Persian teachers?’

Furthermore, the second question from the original affinity that was ‘What influences have you received from your teachers in learning English?’ was changed to ‘What influences have you received from your Cypriot teachers in learning English? What influences have you received from your Iranian teachers in learning English?’

D) Another adjustment was made on the Test Types affinity. Similarly to the aim of the previous section, the researcher attempted to include the context of the study through substitution of the last question of this section from ‘How do you prepare for these tests?’ “How important do you think your preparation for the tests is to your day-to-day learning?” to “How do you prepare yourself for the proficiency test of the preparatory school for these tests?” How important do you think your preparation for the tests is to your day-to-day learning?’

E) And finally the last modification was carried out about the anxiety affinity. Ever since the ultimate goal of this study was to achieve the real causes leading to anxiety, the researcher found it crucial to psychologically explore learners either directly or indirectly to detect factors contributed to language learning anxiety. Therefore, in this

section researcher added two more questions about anxiety to the affinity. The first one is ‘Have you ever experienced being anxious in the class? Tell me about that moment.’ And the other one is ‘What’s your idea about tension and anxiety in learning English?’ The former one was added at the end of five questions in the anxiety section whereas the later was added at the end of the all affinity sections.

3.6.2 The Pilot Study

After applying the above mentioned modifications, the English version of the instruments (FLCAS and Affinities) were translated by two professional English-Persian translators into Persian which is the mother tongue of the participants. Then, an expert in translation finalized the last version of the instruments in Persian language. The package for pilot study included a background questionnaire being developed by the researcher, FLCAS, and affinities. The piloting of the instruments were carried out at the very beginning of the spring semester 2011-12 at the Preparatory School of Eastern Mediterranean University in North Cyprus and lasted for one month.

The pilot study was performed on four randomly selected Iranian students studying at Preparatory School of EMU, two males and two females participated in the pilot study. At the end of the first week, one of the male participant said that he is not interested in participating in this study; therefore, the researcher asked another Iranian male student in Preparatory School of Eastern Mediterranean University to participate. Table 3.1 provides the characteristics of the participants of the pilot study. As the Table 3.1 illustrates, a rather homogenous sample has been selected for the pilot study. The table shows that one male and one female from each pre-intermediate and intermediate level

of proficiency, all in a rather similar age and almost with the same anxiety level were the subjects of the pilot study.

Table 3.1: Distribution of the characteristics of the participants of the pilot study

| Participants | Gender | Age | Proficiency level | Anxiety Score |
|--------------|--------|-----|-------------------|---------------|
| 1 | F | 24 | Pre-Intermediate | 95.7 |
| 2 | M | 27 | Intermediate | 86.79 |
| 3 | F | 19 | Intermediate | 81.84 |
| 4 | M | 26 | Pre-Intermediate | 78.87 |

3.6.3 Modifications after the Pilot Study

After analyzing the results of the pilot study, the researcher found some modifications essentials. There seemed that the participants required more explanations on how to reflect their personal experiences as well as the necessities to involve them to participate in the study with more commitment. In addition, the observation of the participants' reflection on their opinions on the affinities revealed that their attentions were drawn to the overall purpose of the questions. Accordingly the researcher made an effort to shift the focus of their attention to the details while answering the questions.

What follows is a list of alternations that researcher exerted after the administration of the pilot study.

A) The first one is the case of deletion of the Test Types affinity. The most striking results emerging from the analysis of the pilot study revealed that except for one

participant who reflected her opinion about this factor by responding to one of the four questions, all of the participants failed to reflect their attitudes towards Test Types affinity.

B) The second modification is referred to the Influence of First Language (PERSIAN) in which the researcher found it to be effective if she added the pronoun ‘you’ in the Persian version in the questions so that students will be guided to reflect their own ideas rather than a general answer to the question. Although this slight change seems to be ineffective in English version, the examination of the final data collection demonstrated the effectiveness of such minor alternation.

C) The third one was done on the Individual Learning Approaches affinity. Due to unconvincing reply to this affinity, the researcher asked learners to provide some personal examples related to their own comment. As a result, the first question which was ‘What method(s) do you think is/are most effective in learning English?’ was replaced by “What method(s) do you think is/are most effective in your English learning? Give some examples”.

D) As very short answers were provided for the first and second questions in Achievement affinity, the next change was implemented on this affinity by simply adding the word ‘Why’ at the end of the question.

E) And finally, the last change is related to that question has been added that at the end of all affinities by the researcher. In fact, she realized it would be more helpful if

learners could have a chance to freely share their own thoughts about anxiety and the possible sources. Therefore, the phrase ‘How it initiated’ was added at the end of this question and made it to change from “What’s your idea about tension and anxiety in learning English?” to “What’s your idea about tension and anxiety in learning English? How it created?”

3.7 Participants

Since the main data collection of this study was required to be performed among 8 learners, a group of four high anxious and four less anxious students were purposefully selected among Iranian English language learners (N= 38) with equal respect to gender where its step-by-step procedures for the participant selection is explained below in details.

3.7.1 Selection of the Participants

The highest and lowest anxious students were supposed to be chosen among all Iranian students studying in Preparatory School of Eastern Mediterranean University in North Cyprus. Therefore, the researcher followed a series of procedures in order to identify the highest and lowest anxious students from the whole group. The procedures are explained in detail below.

Step 1: Introducing the Whole Group

Total number of Iranian students who were studying in Preparatory School of EMU was 38 the characteristics of which are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Distribution of the characteristics of the group

| | Sex | | Proficiency Level | | | | Age Group | | | |
|------------|------|--------|-------------------|------|------|------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Male | Female | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 17-20 | 21-24 | 25-28 | 29-32 |
| Frequency | 20 | 18 | 6 | 7 | 18 | 7 | 21 | 7 | 6 | 4 |
| Percentage | 52.6 | 47.4 | 15.8 | 18.4 | 47.4 | 18.4 | 55.3 | 18.4 | 15.8 | 10.5 |
| N= 38 | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 3.2 is revealing in several ways. Firstly, it shows the total number of the participants (38) that includes 20 males and 18 females with the percentage of 52.6% and 47.4% respectively.

Secondly, it shows the proficiency level of the learners in 4 groups: group 1 including beginner, group 2 including elementary, group 3 including pre-intermediate, and group 4 including intermediate language learners. As shown, 47.4% of the students were in pre-intermediate level, 18.4% in intermediate and elementary levels, and only 15.8% of the students were from beginning level. The majority of students were studying in the pre-intermediate level.

And finally, Table 3.2 illustrates the age range of the participants in 4 groups ranging from 17 to 32. As can be seen from Table 3.2 the majority of Iranian population which is about half of the population (55.3%) was in the first years-group (17, 18, 19, and 20).

Step 2: Measuring Anxiety Score by Administering FLCAS

In order to distinguish the highest and lowest anxious students among all Iranian students studying in Preparatory School of EMU for the main data collection, the researcher needed to measure their level of anxiety. To do so, the researcher, after applying the written permission from the head of the Preparatory School of the EMU, gave them the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS).

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), was developed by Horwitz, et al (1986) (See Appendix C), was considered as the primarily instrument to differentiate the highest and lowest anxious students. This scale, in the quantitative manner, evaluates learners' level of anxiety based on an individual's foreign language learners' experience in the classroom. Experience in the classroom, as simply defined by Horwitz (1986) can be regarded as "Student self-report, clinical experience, and a review of related instruments" (p.560) which were the building blocks of every individual item in this instrument.

The FLCAS has 33 items and the responses are in the format of 5-point Likert scale. The five responses for item are "strongly agree", "agree", "neutral", "disagree", and "strongly disagree". The lowest possible score (minimum) for language anxiety being measured by FLCAS can be 33 while the highest (maximum) can be 165.

As it was stated by Horwitz et al. (1986), this scale was categorized under three subcategorize: A) Communication apprehension B) Fear of negative evaluation, and C) Test anxiety all of which conveys different loads of meaning.

The Persian version of the questionnaire, after being translated by 2 Iranian experts, was given to a very professional Iranian translator to finalize a valid and reliable version of the questionnaire in Persian language (See Appendix D). After that, the finalized Persian version of the FLCAS was given to the fourth person, who was a very professional Iranian translator, to translate from Persian to English. Then, this FLCAS was compared to the original one in order to make sure the reliable translation was performed during the steps.

Then, the researcher after obtaining the official permission from the chair of the Preparatory School of EMU (See Appendix E) went to the preparatory School and distributed the questionnaire among all Iranian students. Although the whole population of the Iranian students at the Preparatory School was less than 40, administering the FLCAS lasted three weeks.

In order to detect the highest and the lowest anxious students, FLCAS was analyzed to find the anxiety level of each Iranian student through the following procedure:

Due to the necessities of being effective for the FLCAS to establish learners' actual level of anxiety, various semantic categories of meaning were included in the questionnaire filling of which will determine who the anxious students are.

Step 3: Analyzing the FLCAS

The method for analyzing the FLCAS was based on the assumed values for questions and was categorized in two different groups. For the first group which includes questions number 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29,

30, 31, and 33 and being positive sense to them indicated higher level of anxiety 'strongly agree' would gain 5 score, 'agree', neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree would gain 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively.

As for the second group of questions having positive sense would represent lower anxious students the score should revise. In other words questions number 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32 the score for 'strongly agree' would be 1, agree 2, and neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree would obtain 3, 4, and 5 respectively.

Step 4: Using the Results of the FLCAS

Based on the results of the FLCAS, each participant received one score showing his/her anxiety level. The anxiety score of all Iranian students studying is ranked in order and are presented in Table 3.3. As it is apparent from the Table 3.3, participant 1 with the anxiety score of 45 is the lowest anxious person while participant 38 with anxiety score of 108 is the highest anxious student.

The researcher purposefully selected the following mentioned students as the main participant of this study:

Low anxious participants: Among the low anxious female students, participants number 1 and 4 with the anxiety score of 45 and 57, and among low anxious male students those with the score of 46 and 56 are purposefully selected by the researcher as the subject of this research.

High anxious participants : Among the male high anxious learners, student number 38 and 34 with the anxiety score of 108 and 96 an among high anxious female one, student

number 37 with the score of 104 and either student number 35 or 36 with the score of 96 were selected as the participants of this research.

Table 3.3: Anxiety score of the whole group

| Participants | Gender | Anxiety Level | Anxiety Score |
|--------------|--------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | F | 1.36 | 45 |
| 2 | M | 1.39 | 46 |
| 3 | M | 1.69 | 56 |
| 4 | F | 1.72 | 57 |
| 5 | F | 1.78 | 59 |
| 6 | F | 1.84 | 61 |
| 7 | M | 1.87 | 62 |
| 8 | M | 1.93 | 64 |
| 9 | M | 2.03 | 67 |
| 10 | F | 2.06 | 68 |
| 11 | M | 2.09 | 69 |
| 12 | M | 2.12 | 73 |
| 13 | F | 2.18 | 72 |
| 14 | F | 2.18 | 72 |
| 15 | M | 2.24 | 74 |
| 16 | M | 2.24 | 74 |
| 17 | F | 2.27 | 75 |
| 18 | F | 2.30 | 76 |
| 19 | M | 2.33 | 77 |
| 20 | F | 2.36 | 78 |
| 21 | F | 2.36 | 78 |
| 22 | F | 2.36 | 78 |
| 23 | M | 2.36 | 78 |
| 24 | M | 2.39 | 79 |

| | | | |
|----|---|------|-----|
| 25 | M | 2.45 | 80 |
| 26 | M | 2.48 | 82 |
| 27 | M | 2.63 | 87 |
| 28 | M | 2.66 | 88 |
| 29 | M | 2.66 | 88 |
| 30 | M | 2.66 | 88 |
| 31 | F | 2.72 | 90 |
| 32 | F | 2.87 | 95 |
| 33 | M | 2.90 | 96 |
| 34 | M | 2.90 | 96 |
| 35 | F | 2.90 | 96 |
| 36 | F | 2.96 | 98 |
| 37 | F | 3.15 | 104 |
| 38 | M | 3.27 | 108 |

3.7.2 Final Selection of the Participants

A non-random theoretically-driven purposive convince sample was used for the final selection of the participants. The participants of this study have been selected through a quantitative approach. Since the researcher seeks to conduct the study with the specific focus on the high anxious students in one extreme and the low anxious one in the other extreme, main participants of the study were selected based on a very precise level of selection.

Table 3.4 represents the characteristics of the participants for this study which was achieved through rather complicated and purposeful procedures. The most desirable

selection of participants amongst all Iranian language learners (N=38) are presented below:

Table 3.4: Characteristics of the participants

| | Participants | Gender | Age | Proficiency Level | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----|-------------------|---------------|
| | 1 | M | 22 | Elementary | 108 |
| High Anxious Participants | 2 | F | 29 | Elementary | 104 |
| | 3 | M | 19 | Beginner | 96 |
| | 4 | F | 22 | Beginner | 96 |
| | 5 | F | 19 | Pre-Intermediate | 57 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 6 | M | 30 | Pre-Intermediate | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 18 | Elementary | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 20 | Intermediate | 45 |

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

The purpose of this study was to examine the Iranian English language learners' perception towards foreign language learning anxiety. Furthermore, it aimed to discover the factor that contribute to foreign language anxiety for this group as well as an essential urge to prioritization of the existed sources of language anxiety. The instruments of the study were FLCAS, back ground questionnaire (which have been explained in the participants section) and open-ended questions titled as affinities.

3.8.1 Background Questionnaire

The background information questionnaire (See Appendix A and B) was developed by the researcher in mother tongue format of the participants. In order to gather information about the background variables of the participants in which the researcher explained the study as part of fulfilling the requirements of her degree leading to MA thesis, the background information questionnaire composed of some variables related to individual characteristics of the participants. Those variables include age, gender, their proficiency level being defined by the Preparatory School of EMU, and the starting point of learning English of every individual participant.

In addition, the background information questionnaire asked about the possibility of knowing other languages so that the researcher could easily distinguish those who know any languages except for Persian and English as well as recognizing those who have the experience of traveling to English speaking countries and staying for a considerable period of time.

Since the study composed of two phases and limited number of participants were supposed to be selected to participate in the first phase, the background information questionnaire ended with a space asking students to write their phone numbers so that the researcher can contact with them at any time. Fortunately, except for only five students, all of them wrote their phone numbers and declared willingly to cooperate with the researcher.

3.8.2 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (See Appendix C) was developed by Horwitz, et al. (1986). As it was explained in selection of the participants, FLCAS was administered as the tool to measure anxiety score of the whole group in order to identify the high and low anxious participants among the whole group.

3.8.2.1 Reliability and Validity of the FLCAS

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) has been administered in a number of studies in order to show the anxiety score of a particular group of language learners and it has been shown to be very reliable (Horwitz et al, 1986; Young, 1986; Aida, 1994; Truitt, 1995; Kunt, 1997; Tallon, 2009) and similar to many other researcher such as Cheng, et al 1999 and; Tallon, 2009) who administered the translated version of the FLCAS, I administered the Persian version of the FLCAS. In all of these studies FLCAS demonstrates the acceptable level of reliability and validity. For example, in Horwitz et al 's (1986) study with the population of 108 students, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.93 which is a representation of high internal reliability of the scale or In Aida's (1994) study the reliability was reported as 0.80.

Although administering the FLCAS was not considered as the instruments of this study, the researcher calculated the internal consistency for her administration of the FLCAS which was 0.84 for 38 Iranian English language learners through the application of Cronbach's alpha formula. The validity of the FLCAS was consulted by three experts in the field and they all reached to the consensus regarding the validity of the FLCAS.

3.8.3 The Affinities

The affinities were originally designed by Yan and Horwitz (2008) (See Appendix F) and after being modified were used in this research. Dr. Horwitz in a personal communication, most kindly gave her permission for me to use the affinities in this master thesis. The original affinities were grounded through a procedure in which a group of Chinese English language learners were invited describe their experiences about English learning and explain all kinds of feeling related to anxiety and nervousness and any possible relation to their English learning. While reflecting their own opinions about language anxiety, they were asked to think about personal factors which might have some effects regarding anxiety. The results of the students' responses were categorized under 12 sections by Yan and Horwitz (2008) each of the categories consists of 4 open-ended questions:

- 1) Genetic and Personal Characteristics
- 2) Social and Cultural Elements
- 3) Motivation and Interest
- 4) Influence of First Language (Chinese)
- 5) Class Arrangements
- 6) Regional Differences
- 7) Teacher Characteristics
- 8) Test Types

9) Anxieties

10) Individual Learning Approaches

12) Achievement

The final version of the affinities (See Appendix F) that were grounded through a study being performed by Yan and Horwitz (2008), being revised before and after the pilot study, was administered in this research (See Appendix G).

The revised version of these affinities (See Appendix G) include eleven sections:

1) Genetic and personal characteristics

2) Social and cultural elements

3) Motivation and interests

4) Influence of First Language (PERSIAN)

5) Class Arrangements

6) Situational Differences

7) Contextual Differences

8) Teacher Characteristics

9) Anxieties

10) Individual Learning Approaches

11) Achievement

Except for the I section which is called Anxieties and includes seven questions, each of these sections include 4 questions attempting to extract the information from the participants about the anxiety in learning English as well as the possible relationship that exists between anxiety and other variables.

Since the ultimate goal of this study is to provide a situation in which English language learners can freely express their feeling about language learning, the researcher realized it would be highly effective if participants could express their feeling and experiences in their mother tongue. In fact, asking students to state their feeling in the second language would significantly affect the truth in their opinions due to lack of general competency to write and explain all sort of emotions in any language other than mother tongue. Therefore, the final version was translated by two professional Iranian translators into Persian. Then, an expert Persian language in translation finalized the most reliable version of the affinities in Persian (See Appendix G and H). This finalized copy of affinities was translated from Persian to English by an expert Iranian translator to check the level of validity and reliability of the finalized version of the affinities.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher made contact with those 8 purposefully selected participants one by one, distributed the Persian description of affinities to them, spent about 1 or 2 hours with each participant, and explained how to reflect their feelings and experiences about any subject related to English language learning in Persian. The researcher, also, read some of the questions for the participants and talked to each of them and made them indirectly express their opinions about anxiety in English language learning orally. After that, researcher asked them to keep the questionnaire (See Appendix G English version and H

Persian version), and respond to it each night only 2 or 3 questions. Participants were informed that they can call the researcher at any time for any clarification of the questions or anything that comes to their mind that they need the researcher's opinion.

Data collection procedures officially started at the mid of April 2012 till 20th of June in the same year. In this period, the researcher and participants were in contact with each other. Sometimes the researcher asked them to come for a daily short visit, but mostly the researcher called them one by one during week and asked them about the process.

One of the participants asked for a meeting with the researcher and declared about two affinities that it would be easy for him if he could explain orally and the researcher took note. Therefore, one day the researcher and this anxious male student spent three hours with each other and he explained his feeling about almost all affinities one by one in details and in informal Persian language.

In this period of time, the researcher sometimes met some of the participants after the English class in Preparatory School and they gave a short review of what happened during class. Even sometimes they shared the behavior of the teachers and the other students or complained about some factors that bothered them. They told the researcher what was funny for them or what annoyed them.

I was receiving a rather comprehensive package of information about the English classes at EMU; I felt that I am one of students in Preparatory School in EMU. I consider myself as a passive student who can clearly felt the atmosphere of English classes,

teaching approaches and methodologies, classroom settings, teacher characteristics, and etc. These sorts of information provided a magnificent chance for me to be able to look at the anxiety from the different angles which were the learners' point of view.

3.10 Data Analysis

In conjunction with interviewing and observation, content analysis accounts for reliable method to measure those human activities that are not directly observable through the description and analysis of communications among participants (Fraenke & Wallen, 2006).

Content analysis, as its name suggests, covers a thorough examination of the written form of mostly oral communications, text books, essays plus a wide range of other elicited materials. This research method is highly valid specially when aimed at discovering beliefs, attitudes, ideass, and values of a person or of a group. Yet what lies ahead as a problem is the trend we organize the bulk of raw data into appropriate category by means of a technique named Grounded Theory Analysis (GTA) (Glaser ,1992) which will be discussed in details.

Since this study applied methods of systematizing and quantifying, content analysis is used with conjunction with other methods.

3.10.1 Steps of Performing Content Analysis

Once the researcher transcribed all the interview and observations, there are two possibilities of converting the descriptive information to categories: a) the researcher

starts with a set of pre-set categories before the analysis based on her knowledge and experience

b) Themes and categories emerged when the analysis continues.

3.10.1.1 Determining Objectives

Fraenke and Wallen (2006) refer to five main objectives specified in content analysis which are basically in line with our research objectives

a) To obtain information about a topic:

Major objective of this study was to find out prioritize sources of language anxiety from the point view of Iranian learners in comparison with Chinese learners

b) To formulate themes (major ideas) to organize the descriptive information

In addition to Yan and Horwitz (2008), three new themes (assignment load, self-regulation, and assessment affinity) were newly generated.

c) To check other research findings

The chief frame of reference for the present study was to match our findings with what Yan and Horwitz (2008) came up with. It is crucial to mention that regional, cultural, and background differences consists a large part of the differentiation between these two studies.

d) To obtain information useful in dealing with educational problems.

Anxiety without a doubt sense up between teacher and learner in every learning context; therefore, any attempt to reduce or eliminate its sources ranks among the major educational achievement in TEFOL and TESOL.

f) To test hypothesis

This study was based on an early assumption that Iranian English language learners in EMU might display a set of various learning futures distinct from those of Chinese', it is hypothesized that the content analysis applied in this study will have the capability to weight up the assumption.

3.10.1.2 Defining Terms

Although the key terms employed in the title of the categories and themes were predefined, the researcher took assistance from an external rater to rectify definitions and make sure they have come to similar understanding. This process took at least six rounds due to the ambiguities created as a result of wide semantic domains each term covered.

3.10.1.3 Unit of Analysis

Rather than structural or textual units of measurement, a meaning based approach was taken to measure the frequency of cases of anxiety sources mentioned by learners. In fact those cases were more discourse-based comments (discursive cases) which were diagnosed and extracted from the transcripts. Here is an example:

3.10.1.4 Relevant Data

It was not such a formidable task to locate the cases of anxiety after the objective and themes were identified. Yet two points are worth mentioning; a) Cases related to a

specific affinity were likely to be found under other themes and this required going through the comments with great scrutiny, b) as the study went on, it was mutually noticed that some cases do not fall under in any affinity resulting in generation of three new category of sources of anxiety. Moreover, the second rater was helpful to reduce the mismatches as much as possible.

3.10.1.5 Rational and Sampling Plan

While quantitative measurements of anxiety have been so far a recognized research trend, the researcher thought it would be more practical if she attempts to extract the sources of language anxiety from learners' perception and point of view by asking learners to express their true feeling as freely as possible in open-ended questions.

Since the discrepancy between level of anxiety of high anxious and low anxious learners towards language anxiety was one of the main purposes behind this study, purposive sampling data was applied and it has been explained in details in section 3.7 which includes 3.7.1 and 3.7.2.

3.10.1.6 Coding Strategies

The last step in performing a content analysis was to quantify the extracted data under some general categories by means of formulating them into relevant affinities compared to dominant trends in analyzing foreign language learners' anxieties, this study takes a rather different approach in which a new system of coding was applied based on studying discursive and structural features of Iranian participants' comments regarding their learning concerns in the context of Eastern Mediterranean University through administrating Grounded Theory Analysis.

For the purpose of providing justified answers to the research questions, the collected data on different sources related to learners 'anxiety were tabulated and analyzed in terms a qualitative analysis.

Grounded theory is an approach to qualitative study that was developed in the school of Nursing of California by two eminent sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, in San Francisco who realized that gathering information before making any conclusions sounds to be more reliable (Glaser, 1978, 1992; Strauss, 1987).

This theory looks at a specific situation and makes its attempt to comprehend what is happening. In fact, the researcher in grounded theory initiates the study regardless any previous idea or thought in mind. In fact, it will be let the study to create the suitable theory related to the data which has been gathered through the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Bearing in mind the primary need for discovering the theory to be grounded from the data (Glaser 1978), it can be stated that researchers are those who involve themselves in the study for a considerable period of time.

Despite its subjectivity and context-specific nature, GTA is considered a new analyzing technique when it provides opportunities for learners to use their own style and viewpoint in expressing what is and might be the cause of their fears and possibly the reason for their progress. Arriving at those theories without making direct reference to numerical statistics is a unique characteristic of the generated model.

Roughly speaking, GTA has the following features:

- a general method of comparative analysis with various procedures designed to generate grounded theory,
- methodology is based on a process of research of a prevalently inductive character, in which the relationship that the researcher has with field-collected empirical data, disconnected as much as possible from theoretical presuppositions,
- continues to be successfully applied in those fields which take into examination new phenomena: as we have seen, the method was created from the bottom

3.10.1.7 Applying Grounded Theory Analysis (GTA)

The current study employs a three step coding procedure in conducting the analysis of extracted observations including a) coding stage; and b) generating new affinities (to Yan and Horwitz 2008). The transcripts of the learners' comments were studied to identify those statements which directly or indirectly indicated the presence of anxiety in the form of basic ideas (or discursive cases) which worked as a unit of measurement. The specific feature about basic idea is the fact that it includes all cases of learners' experience of feeling anxiety regardless of the textual and structural features of the statements.

Stage 1: Open coding:

In this stage, data in the transcript were broken down into identified basic ideas, analyzed, labeled, and put into categorized and affinities proposed by Yan and Horwitz (2008). Since a point of reference was available, in this stage attempts were only made to carefully distinguish sources of anxiety and correctly put them in relevant categories.

One of the dilemmas in coding the different types of anxieties originated when the rater was faced with very positive descriptions lack of which might be the source of nervousness.

In doing so, few points worth mentioning:

- Direct responses do not indicate anxiety because the participants use reasoning instead of referring to their feeling.
- There are some simple sentences that refer to more than one affinity.
- Extra care was taken to identify and exclude those items that were considered facilitating sources of anxiety.
- Another problem was those cases where one specific source of anxiety was mentioned under other categories other than the required one.

Stage 2: Axial coding:

In this stage, the transcripts were read for the second time in order to ensure that correct measures were taken in the previous coding stage. Axial coding refers to re-reading process of examining the transcripts (Strauss, 1987). The technique that the rater used was to assign each basic idea with a different coded color to reduce the risk of incorrect distribution of affinities.

The major advantage of axial coding stage was that it assisted the rater to come up with new affinities not previously mentioned. This provoked a genuine understanding on the part of the researcher which will be stated under implication for further study section.

Stage 3: Selective coding:

The third and the final part of the coding stages is the process in which latest revisions and modifications were applied on the categories so that they fulfill research goals. When the process is done, interrelationship among affinities is discovered. Also, comparisons were made between findings of the previous study and the current research in terms of number, frequency, and priority of affinities. Therefore, the links between the mentioned categories are displayed by correlational measurements which will be presented and discussed in the result section.

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Presentation

This chapter is organized according to the results of the six research questions which were found based on the content analysis of the students' comment. This includes the sources of foreign language anxiety for the participants of this study and the way they prioritize them. Also, it describes the newly generated affinities in addition to what was generated in the Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study, and finally it explains differences between males and females as well as high and low anxious participants in their view to foreign language anxiety.

4.2 Research Question One: What Are the Perceived Sources of Foreign Language Anxiety of Iranian English Language Learners?

The first research question is posed in order to discover the sources of foreign language anxiety from Iranian learners' point of view. To answer this research question, the researcher applied Grounded Theory Analysis of the content of the students' comments and as a result a total number of fourteen affinities (categorize under which topic-based expressions are grouped) were generated based on participants' responses.

The researcher presents the affinities one by one in the order that was prioritize by the participants of this study. Each affinity is explained by its definition and its distribution

among the group by drawing table for each affinity. The tables rank the data from highly anxious learners (with the anxiety level of 108) to low anxious (with the anxiety level of 45). Then, the interpretation and explanation for each table is shown. And finally, the students' comments which were the basis for generating affinities are presented. Fourteen affinities are: Self-Regulation, Anxieties, Teacher Characteristics, Genetic and Personal Characteristics, Class Arrangement, Social and Cultural Factors, Situational Differences, Achievement, Contextual Differences, Motivation and Interests, Individual Learning Approach, Influence of the First Language, Assessment Effects, and assignment load.

4.2.1 Affinity 1: Self-Regulation

The first source of foreign language anxiety that was generated from the Grounded analysis of the students' comments is Self-Regulation affinity.

By definition, Self-Regulation affinity is referred to those comments that are related to participants' concerns about their cognitive and metacognitive status of self-management. These comments covered topics such as class preparation, doing assignments and homework, attending the class effectively and punctually, and regulating their personal life style such as time management, eating habits, transportation, appearance, and socialization skills.

There exists ample evidence that fully support the eminence of metacognitive elements debilitating the process of second language learning in terms of anxiety. As such are the preliminary works on language anxiety which were undertaken by many scholars (Krashen, 1985; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999; Horwitz et al., 1986) and reported that

anxiety is initiated from cognitive interferences based on self-related cognitions, such as their self-perceptions, self-esteem, self-evaluation, their belief about themselves.

In Table 4.1 the distribution of the Self-Regulation affinity among high and low anxious group is presented.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Self-Regulation affinity among high and low anxious participants

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 4 | 9.09 | 108 |
| | 2 | F | 8 | 18.18 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 22 | 50 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 4 | 9.09% | 96 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 1 | 2.27 | 57 |
| | 6 | M | 1 | 2.27 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 4 | 9.09% | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 0 | 0 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total: 44 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

According to Table 4.1, the majority of the participants perceived that lack of ability in self-regulation is a major factor behind their feeling of stress in learning English. As it can be observed from the Table, mostly high anxious learners believe self-regulation is the source of their anxiety (86%) compared to low anxious level learners (14%).

As it can be seen, there is equal distribution of gender in terms of their anxiety level except for the extreme case of participant 3 (50% of the total). Therefore, both males and females are equally concerned about their self-regulation capabilities as a source of anxiety.

As can be seen, there is equal distribution of gender in terms of their anxiety level except for the extreme case of participant 3 (50% of the total). Therefore, both males and females are equally concerned about their self-regulation capabilities as a source of anxiety.

The presence of such a connection invites some qualitative interpretations which will follow: While doing the qualitative analysis of the comments, to the researcher's surprise, a huge number of comments referred to the problems in those self-management life styles which were not counted in previous studies as an affinity. Among the reasons that cause anxiety, time management has been seen as a very fundamental point. Some of the participants clearly stated the reasons for being afraid of attending English language classes in the following:

Participants 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

It is interesting to note that participants frequently commented on self-regulation affinity under other affinities while they were trying to express their feelings about a specific affinity.

For example, participant 3 commented about her anxiety experiences of Self-Regulation affinity under another affinity:

I don't have time to do all my homework; therefore, in the classroom I get scared by everything that has to do with English such as teacher, new lessons, my classmates, and etc.

In fact, lack of time has been seen as the focal point of producing anxiety for Iranian learners' and its lack directly influenced their anxiety levels. For these learners, personal management and self-discipline were seen as the main factors in increasing their sense of nervousness.

Participant 3 frequently pointed out the importance of time management in her life.

I do not have enough time to do all of my homework. So when I attend the English class I always feel awful and I look at my watch and hope the class will finish soon. I can't follow what the teacher is saying in the class and I am afraid teacher may ask me something and I fail to answer. I am not lazy student but I don't have time to do everything perfectly.

Time management has been considered a very important element in students' lives. Some of them reported that they terribly feel anxious only because they cannot be punctual in the classroom. And as a result, they cannot be prepared for their English lessons.

Participant 2 (Female, Anxiety score 104):

Since the beginning of this English class, I couldn't study at all for the lack of time. This really freaks me out...

I believe time shortage which stops me from doing all my assignments and be prepared in the classroom, is a huge problem for me in learning English. This is a situation which I really cannot tolerate anymore and I feel afraid of it.

Based on their students' comments, many cases revealed that students are anxious in the class because of a series of reasons that originated from their own.

Participant 7 (Male, Anxiety score 46):

I always feel nervous in the class when I don't review what the teacher had taught in the previous sessions of the class.

In a similar statement, he also wrote that:

I feel anxious, if I don't study enough. Because in this case I feel that I get left behind the class.

Since the 11 categories of affinities in which participants were asked to express their opinions did not include affinity similar to self-management, a considerable amount of comments and statements about own-self regulation which consistently appeared in almost entire affinities, the researcher decided to consider this affinity a separate variable that was generated based on the learners' points of view.

4.2.2 Affinity 2: Anxieties

The second affinity that was generated based on the students' comments is entitled Anxieties. This affinity is referred to as "the comments referred to specific anxious feeling towards foreign language learning" by Yan and Horwitz (2008).

Since this study was performed in order to offer a comprehensive vision about the perception of Iranian English learners about language learning anxiety as well as reaching at a decision about the factor that brings high apprehension, "Foreign Language Anxiety" has been considered as one of the factors that hinders learning a new language.

Table 4.2 represents the distribution of the Anxieties affinity among high and low anxious students.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Anxieties affinity among high and low anxious participants

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 9 | 21.45 | 108 |
| | 2 | F | 3 | 7.14 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 12 | 28.57 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 9 | 21.45 | 96 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 3 | 7.14 | 57 |
| | 6 | M | 4 | 9.52 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 1 | 2.38 | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 1 | 2.38 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total: 42 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

Table 4.2 highlights the priority of participants' direct reference to such concepts as "fear", "pressure", and "nervousness" in expressing their anxiety feelings. Similar to Self-Regulation, Anxieties affinity was mostly expressed by highly anxious students with 33 cases out of 42 which are equal to 78.57% of the total whereas only 21.42% of the low anxious students experienced anxiety feeling in the classroom.

It can be inferred from Table 4.2 that although female participants ranked among the highly anxious participants, there is equal gender distribution in terms of anxiety affinity. Anxieties affinity has been distributed alike among both genders with amount of 45.23% for females and 54.76% for males.

It was a formidable task to draw a clear line between what exactly counts as anxieties and what does not. The concept of this affinity is extremely large that assigning each basic idea to a relevant category required cross-referential decision making. Even the researcher reached a point that it was decided to merge anxiety affinity with other categories. Finally, “direct textual reference” to the source of anxiety became the distinctive criterion to define this affinity. Students’ comments about anxiety can be categorized in three situations; first group is a situation when students are expected to produce oral English in class. They declared that they feel highly anxious because the other classmates may laugh at them or especially teacher may consider them as the fool.

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

I feel anxious when I want to speak in the classroom because I am afraid that I may make an awful mistake and my classmates may laugh at me. Also, I fear that my teacher thinks I am a dump person.

The second situation refers to the time when due to lack of knowledge of English, learners don’t have self-confidence. Participants believed that lack of knowledge in English is one of the main sources of their anxiety in classroom.

Participant 1(Male, anxiety score 108):

I feel horribly anxious when I don’t have adequate English knowledge. For example, while doing the English exercises in the classroom, I feel really worried because I cannot answer the questions. I don’t believe in myself, I always scare in English language classes because I want to speak but I cannot. I cannot use the language.

In general, students' comments in the second group were mostly a clear representation of their fear about the lack of knowledge in English language. It is interesting to note that in all cases of these studies, participants from different proficiency levels become anxious as they thought they do not have sufficient knowledge in English:

Participant 4 (Male, anxiety score 96):

I feel anxious because I am weak at grammar and vocabulary. I always feel anxious because my English is poor and I do not understand what the teacher says in the class.

The third group of comments provided by the students was directly linked to their self-organization lack of which was seen as an important source of anxiety. Upon administering the grounded theory analysis of the students' comments, the largest set of major clusters of textual comments was generated showing that anxious students considered themselves the main reason of being anxious either directly or indirectly. As far as self-organization and self-regulation is concerned, participants' comments were highly in common under this category.

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

I feel suddenly anxious in the classroom when I don't study the previous sessions' lessons. I fear when I am not ready in the classroom. I panic when I don't do my homework.

Below there are a list of comments frequently was explained by students under this affinity:

- I feel anxious when I am not prepared in the class.

- I feel terribly afraid when I didn't practice before.
- I am very anxious. I think I need to study everything at home after I learned in the class so this may help me not to feel panic in English classes.
- I am always worried as I did not study enough before the class.
- I am anxious because I did not study new lessons before the teacher teaches, I did not have time.

The content analysis of the students' reflections presents interesting results. Regarding the highest anxiety scores which was the basis of participant selection among the all Iranian English learners as the main participants of this study, interestingly, highly anxious participants did not count themselves as anxious learners. Despite using words like "*dupe, fear, worry, cannot, and pressure*" in their comments, they directly stated that they are not anxious at all. Especially participant 1 who is the highest anxious in the whole population and his anxiety score is dramatically high (108 where as the mean score is 78).

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

I feel that I am not anxious and it will happen when one doesn't have self-confidence.

Participant 2 (Female, anxiety score 104):

I never felt anxious in English classes. The only moment I feel nervous is a few minutes before the grade announcement.

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

Just at the beginning of the semester because I was not familiar with the situation, I was a little anxious and now everything is alright.

Participant 4 (Male, anxiety score 96):

I am not anxious at all.

Participant 2 (Female, anxiety score 104):

I never felt anxious in English classes. The only moment I feel nervous is a few minutes before the grade announcement.

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

Just at the beginning of the semester because I was not familiar with the situation, I was a little anxious and now everything is alright.

Participant 4 (Male, anxiety score 96):

I am not anxious at all.

4.2.3 Affinity 3: Teacher Characteristics

The affinity of teacher characteristics is the third affinity that was generated based on student' comments and it defined as “comments referred to teachers’ personalities, philosophies, and skills in language teaching” by Yan and Horwitz (2008). They stated “The Teacher Characteristics and Class Arrangements affinities are closely related because classes are organized by teachers”, the analysis of the students comments revealed the fact that the similarity between these two affinities sometime made the researcher carefully analyze the comments in order to ground the reasonable theory.

The content analysis of the comments revealed that even limited and unintentional actions on the part of English teacher such as the way teacher looks at the students, teacher's attitude toward less proficient learners, lack of verbal praise to less proficient students, and teacher's attention to savvy students more than others will result anxiety for students.

Since the native language of the teachers was different from the native language that of sample study, teachers' usage of their first language was reported as one of the very serious sources of language anxiety for the participants of this study.

The analysis of the affinities points to the fact that Teacher Characteristics affinity is the third category of affinities that is the cause of anxiety for Iranian English language learners. Table 4.3 shows the distribution of the Teacher Characteristics affinity among the two groups.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Teacher Characteristics affinity among high and low anxious participants

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 3 | 7.69 | 108 |
| | 2 | F | 9 | 23.07 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 13 | 33.33 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 5 | 12.82 | 96 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 3 | 7.69 | 57 |
| | 6 | M | 3 | 7.69 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 1 | 2.56 | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 2 | 5.12 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total: 39 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

It can be seen from the data in Table 4.3 that the Teacher Characteristics affinity was reported commonly by participants ranking third among all affinities that causes anxiety among language learners. As Table 4.3 illustrates, among all 39 cases of anxiety related to teacher characteristics affinity, 30 cases (76.92%) were reported by high anxious students whereas only 9 cases (23.07%) were mentioned by low anxious language learners.

By analyzing the gender distribution of the anxiety cases, it is apparent from the Table 4.4 that females commented almost twice as males regarding Teacher Characteristics affinity. 27 out of 39 cases of anxiety reports (69.23%) was stated by females which is almost double in males cases (12 out of 39).

The single most striking observation to emerge from the data comparison was students' response about Teacher Characteristics in the highly anxious group that was totally different from those in the other group. They refused to directly reflect their opinions under this affinity. For example, participant 3 wrote nothing under this affinity; whereas, under other affinities, she unknowingly presented a lot of comments about Teacher Characteristics. In fact, the most frequent cases resulting in sense of fear for Iranian learners was offered by this participant. Similar behavior was also apparent for the other anxious female participant where she did not directly point out any cases causing apprehension because of the behavior of teacher; however, the content analysis of the comment indicates that a considerable number of cases in this affinity led to serious anxiety feeling, all of which were indirectly mentioned under other affinities.

Considering the similarities between Teacher Characteristics and Class Arrangement affinities, these results, therefore, need to be interpreted with caution. Students' responses to this affinity included a vast number of reasoning and justifications.

Participant 6, (Male, anxiety score 56):

Our male teacher was more active and energetic than our female teacher. Also, our male teacher spoke with louder and clearer voice in his class. We never felt frustrated and we all could establish better communication with him. I hardly can hear what our female teacher says in the class and I feel awful.

Since this study was performed in an international university where the first language of the teachers was completely different from the participants' native language, some of the comments directly indicated some levels of anxiety when English language teachers

shifted to Turkish language in classroom. One of the anxious female language learners ironically commented that:

Participant 2 (Female, anxiety score 104):

Cypriot English language teachers had highly influenced in developing my Turkish language.

The students, also, were concerned about the knowledge of the teacher in the classroom. Some of them complained about lack of teachers' qualifications. Students believed that regular mistakes and incorrect information that was provided by the teacher was a very important source of anxiety for them. They stated that when a teacher permanently makes flaws while speaking second language or do not have a clear idea how to teach English with no plan on how to start teaching, then the students cannot trust them. In fact, participants mentioned that they feel a high level of anxiety because they cannot trust those teachers who are not able to provide error free utterances in classroom.

Participant 5 (Female, anxiety score 57):

I cannot trust those teachers who are incapable of speaking English correctly in the classroom. I mean when the teachers make those simple mistakes that regardless of my low proficiency level, I can understand, then how can I be sure what s/he is teaching me is correct?

Participant 7 (Male, anxiety score 46):

Some teachers come to the class without a pre-determined plan to teach English. I can realize that these teachers are not ready and do not know how to teach English.

Teachers are the determinant character in language learning classes. Most importantly, teachers' inequality in behaving with students is a major cause.

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

I know that I am not as good as some of the students in the class, but I can feel that the teacher always pays more attention to the smart and clever students. I feel worried when in the class the teacher doesn't look at me. I feel horrible when the teacher consistently looks at the smart students and asks them to read, write, or share their answers with the class. In the English classes, I always feel that it is not my class unless I am a professional English speaker. I think it is not fair that teachers do not consider those with not perfect English. I am not perfect, but I am trying to be.

Participant 8 (Female, anxiety score 45):

I think teachers should behave equally with all the students. I remember in one of our English classes there was a student who couldn't talk in English properly and had poor English proficiency. The teacher's behavior was rather rude with him. The student was a kind of dump in English but whenever the teacher behaved inappropriately with him, my heart started beating harshly.

Moreover, the students found important differences in establishing a friendly connection with their English language teachers in an international context of language learning.

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score anxiety score 108):

There is a huge cultural gap between my Persian English teachers and other English teachers. I cannot establish friendly connections with them as I do in my country and this sometimes makes me panic.

4.2.4 Affinity 4: Genetic and Personal Characteristics

The fourth category of sources of foreign language anxiety is called Genetic and Personal Characteristics affinity. According to Yan and Horwits (2008), this affinity includes two sets of questions; one of them refers to the participants comments about their "abilities and talents that they viewed as specifically related to language learning"

and the other section is related to gender differences which has been defined as “the comments referred to special characteristics that the interviewees believed distinguished males from females with respect to language learning”. Table 4.4 presents the distribution of the Genetic and Personal Characteristics affinity among the whole group.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Genetic and Personal Characteristics affinity among high and low anxious participants

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 16 | 48.48 | 108 |
| | 2 | F | 3 | 9.09 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 7 | 21.21 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 0 | 0 | 96 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 5 | 15.15 | 57 |
| | 6 | M | 2 | 6.06 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 0 | 0 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total:33 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

The analysis of the affinities indicates that “Genetic and Personal Characteristics” affinity is the fourth category which causes anxiety for Iranian second language learners. As it can be seen from Table 4.4, a total amount of 33 textual comments reported the learners’ anxiety under this category in which the role of gender and learners’ aptitude towards learning a new language is discussed. According to Table 4.4, a majority of 26 cases out of 33 (78.78%) have been reported by the highly anxious students whereas; only 7 cases (21.21%) are reported by the low anxious participants.

As it can be perceived from Table 4.4, the study did not detect any evidence for significant inequality in gender distribution as 54.54% of themes have been reported by male participants and 45.45% of the cases by female students.

Although the Genetic and Personal Characteristics affinity included questions that either directly or indirectly searched participants' opinions about gender and aptitudes, the students' comments under this theme mostly included a variety of responses to aptitude about learning English. In fact, one unanticipated finding was that none of the participants believed that gender can make any difference in learning a new language.

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

In my opinion, learning is not related to gender.

Participant 2 (Female, anxiety score 104):

Gender differences are hardly related the processes of learning in any individual.

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

I don't believe that gender can make any differences in learning either learning, a language or science.

Participant 4 (Male, anxiety score 96):

It has nothing to do with gender.

Participant 5 (Female, anxiety score 57):

In my own point of view, gender cannot be a crucial factor in learning a language.

Participant 6 (Male, anxiety score 56):

Gender?! No way.

Participant 7 (Male, anxiety score 46):

I think nothing but interests can make somebody learn better.

Participant 8 (Female, anxiety score 45):

From my point of view, gender has nothing to do with the amount and the processes of learning another language.

The analysis of the participants' comments was mostly related to aptitude in learning a language whereas the concept of aptitude is related to many factors from the learners' point of view such as intelligence, natural ability in oral production, a special talent in learning languages.

Here are a set of comments in which participants consistently reflect their opinion about intelligence:

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

It is obvious that some of the students have high IQ, so they can learn English easier.

Participant 6 (Male, anxiety score 56):

I believe some of the students are more intelligent than others, so they have the required intelligence to learn fast. I think those with high intelligences factor do not try hard to learn new language but I should try more and more.

Interestingly, here again content analysis points that some of the students believe learners vary based on their oral production skills. They think the communicative skills have genetically been injected in personal characteristics of individuals; as a result, there are a group of English learners who can produce fluent English easier and simpler rather than normal students.

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

There are some students who have natural ability in oral production even in their native language. I believe those who are good speaker in their mother tongue have the ability to communicate in all forms of production, and therefore, they could be excellent speakers in any language. I have some difficulties in giving speech in Persian so it is normal that I cannot be a good speaker in English as well.

On a relevant ground some of the students believed that language learning needs a special talent that make students learn as many languages as they want without any efforts.

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

I can see that among my friends, there are people who have special talent in learning English language which I don't have. I mean, in English class, I usually don't understand teacher's speech, but others learn everything quickly and I feel I am stupid and I think my classmates consider me stupid as well.

Sometimes the presences of some personal characteristics are problematic. The researcher found a group of characteristics which causes foreign language anxiety.

Participant 5 (Female, anxiety score 57):

I am a very shy person. Therefore, I cannot speak in the class and I cannot say anything new in English and as a result I cannot learn the language.

Participant 8 (Female, anxiety score 45):

I believe in order to learn a language perfectly, learners should start from the early ages; otherwise, their personality is shaped and there will be a lot of obstacles.

It is worth mentioning that a set of comments have been identified by the researcher that she could hardly discover a clear rationale behind them; therefore, they are called "odd things".

Participant 1(Male, anxiety score 108):

I believe the more students travel to other countries from childhood, the less they will have problems with English because English will grow inside them. I think kids have to go to English language schools since childhood so that they will face no difficulty with English.

4.2.5 Affinity 5: Class Arrangements Affinity

Class Arrangements affinity is defined as “the comments referred to the ways classroom language learning was organized, including class activities, textbooks and other materials, student-teacher ratios, and seating arrangements”(Yan and Horwitz, 2008). As classrooms are usually managed by teachers, Class Arrangement affinity is similar to teacher characteristics affinity

This affinity is the fifth variable that caused anxiety for the participants of this study. Table 4.5 shows the distribution of the Class Arrangement Affinity among the high and low anxious participants.

Table 4.5: Distribution of Class Arrangement affinity among high and low anxious participants

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 4 | 12.90 | 108 |
| | 2 | F | 9 | 29.08 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 8 | 25.08 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 7 | 22.58 | 96 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 1 | 3.22 | 57 |
| | 6 | M | 1 | 3.22 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 1 | 3.22 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total:31 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

From the data in Table 4.5, it is apparent that a high majority of the cases (28 out of 31) were pointed out by highly anxious students comparing to very few number of cases (3 out of 31) by low anxious students.

According to the Table 4.5, the proportion of anxiety cases that were mentioned by female participants is almost twice as male students with amount of 61.29% for females and 38.70% for males.

In addition, strong evidence from Class Arrangement affinity was found when the data was analyzed qualitatively some of which were possible to be examined even under the Contextual differences affinity. Since the mother tongue of the participants (Persian) of this study was totally different from the mother tongue of English teachers (Turkish), the majority of students' comments were related to teachers using their own first language in the classroom. Students complained that teacher switching from English to Turkish was the main reason causing anxiety in the classroom.

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

If I were an English teacher in an international university, I would never speak in any language other than English. I would never speak in my mother tongue. I feel a kind of worried when the teacher speaks in her mother tongue because most of the students know Turkish but I don't.

Participant 2 (Female, anxiety score 104):

I hate it when the teacher speaks Turkish with some of the students.

Participant 6 (Male, anxiety score 56):

If I were the teacher, I wouldn't speak Turkish in the class. Also, I didn't let the students speak Turkish and if they did, I would answer them in English.

Four questions were included in the Class Arrangement affinity which directly asked learners' opinion about classes in many aspects. Among participants' comments, the researcher found some cases that referred to anxiety but have not been considered as a serious variable before.

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

If I were an English teacher, I would never ever put absent in front of students' name, when they came late. In my English classes, teachers put absent mark even if you are late and this is a very big problem for me, because when the teacher does this, I really cannot concentrate on the lessons and I consistently think about losing some grade for being absent.

In another observation, a large number of cases referred to some reports on the parts of students losing their concentration only because they were not put in a homogenous class.

Participant 2 (Female, anxiety score 108):

In my English classes, I can affirm that not only me but also some of my classmates especially those similar to me with English background, are not comfortable to be in the same class with those highly different in proficiency level. We all feel insecure in our English classes.

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

My English class is run by proficient students. They always volunteer to answer all questions so there is no chance for average students like me who really want to learn. I mean I feel awful when I know the answers or I can be a part of class activity, but they don't let me try. I think it is waste of time to be in a class with very proficient students.

Participant 4(Male, anxiety score 96):

If I were an English teacher, I would not let the top students make others feel bad. I would put one of the proficient students with 2 or 3 students in a group and asked them to help weak students so they not only become helpful but also do not make others feel worried any more.

4.2.6 Affinity 6: Social and Cultural Factor

Social and cultural affinity is the sixth one which has been prioritized by Iranian English language learners. It is necessary here to clarify what is meant by Social and cultural affinity. It includes questions measuring effects of other people's opinion on language learning process. Others mostly referred to parents, teachers, and friends or other students in the same classroom. According to a definition provided by Yan and Horwitz, (2008), parents' opinion is known as parental influence which is defined as "Those comments referring to concerns and behaviors of the participants' parents related to language learning". In addition, learners sometimes judge their own learning based on an understanding from other language learners is known as comparison with peers defined as "The comments referred to the environment and atmosphere resulting from peer competition and influence" by Yan and Horwitz (2008). The sixth important factor that causes anxiety for the students is Social and Cultural affinity. Table 4.6 demonstrates the distribution of this affinity among participants with different anxiety scores.

Table 4.6: Distribution of Social and Cultural affinity among high and low anxious participants

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 4 | 13.33 | 108 |
| | 2 | F | 1 | 3.33 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 14 | 46.66 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 4 | 13.33 | 96 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 3 | 10 | 57 |
| | 6 | M | 0 | 0 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 4 | 13.33 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total:30 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

From the Table 4.6, we can see that a total number of 30 anxiety cases were reported by participants of this study. Similar to other affinities, the majority of cases (76.66%) were presented by high anxious and only a low total (23.33%) of the cases were given by low anxious students. Table 4.6 shows that 73.33% of the cases were described by females and only 26.66% by males.

The qualitative analysis of the data revealed the fact that the main causes of anxiety for the participants under the Social and Cultural affinity is directly linked to the pressure felt by the peers.

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

If the atmosphere of the class changes and students don't maintain negative competition with each other, my feeling of fear will decrease, so I can learn English. It frightens me that knowledgeable students don't let weak one, like me, be a part of the class activity.

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

During all of my experiences in learning English, I was always uncomfortable in front of my classmates whose English was great. I mean I was embarrassed that I could not be like them. I hate it when the levels of the students are not similar in one class. Because they put too much of pressure on other students.

Participant 4 (Male, anxiety score 96):

I believe, in an English class, when students are almost in the same proficiency level, everyone will try hard to get better, but when the levels of the students are so high, weak students may stop trying to get better because they think no matter how hard they try, they would never be like the proficient students in the classroom.

Some of the participants judge themselves from the teachers' point of view the result of which gives them a considerable amount of anxiety.

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

I remember at the very beginning of my language learning period, I didn't speak a lot, because I was not able to talk, and I felt myself as a complete idiot from my teacher's view.

4.2.7 Affinity 7: Situational Differences

Similar to Social and Cultural affinity, Situational Differences affinity ranks as the sixth category that causes anxiety for Iranian language learners. The questions designed under the Situational affinity category were mainly focused to elicit information about two English learning situations where the entire group experienced learning another language in Iran and Cyprus where participants were asked to write about similarities and differences of language learning as well as the life styles in these two situations.

It also includes the expression of feeling of fear or worry that was created specifically in different learning situations.

This affinity was developed in order to obtain information about specific situations that learners experienced. Since the participants of the study were all Iranian, the questions under this affinity were categorized through high attention to the situations in Iran as well as Cyprus.

Table 4.7 shows the distribution of Situational differences affinity within the group of participants.

Table 5: Distribution of Situational differences affinity among high and low anxious participants

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 2 | 6.66 | 108 |
| | 2 | F | 8 | 26.66 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 4 | 13.33 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 5 | 16.66 | 96 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 1 | 3.33 | 57 |
| | 6 | M | 4 | 13.33 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 1 | 3.33 | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 5 | 16.66 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total:30 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

As it can be seen from the Table 4.7, similar to the Social and Cultural affinity, a total number of 30 cases were reported by the participants as the reason to be anxious in the specific situations of language learning. however, there seems to be more balanced distribution of the anxiety cases in the high and low anxious participants with the percentage of 63.33% from the high anxious compared to 36.66% from the low anxious group.

Similar to other affinities, more female participants expressed their feelings including 18 (60%) cases whereas only 12 (40%) cases were mentioned by male participants.

It was observed by the researcher that in this affinity participants' report about time management. Some of them complained about how they ran out of time and get pressure not being able to manage their reading time and schedule for daily routine jobs like cooking, cleanings, short trips, and shopping. On the other hand we had many who thought the new learning situation was a great opportunity in learning new language because in their home country they could not have a chance to concentrate.

Analyzing participants' comments revealed the fact that being taught by a teacher whose mother tongue is different from theirs, is regarded as special privilege lack of which is a disturbing point for them.

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

In Iran, although teachers try not to speak Persian, they sometimes even unintentionally do. I mean it's a huge difference between learning English in a situation where the teacher is not able to speak Persian than s/he doesn't want to.

If teacher and students share the same mother tongue, the teacher for, sure, will switch to her/his native language. I really hate this.

Participant 7 (Male, anxiety score 46):

The basic problem in learning English in Iran is that teachers speak Persian in order to teach English. To me, it is a very huge mistake that stops me from learning when teacher speaks in any language other than English.

Interestingly, the researcher found that even minor dissimilarity between the way English is taught in Cyprus and Iran can cause major anxiety for students. Iranian learners used to the format of lesson plan which they had been taught in Iran; therefore, a nuance variation in even minor details can cause them nervousness.

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

In Iran, I worked from morning till night, so I did not have time to study. I was always nervous in the class and I feared the class activities.

Participant 3 (Female, Anxiety score 96):

Here in Cyprus, I am responsible for everything, food, shopping, cleaning, laundry, and so on. I always don't have time to be fully prepared in the class and feel learning situation in Cyprus is more difficult than in Iran.

Participant 4 (Male, anxiety score 96):

In Iran, English classes focus on speaking more than grammar, but in Cyprus a huge amount of teaching is spent on grammatical points which I hate.

The finding that is mostly highlighted here is that any sort of change from the situation in Iran to Cyprus, though related or unrelated to language learning, is a root of nervousness for the participant of this study. Life style of the participants which is somehow different from that in Iran has been suggested as one case of anxiety.

Participant 5 (Female, anxiety score 57):

In Iran, because of the cultural and religious boundaries, establishing a friendly connection with classmates is very difficult. Therefore, in English classes I am not comfortable with my classmates, but in Cyprus no matter which nationality students are, the relationship is established from the first day of the class which helps me not be afraid of anything in English classes.

Participant 8 (Female, anxiety score 96):

English classes in EMU are consisted of international students with a great difference in their cultural view. Therefore, establishing a friendly connection with those students is very difficult. To me, this is a very magnificent difference between Iran and Cyprus. In Iran, I was more comfortable in English classes than I am in Cyprus.

4.2.8 Affinity 8: Achievement

Achievement is another source of foreign language anxiety for the participants of this research. Achievement, according to Yan and Horwitz (2008), is defined as “the comments referred to students’ levels of achievement in English” that ranked eighth anxiety producing element for the Iranian English learners. Achievement affinity includes questions that seek for students’ direct and indirect response about their success level in English.

Table 4.8 shows the distribution of Achievement anxiety among the participants.

Table 4.8: Distribution of the Achievement affinity among the high and low anxious group

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 7 | 25 | 108 |
| | 2 | F | 5 | 17.85 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 5 | 17.85 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 4 | 14.28 | 96 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 0 | 0 | 57 |
| | 6 | M | 1 | 3.57 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 2 | 7.14 | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 4 | 14.28 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total: 28 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

According to the Table 4.8, a total amount of 28 cases were reported under the Achievement category 21 of which (75%) is presented by highly anxious students and 7 cases (25%) by low anxious ones.

Unlike other affinities, achievement affinity was distributed equally in both genders which were beyond expectation. Out of 28 cases, each gender reported 14 times of situations related to achievement making them nervous.

In qualitative analysis of the English learners' comments about achievement affinity, the researcher discovered that highly anxious students, to a great extent, believe they will not be successful in English; whereas, low anxious learners believed in their achievement. In response to the question, "What are the chances of you not achieving

much in the English?" Participants reflected their opinion that is separately presented below:

Participants' responses from highly anxious group

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

80%, because I feel I know nothing in English and I won't learn.

Participant 2 (Female, anxiety score 104):

100%, because 8 months ago, when I first came to SFL, I had some problems in English such as speaking, but after 8 months none of them were solved, so I really feel I won't progress in English.

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

50%, I don't know why. I just feel it.

Participant 4 (Male, anxiety score 96):

30%, because people in Cyprus speak Turkish rather than English. My Turkish is getting better rather than English.

Participants' responses from less anxious group:

Participant 5 (Female, anxiety score 57):

Very little, because I am in a place in my life that I have to learn English and I have more facilities to learn.

Participant 6 (Male, anxiety score 56):

I don't even think like 0.01% not to be successful in English language.

Participant 7(Male, anxiety score 46):

None, because I believe in myself, I have self-confidence, so I would never think of not progressing in English.

Participant 8 (Female, anxiety score 45)

None, I never think about not to progress in English.

Here, the analysis of the comments shows that the more anxious learners are, the less they believe in their achievement in English.

Participant 3(Female, anxiety score 96):

When I study to learn English, I try hard. I read all vocabularies, listen to all listening exercises, read all readings, and so on, but I don't understand no matter how hard I try, I cannot notice my progress and I cannot see my achievement. This really makes me worried.

4.2.9 Affinity 9: Contextual Differences

Standing ninth among the major themes leading to sense on nervousness is the pressure learners feel. By definition, this affinity describes learners' comments on their experience of contexts other than preparatory school ranging from English classes outside the school and extra-curricular activities to random occasions where they had a chance to learn English.

Since this study was performed in the school of foreign language learning (SFL) in Eastern Mediterranean university, the researcher tried to elicit information about the

context of SFL under the affinity of Contextual Differences including questions mostly focused on those comments about learning English in SFL.

Table 4.9 provides the distribution of the Contextual Differences Affinity in the group among participants with various anxiety scores.

Table 4.9: Distribution of contextual Differences affinity among High and low anxious participants

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 6 | 24 | 108 |
| | 2 | F | 10 | 40 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 2 | 8 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 2 | 8 | 96 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 0 | 0 | 57 |
| | 6 | M | 1 | 4 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 4 | 16 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total: 25 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

Table 4.9 shows that 25 anxiety cases were stated by the group that 20 (80%) of which were reported by high anxious and only 5 (20%) cases by low anxious.

Similar to most of the other affinities, females expressed their anxiety feeling under the Contextual Differences Affinity more than males with the percentage of 64% compared

to males with 36%. It could be argued that female learners tend to be more insecure upon the shift of context.

Qualitative analysis of the participants' comments about Contextual Differences affinity demonstrated some anxiety cases that were specifically related to the context of SFL.

Participants' comments under this affinity are presented below:

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

I feel that going to English classes in SFL is useless and it is only waste of time, because I don't learn any things. Also, I can't establish a connection with teacher at all.

Participant 2 (Female, anxiety score 104):

I hate when Turkish students speak Turkish language with teachers, and the worst part is when teachers respond them in Turkish.

Participant 6 (Male, anxiety score 56):

In SFL, it really makes me worried when teachers and students who know Turkish speak Turkish in the class.

4.2.10 Affinity 10: Motivation and Interests

Motivation and Interests affinity ranks tenth among the other affinities. In fact, unlike what was expected from the role of motivation in learning a language, motivation doesn't seem to be an important factor lack of which hinder learning process for Iranian language learners.

By Interest it is meant “The comments referred to favorable attitude and concerns towards language learning” and by Motivation “The comments referred to the desires goals, and directed efforts the students expressed about language learning” by Yan and Horwitz (2008). Table 4.10 illustrates the distribution of Motivation and Interest affinity among the participants.

Table 4.10: Distribution of Motivation and Interests affinity among high and low anxious participants

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 3 | 12.5 | 108 |
| | 2 | F | 7 | 29.16 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 4 | 16.66 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 3 | 12.5 | 96 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 0 | 0 | 57 |
| | 6 | M | 4 | 16.66 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 2 | 8.33 | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 1 | 4.16 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total:24 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

According to the Table 4.10, a total number of 24 cases have demonstrated anxiety among 8 participants where 17 cases (70.83%) were presented by highly anxious and only 7 cases (29.16%) by low anxious language learners.

To the researcher's surprise, the gender distribution of this affinity was completely equal and each gender expressed 12 anxiety cases which were reported under the category of motivation and interest.

Unlike the results of this study, the findings reports by Yan and Horwitz shows that Motivation and Interest affinity ranked first among most essential cases of anxiety, while in this study this affinity was known as a minor reasons of generating anxiety for Iranian language learners. The students' statements under this affinity are presented below:

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

English is very essential in my life and I need it a lot. I wish I was born as a native speaker of English language.

Participant 2 (Female, anxiety score 104):

I want to start my education in an international university, so I really need English and it is really difficult to be good at it.

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

Motivation is very important in learning English. In English classes, I was an average student, but I really don't know what happened and out of nowhere I became top student of the class. After that, I tried like hundred times more than before. The only reason I did not study a lot was lack of motivation for me.

In fact, I think in 20th century the definition of literacy has changed and means knowledge of computer and English language rather than only being able to read and write.

Participant 4 (Male, anxiety score 96):

English is everything for me. I am going to live in another country and I cannot do unless I know English well.

Participant 7 (Male, anxiety score 46):

I cannot be successful in future unless I could learn English. So, for me English is the only tool which can take me to my dreams. I became interested in English when I realized my success only depends on it.

The analysis, most importantly, shows that teacher's behavior can initiate serious anxiety problems for the sensitive students.

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

In some English classes, I can sense that teachers pay more attention to those students who are well dressed. In these classes, I am hardly motivated to listen to teacher and follow lessons.

4.2.11 Affinity 11: Individual Learning Approach

What techniques and methods students used to complete language learning tasks and to further develop their English competence? The answer to this question forms the eleventh affinity in relation to anxiety. Through the course of time, each single learner manages to develop some self-proposed strategies to overcome learning barriers one of which is included under Individual Learning Approach affinity.

Table 4.11 shows the distribution of Individual Learning Approach affinity among high and low anxious participants.

Table 4.11: Distribution of Individual learning Approach Affinity among High and low anxious participants

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 1 | 4.34 | 108 |
| | 2 | F | 2 | 8.69 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 7 | 30.43 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 7 | 30.43 | 96 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 1 | 4.34 | 57 |
| | 6 | M | 4 | 17.39 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 1 | 4.34 | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 0 | 0 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total: 23 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

Table 4.11 demonstrates that similar to the other affinities, the majority of anxiety cases have been presented by participants in high anxious group from 17 cases (73.91%) out of 23 and only 6 cases (26.08%) were suggested by low anxious students which is an indication of the fact that the FLCAS shows consistency with the results of the qualitative analysis of the comments.

The Table 4.11 shows that both genders approximately suggested anxiety cases equally with number of 12 and 10 respectively.

A number of participants report their concerns as follow:

Participant 1 (Male, anxiety score 108):

I don't really know how to study English and I'm looking to find the best learning approach for myself, but how?

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96) :

I cannot concentrate on long reading comprehension texts. I feel I get lost in the text. This is my problem and I think my classmates are able to follow such texts. Also, I want to practice English when I'm home but I really don't know what makes me learn better.

Participant 4 (Male, anxiety score 96):

My own learning approach is to be taught by a private a teacher and s/he teaches only me and not any other students. In class, because the teacher is teaching a group, it doesn't work for me.

4.2.12 Affinity 12: Influence of the First Language

A learner's first language undeniably plays both negative and positive roles in one's learning a language fully discussed in literature. The Influence of the First Language affinity includes those comments that demonstrated the anxiety cases because of the role of the first language. The participants of this study made very few anxiety accounts under this category. In fact, this affinity is not seen by learners as a focal point that hinders language learning.

Table 4.12 demonstrates the Distribution of Influence of the First Language Affinity among high and low anxious participants.

Table 4.12: Distribution of Influence of the First Language affinity among high and low anxious participants

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 5 | 29.41 | 108 |
| | 2 | F | 2 | 11.76 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 5 | 29.41 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 3 | 17.64 | 96 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 1 | 5.88 | 57 |
| | 6 | M | 1 | 5.88 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 0 | 0 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total: 17 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

Table 4.13 illustrates that considering small number of anxiety cases, the majority are suggested by the high anxious students 15 out of 17 and only 2 cases were found to cause anxiety for low anxious learners. The suggested anxiety cases were equal in both genders as it was the case for the previous affinity.

It appears that the grammatical and linguistic structure of learners' first language do not bother them in a great amount. Although there were a number of complains, the reason might refer the fact that English language were introduced them many years ago (approximately 8 years ago) and consequently they have accepted such interference and the potential errors they make because of it. Here are two accounts by participants 1 and 3 explaining how their L1 makes them feel nervous while using English.

Participant 1(Male, anxiety score 108):

I believe Persian language hinders English language learning. Because If I want to, I had to think in English and because I am a Persian language speaker, I cannot. I wish I was born an English language speaker.

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

Persian language prevents me from speaking English. Because I think in Persian, make sentences in Persian, and replace the words with English which doesn't sound like an English sentence at all.

4.2.13 Affinity 13: Assessment Affinity

Besides performance, one of the indicators of measuring success is the scores' teachers specify. Great majority of learners are goal-oriented thus they refer to the grades for the achievement index.

Although assessment affinity has not been regarded as an extreme case of anxiety for the participants, its existence is worth mentioning as one of the least anxiety making reasons for some of the students. By Assessment we mean those comments which specify the learners' distress about their final evaluations and grades and the effects of language assessments in their learning process. It has to be added that most of the comments under this newly generated affinity included participants' feelings of injustice and inequality they were expecting to happen. Table 4.13 demonstrated the distribution of the assessment affinity among the participants of this study.

Table 4.13: Distribution of Assessment affinity among high and low anxious participants

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 0 | 0 | 108 |
| | 2 | F | 7 | 63.63 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 2 | 18.18 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 1 | 9.09 | 96 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 1 | 9.09 | 57 |
| | 6 | M | 0 | 0 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 0 | 0 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total: 11 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

As it is apparent from the Table 4.13, all of the anxiety cases except for one were pointed out by the highly anxious students.

It is really interesting to mention that all of the cases related to assessment anxiety were suggested by the female participants and only one case by male student from the high anxious group.

The content analysis of the students' comments reported of a rather frequent nervousness about the assessment of their English. Analyzing the comments suggested that one of the participants' concerns is generated based on the process, the base and content, and the results of the assessment.

Following is the one comment about the content assessment which was irrelevant to her knowledge of English.

Participant 2 (Female, anxiety score 104):

A very huge amount of my negative sense is related to the sizeable part of the grades which the teacher specifies to the class attendance. This really makes me nervous and I always think no matter how hard I try to be the best in the class, I have practically lost many points as I was absent for 2 days.

Curiously, the researcher discovered that in the area of assessment, learners are anxious because of no apparent reason but the results. Their responses were directly related to the results of the assessment rather than taking the test itself.

Participant 2 (Female, anxiety score 104):

It really freaks me out that my English teachers drop off my grades in the final test only because I was absent in the class or arrived late.

Participant 3 (Female, anxiety score 96):

I cannot speak English very well in the classroom, and I am really worried because I think the teacher will cut some points from my final grades because I don't speak English in the classroom. My writing is very good, but I really have problem with speaking.

Participant 5 (Female, anxiety score 57):

I really hate English lessons and classes when teachers are not fair in grading the tests and when they are generous in giving grades to those who did not try very hard. I hate all tests and I like English classes without tests at all.

4.2.14 Affinity 14: Assignment Load Affinity

Assignment load affinity refers to the comments which display the participants' concerns about the possibility of failure in dealing with apparently huge bulk of homework and tasks they were expected to complete at home. Although assignment load affinity is not regarded as a major case of anxiety on the parts of participants, its consequences are noticeable.

Table 4.14 provides the information about distribution of Assignment Load affinity among high and low anxious participants.

Table 4.14: Distribution of Assignment Load affinity among high and low anxious participants

| | Participants | Gender | Frequency | Percentage % | Anxiety Score |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| | 1 | M | 0 | 0 | 108 |
| High Anxious Participants | 2 | F | 4 | 40 | 104 |
| | 3 | F | 3 | 30 | 96 |
| | 4 | M | 0 | 0 | 96 |
| | 5 | F | 0 | 0 | 57 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 6 | M | 2 | 20 | 56 |
| | 7 | M | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| | 8 | F | 1 | 10 | 45 |
| | Total: 8 | ----- | Total:10 | Total: 100% | Mean: 76 |

As it can be seen from Table 4.14, out of 10 suggested anxiety cases under Assignment Load affinity, 70% were uttered by high anxious and only 30% by participants with low anxiety level.

Parallel to most of the affinities, females with the percentage of 80% expressed their feelings more than males 20%.

Self-organization to keep up with weekly assignments is among the reasons why learners experience anxiety. It is believed that it is mostly because of versatility and volume of the tasks especially when it is combined with some specific courses. However, this appears to be the least important factor to produce sense of nervousness.

Participant 8 who is the least anxious student in the group explains:

Participant 2 (Female, anxiety score 104):

I feel the assignments are so huge that I never will be able to do them all. So, I am afraid to go to the class.

Participant 6 (Male, anxiety score 56):

I don't understand why teachers put this much pressure on learners by giving a high amount of homework. I really freak out because not only I can't finish them, but also I can't review the previous lessons.

Participant 8 (Female, anxiety score 45):

I hate it when teachers give students various pieces of homework without thinking how much time does it take. I really feel sick and my heart beats like an atomic bomb because I know that I cannot do them all.

4.3 Research Question Two: What Other Anxiety Pronoking Themes Could Possibly be Discovered in Addition to Those in Yan and Horwitz’s (2008) study?

The second research question explored the existence of any sorts of similarity of significant differences between the Iranians English language learners’ perception toward language anxiety with those of Chinese learners. In fact, this research question seeks to discover any other possible sources of language anxiety in addition to what was resulted from the Chinese study.

The Grounded Theory analysis of the students’ comments generated a group of affinities as the main sources of language anxiety among which five of them were newly generated. In other words Situational Differences, Contextual Differences, Self-Regulation, Assignment load, and assessment were those affinities that did not observed as the results of the Yan and Horwitz’s (2008) study.

4.4 Research Question Three: What Affinities do Iranian English Language Learners Prioritizes Compared to Learners in Yan and Horwitz’s (2008) study?

The second research question was presented to identify first, the prioritization of the sources of language anxiety from the learners’ point of view and second

To answer this question it is probably best to refer to Yan and Horwitz’s (2008) findings which reported that three affinities of “Comparison with Peers, Learning Strategies, and Language Learning Interest and Motivation as the most immediate source of anxiety”.

This to a great extent is not supported by the findings of this study where Self-regulation, Anxieties, and Teacher Characteristics were among the highest frequently commented anxiety making affinities.

The themes are not only reshuffled in terms of their frequency rankings, but somehow their entire nature has been changed meaning that three new categories are generated one of which was seen as the most and immediate factors leading to anxiety from the participants' point of view.

Our reaction to such findings has two aspects. Peculiar to this study is its qualitative nature which in comparison with quantitative research findings on anxiety (Dörnyei, 2005; Horwitz, 2001; Oxford 1999) highlights rather different factors. Analysis of descriptive, lengthy and elaborate comments of learners reveals some uncharted facets of anxiety mainly those which are related to metacognitive side of learning such as self-regulation and time management. As a result it could be reported that the prioritization of the major themes behind anxiety was rather different between Chinese and Iranian English language learners.

Chart 1 demonstrates the model generated from the grounded analysis of the results of this research.

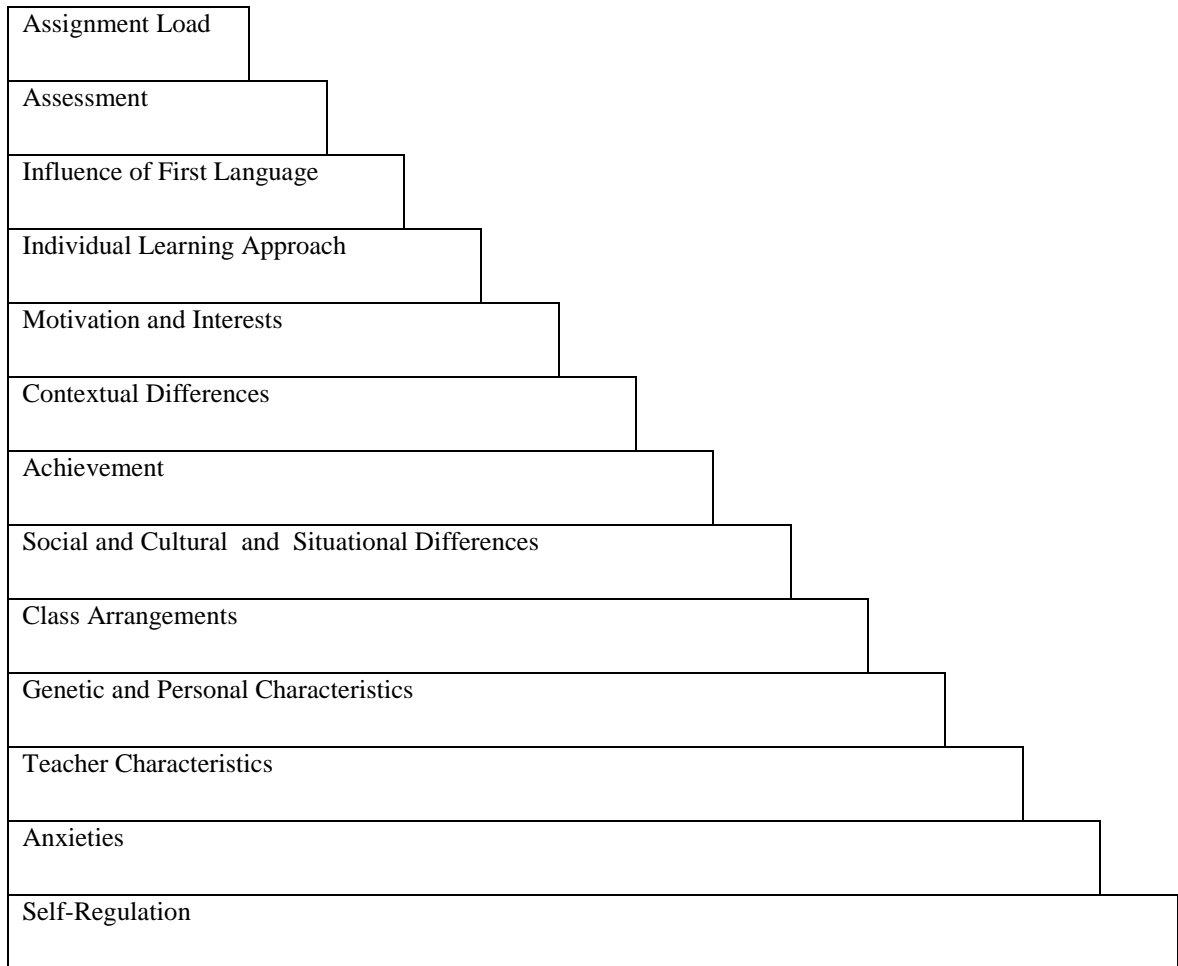


Chart 1: The Grounded-Theory model of prioritization of the sources of foreign language anxiety

Chart 1 illustrates the sources of foreign language anxiety based on the Iranian's prioritization. The major source is Self-Regulation affinity whereas the minor source is Assignment Load. It is necessary to note that Social and Cultural affinity and Situational Differences affinity have been seen similar to each other by participants as anxiety making sources.

4.5 Research Question Four: How do High and Low Anxious Iranian English Language Learners Perceive Foreign Language Learning Anxiety?

The fourth research question attempted to compare the perception of high anxious language learners towards language anxiety with those of less anxious learners. Table 4.15 shows the diversity of the spread of comments among two groups.

Table 4.15: Distribution of the all affinities among high and low anxious participants

| | High Anxious | Low Anxious | Total |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------|
| Frequency | 304 | 83 | 387 |
| Percentage% | 78.55 | 21.44 | 100 |

According to the Table 4.15, the majority of the mentioned cases (304) have been stated by the participants in high anxious group which is more than 78.55% ;whereas, only a limited number of anxiety cases (83) have been reported by low anxious participants. This confirms that first, the anxious participants were carefully selected among the whole group based on the result of the FLCAS which has been discussed in chapter three, and second, the anxious students who, no matter how strongly they consider themselves not anxious, managed to frequently express their feelings, experiences, and thoughts regarding language learning anxiety.

Since the study aimed to identify the sources of language anxiety for the specific context of Iranian learners, the high number of shared anxiety cases by high anxious level

participants provided the researcher a chance to reach a working knowledge on the possible sources of language anxiety from Iranian learners 'points of view. These results indicated that the more the anxious students become, the greater ability they show to express the reasons for being nervous.

Furthermore, the results of the study revealed the level of diversity between high and low anxious groups regarding their points of view towards the sources of language anxiety. Table 4.16 shows the distribution of the mentioned affinities in two groups.

Table 4.16: Distribution of the each affinity among high and low anxious group

| Affinities | Frequency | | Percentage% | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | High Anxious | Low- Anxious | High Anxious | Low- Anxious |
| Self-Regulation | 38 | 6 | 86.36 | 13.63 |
| Anxieties | 33 | 9 | 78.57 | 21.42 |
| Teacher Characteristics | 30 | 9 | 76.92 | 23.07 |
| Genetic and Personal Characteristics | 26 | 7 | 78.78 | 21.21 |
| Class Arrangement | 28 | 3 | 90.32 | 9.67 |
| Social and Cultural Factors | 23 | 7 | 76.66 | 23.23 |
| Situational Differences | 19 | 11 | 63.33 | 36.66 |
| Achievement | 21 | 7 | 75 | 25 |
| Contextual Differences | 20 | 5 | 80 | 20 |
| Motivation and Interests | 17 | 7 | 70.83 | 29.16 |
| Individual Learning Approach | 17 | 6 | 73.91 | 26.08 |
| Influence of the First Language | 15 | 2 | 88.23 | 11.76 |
| Assessment Effects | 10 | 1 | 90.90 | 9.09 |
| Assignment Load | 7 | 3 | 70 | 30 |
| Total | 304 | 83 | 78.55 | 21.44 |

In terms of foreign language anxiety all language learners could be categorized into four distinct groups: female high anxious, female low anxious, male high anxious and male low anxious. Based on the Table 4.18, female high anxious students are responsible for half of all senses of fear reported in affinities. It implies that serious attention has to be paid to ways of making male learners start expressing.

While there is significant correlation between total population affinity ranks and that of high anxious group, Table 4.16, casts some light on a rather dark corner; and that is affinity rank among low anxious group. Quiet contrary to the dominant trend of the reports, Situational Differences factor appears to be a major concern for low anxious participants regardless of their gender.

One further observation refers to the existence of three major differences among high and low anxious students which can distinguish them vividly. It could be stated that the greatest discrepancies originate from Class Arrangement (28 High – 3 Low), Influence of the First language (15 High – 2 Low), and Assessment Effects (10 High – 1 Low) with Class Arrangement being responsible for 8% of the total meaning that what bothers most the high anxious learners might not be the case for low anxious students.

4.6 Research Question Five: How Do Learners' Perceptions of Foreign Language Anxiety Towards Learning English Differ with Respect to Gender?

The second research question explored the gender differences towards the existence of sources of language anxiety. Table 4.17 shows the distribution of the comments between two genders.

Table 4.17: Distribution of the cases among male and female

| | Male | Female | Total |
|-------------|-------|--------|-------|
| Frequency | 162 | 225 | 387 |
| Percentage% | 41.86 | 58.13 | 100 |

As can be seen from Table 4.17, a total number of 162 out of 387 cases have been stated by the male participants (41.86%); whereas, 225 cases (58.13%) have been suggested by females. Furthermore, a closer look might be helpful. Gender wise, 90% of all males' comments come from highly anxious group which is surprisingly the same amount about females. This is in line with the results of FLCAS and implicates a truly novel finding: the outcome of quantitative research on anxiety is significantly correlated with qualitative analysis of learners' perception bearing in mind that the population were purposefully selected and homogenously distributed in two groups of high and low anxious. The evidence supports the accuracy of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale.

Bearing in mind the equal number of participants was purposefully selected in homogenous sample, it could be concluded that females tend to be more expressive compared to males who proved harder to discover. This inequality might be because of such defensive, guarded, and non-expressive behavior on the part of male learners. Therefore, it is not easy to claim that females are more exposed to anxieties making factors since male and females' anxiety scores overlap. This might give us a hint of developing further efficient tools to elicit feelings and thoughts from male learners.

The second approach to address this research question deals with ranking the affinities in terms of gender priority. Table 4.18 gives a comprehensive account of how different sexes' point of view differs when it comes to expressing the source of their nervousness.

While for males Anxieties, in its direct sense, ranks top among themes, the manner through which females can manage their pre-while-post lesson learning strategies appears to be the most bothersome sources of anxiety. For females Teacher Characteristics affinity comes second, yet Genetic and Personal Characteristics proves to be the second most important root of nervousness for males. This gets really meaningful when we realize that a Social and Cultural factor is the third major element behind anxiety of females whereas the statistics for males show Achievement is their next concerns.

It is also worth mentioning that both males and females give equal value to the affinities of Achievement and Motivation and Interests.

Table 4.18: Distribution of the each affinity among males and females

| Affinities | Frequency | | Percentage % | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------|--------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Self-Regulation | 13 | 31 | 29.54 | 70.45 |
| Anxieties | 23 | 19 | 54.76 | 45.23 |
| Teacher Characteristics | 12 | 27 | 30.76 | 69.23 |
| Genetic and Personal Characteristics | 18 | 15 | 54.54 | 45.45 |
| Class Arrangement | 12 | 19 | 38.70 | 61.29 |
| Social and Cultural Factors | 8 | 22 | 26.66 | 73.33 |
| Situational Differences | 12 | 18 | 40 | 60 |
| Achievement | 14 | 14 | 50 | 50 |
| Contextual Differences | 9 | 14 | 36 | 64 |
| Motivation and Interests | 12 | 12 | 50 | 50 |
| Individual Learning Approach | 13 | 10 | 56.52 | 43.47 |
| Influence of the First Language | 9 | 8 | 52.94 | 47.05 |
| Assessment Effects | 1 | 10 | 9.09 | 90.90 |
| Assignment Load | 2 | 8 | 20 | 80 |
| Total | 162 | 225 | 41.86 | 58.13 |

4.7 Research Question Six: How Do Participants' Senses Of Anxiety Differ in Terms of Their Learning Features?

The sixth research question seeks to discover the possibility of variety in learners' perception about sources of foreign language anxiety among each individual. Table 4.19 shows the percentage of shared comments among the entire group.

Table 4.19: Distribution of the anxiety cases among individuals

| | Participant | Gender | Anxiety Score | Frequency | Percentage % |
|------------------------------|-------------|--------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| High Anxious Participants | 1 | M | 108 | 64 | 16.53 |
| | 2 | F | 104 | 78 | 20.15 |
| | 3 | F | 96 | 108 | 27.90 |
| | 4 | M | 96 | 54 | 13.95 |
| Low Anxious Participants | 5 | F | 57 | 20 | 5.16 |
| | 6 | M | 56 | 28 | 7.23 |
| | 7 | M | 46 | 12 | 3.10 |
| | 8 | F | 45 | 23 | 5.94 |
| | Total: 8 | ---- | Mean: 76 | Total: 387 | Total: 100 |

Table 4.19 is quite revealing in several ways. First, unlike the other tables which were shown the affinities, this table shows the amount of comment suggested by each participant.

It is apparent from the Table 4.19 that participant 3, which is a female anxious learner, expressed her anxiety feeling higher than the others with amount of 27.90%. The second

person is participant 2 which is also a female anxious one, ranked second in expressing her feelings with the amount of 20.15% of the total cases.

Also, Table 4.19 shows that among non-anxious learners participant 7 with amount of 3.10% is the person who expressed the least among the entire group.

To a certain degree we can find little harmony among eight individuals when observed separately. Self-regulation, for instance, which is the major reported source, is only selected by two participants: participant 3 and 7 (See appendix, L and P) as a top factor. For participant 1 and 5 Genetic and Personal Characteristics affinity is the most anxiety producing affinity (See appendix, J and N). This is also revealing in the rest of the participants such as for the participant 2 Contextual Differences affinity (See Appendix K), participant 4 Anxieties affinity (See Appendix M), participant 8 Situational Differences affinity (See Appendix Q) are the major sources of anxiety.

To clarify the issue, one by one participant's priorities will follow:

Participant 1: Genetic and Personal Characteristics Affinity (See Appendix J)

Participant 2: Contextual Differences Affinity (See Appendix K)

Participant 3: Self-Regulation Affinity (See Appendix L)

Participant 4: Anxieties Affinity (See Appendix M)

Participant 5: Genetic and Personal Characteristics Affinity (See Appendix N)

Participant 6: Equal distribution of Contextual Differences, Situational Differences, Motivation and Interests, In Affinity (See Appendix O)

Participant 7: Self-Regulation Affinity (See Appendix P)

Participant 8: Situational Differences Affinity (See Appendix Q)

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Presentation

This chapter explains the major discussions of the study and supports the findings by comparing them with the outcomes of similar studies. Also, the possible implications for further research as well as the limitation and delimitation of the study will be described.

5.2 Discussions

The current research managed to discovered and perceived sources of foreign language anxiety among Iranian English language learners at Eastern Mediterranean University. What follows, then, are a detailed discussion and arguments in chapter four as well as major findings.

The main findings of this study revealed the fact that Iranian learners, as opposed to the Chinese participants from the Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study, believed that self-regulatory, anxiety related (Anxieties), and teacher related (Teacher Characteristics) factors are among most crucial elements that could be the cause of their learning concerns while their Chinese counterpart referred to peer rivalry (Comparison with Peers), strategies (Learning Strategies), and motivation (Language Learning Interest and Motivation) as the most immediate source of anxiety as main reasons. Two out of three major anxiety sources among Iranians are directly related to internal factors showing

that Iranians are less setting-dependent than Chinese who take no clear cut internal factor as the main reasons behind their senses of concern. In a pedagogic sense this means that teachers in Iranian contexts should assist learners to overcome their personal inhibitions. This finding only refers to the present study and any generalization needs further evidence.

A limited number of studies have been done on the second/foreign language anxiety using the perception of language learners in order to identify the major sources of language anxiety. Therefore, the main purpose of this mixed method study was to determine the boundaries around language anxiety from the learners' perspective and as a result recognize the crucial sources of language learning anxiety in order to suggest and develop strategies to cope with this feeling in learning context. Because of its peculiarity, results of this study, to a high extent, corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in this field. However, such major factors behind a learners' sense of nervousness were found that it requires certain levels of attention which will be entailed in following sections.

5.2.1 Anxiety Sources

In this section, elaborated account of each research question with their relevant findings will be discussed. Attempt has been made to evaluate the outcomes of the current study with those available in the literature.

Regarding the first research question "What are the perceived sources of foreign language anxiety of Iranian English language learners?" let us provide a group of studies

in which the researchers examined the sources of foreign language anxiety and reflect on their results which are in line with the outcomes of this research.

A total number of fourteen affinities were suggested by the Iranian English language learners as the sources of foreign language anxiety some of which have been consistently mentioned in the literature such as motivation and interest factors, class arrangement, individual learning approach, and etc either as a separate category or a combination with other variables; whereas, there has been a limited number of research on other factors such as learning style, self-regulation, and situational differences.

5.2.1.1 Self-Regulation Affinity

Self-Regulation affinity is known as the first source of language anxiety. The notion of “Self” has been consistently discussed by scholars in the field of foreign language anxiety. In fact, “the aspects of self-perception were found to be predictors of foreign language anxiety” by Onwuegbuzie et al (1999) in which they included “students’ expectation of their overall achievement in foreign language courses, perceived self-worth, and perceived scholastic competence” as those major factors lack of which have been seen as major causes of nervousness. Cognitive interferences based on self-related cognitions such as learners’ self-perceptions, self-esteem, self-evaluation and was frequently reported as cognitive interferences for language learning (Krashen, 1985; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). In fact, “Self” has been mentioned as a key factors in studies related to foreign language anxiety (Horwitz et al, 1986., Tanveer 2007). The most striking observation to emerge from comparisons made with the findings of the current studies shows that Iranian students had taken the full responsibility of being anxious by themselves.

Also, another justification for high ranking Self-Regulation affinity that originated from the notion of “Self” is perfectionism. In fact, according to Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) learners’ sense of perfectionism is of great importance, if not achievable, strongly hinders the learning process and becomes problematic (Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002).

5.2.1.2 Genetic and Personal Characteristics

Genetic and personal Characteristics, also, is known as one of the very crucial sources of anxiety for the participants of this study. This affinity explored learners’ perception about the existence of some beliefs such as the high potential of some learners in learning a new language or the advantage of one gender in language learning over the other. In addition, while analyzing the comments, researcher observed that most learners intrinsically sense nervousness just because they lack adequate proficiency. Furthermore, it needs to be mention that a noticeable number of learners became anxious as soon as they thought they are not sure about the answer. And finally, some believed must have received acceptable background in English and this was a root of their negative sensation. As a result, the foundation of this affinity as one of the causes of language anxiety reminds us of the results of a group of study in which some students consider others better language learners (Horwitz 1988, Abu-Rabia,2004).

5.2.1.3 Teacher Characteristics

During the analysis of students’ comments, it appeared that teacher plays a very crucial role in intensifying or lowering the anxiety level of the students. The present findings seem to be consistent with those studies which found students’ nervousness can be provoked by the teacher’s behavior in the classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986; Brandl, 1987., Price, 1991; Young, 1990; Young, 1991).

5.2.1.4 Class Arrangement

The Class Arrangements proved to be the fifth predictor of learners' anxiety for Iranian English learners. This finding is in line with those studies in literature that suggest class procedures are sources of anxiety such as Young (1990). Among the factors that affect anxiety inside the classroom, the most common types of anxiety includes oral performance in front of the class (Daly, 1991 and Young, 1991). Krashen (1985a) refers to "club membership" as specific kinds of foreign language anxiety among affective factors where he declared it will decrease when learners can think of themselves as a member of the class community.

5.2.1.5 Social and Cultural Factor

Bailey et al (1999) argued that completion among students is a major cause of anxiety because they consistently compare themselves with others.

Krashen (1985a) believes that social element is a factor in increasing learners' anxiety and he states "people with low self-esteem worry about what their peers think. They are concerned with pleasing others". He believes this is an extreme case of anxiety. The participants in Price's (1991) study believed that their language skills, compared to others, is poor and they were not satisfied with their performance in the class.

5.2.1.6 Situational

Another situation anxiety-making factor involves situational anxiety specifically for visual learners when teacher works on some sort of audio materials in classroom. Palacios (1998) indicated that the situation inside the class what he refers to as "classroom atmosphere" can affect anxiety level. He examined the class climate with the anxiety level of the learners. The results showed that the structures which are followed in one specific situation in class can interfere with the anxiety level of the participants.

Situational differences are among the crucial anxiety making variables. In this regard Daly (1991) stated that students feel nervousness when they are in a new situation. Also, an extremely evaluating situation has been reported by him as a cause of anxiety regarding situational differences factor.

5.2.1.7 Achievement

In the area of research on the sources of foreign language anxiety, achievement is believed to be as one of the factors that consistently were examined. Onwuegbuzie et al (1999) asserted that “foreign language anxiety is a complex phenomenon that has been found to be a predictor of foreign language achievement” (p.219). Similarly, based on the result of the Abu-Rabia’s (2004) study, achievement is one of the strong predictor of foreign language anxiety.

5.2.1.8 Motivation and Interests

A close examination of the comments gives us a hint on how crucial Motivation and Interests are; therefore, lack of which counts as a major step down in one’s learning. Lens and DeCruyenaere (1991) believe that learners’ academic motivation is highly connected with the levels of anxiety. Several studies have revealed that it is not just motivation that acts on anxiety but this relation is bidirectional (Pappamihiel, 2002., Yan and Horwitz, 2008., Kim 2009).

5.2.1.9 Individual Learning Approach

There is limited research that varified accurate link between learning styles and foreign language anxiety. Young (1991) argues that learners’ personal and inter-personal characteristics contribute to anxieties. Distinct in type and nature is the manifest report by Bailey et al (1999) on twenty learning modalities the result of which showed that

responsibility and peer-orientation are the only two factors showing meaningful links to foreign language anxiety.

5.2.1.10 Influence of the First Language

Onwuegbuzie et al (1999) made an attempt to identify possible sources of foreign language anxiety. Interestingly, they came up with a group of seven factors among which lack of having a chance to be in an English speaking school as well as lack of having a chance to travel to English speaking countries was reported as serious causes of foreign language anxiety. Similarly, Young (1991) suggest that one of the solutions to cope with the levels of foreign language anxiety is to provide a chance a chance for learners to visit an English speaking country. In addition, Abu-Rabia (2004) believes that the high levels of anxiety negatively correlate with the language skills.

5.2.1.11 Assessment

As Young (1991) pointed out, language testing is one of the sources of foreign language anxiety. She believed that not only students are afraid of some sort of items, but they will also be anxious if the teachers change their approach. In other words, she meant if a teacher follows a different approach in teaching and testing, s/he will make students both frustrated and anxious.

5.2.1.12 Assignment load

The concept of anxiety in relation to cognitive interference which initiated by self-related thought (Schwarzer, 1986. In fact, according to Eysenck (1972), anxious students not only are concerned about their own reactions to an assignment, but also they are worried about the requirements of the task as well.

5.2.2 Newly Generated Affinities

During the research progress, five more affinities (Situational Differences, Contextual Differences, Self-Regulation, Assessment, and Assignment load) were added to the original 11 affinities which is a clear indication of the fact that two groups (Iranian and Chinese) differ even by nature of the factors that might be the sources of their concerns. Further attention reveals that a mixture of internal and external factors were among the newly-generated affinities not mentioned by the Chinese participants of the Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study two of which refer to heterogeneous and multicultural EMU context in contrast to Chinese-only population of learners.

5.2.3 Prioritization of the Anxiety Sources

Regarding the second and third research question "What other anxiety provoking themes could possibly be discovered in addition to those in Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study?" and "What affinities do Iranian English language learners prioritizes compared to learners in Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study? to some extent, a rather contradictory result has been observed. A comparative glance at what Yan and Horwitz (2008) found shows that unlike Chinese learners whose major source of anxiety was lack of motivation, or comparison with peers as well as the individual learning approach, Iranian students tend to be looking at self-regulatory issue as a major concern in their foreign language learning; hence, a comprehensive English language teaching method has to deal with both personal characteristics and self-regulatory concerns in order to reduce anxiety level on the part of the learners.

5.2.4 Level-based Anxiety Perceptions

Regarding the fourth research question “How do high and low anxious Iranian English language learners perceive foreign language learning anxiety?” the study showed that the majority of the cases (304 out of 387) were suggested by high anxious participants. The results also indicate that 78.55 percent of the total reports belonged to high anxious participants and only 21.44 percent for the low anxious which shows that there is a relation between the results of quantitative with qualitative studies. Thus, not only discourse-based analysis of learners’ reports proposed by Yan and Horwitz (2008) works as reliable measuring device, but it also successfully managed to provide new domains of information pertaining sources of anxiety and the way they are perceived on the part of learners.

5.2.5 Gender-based Anxiety Perception

As regards research Question 5 “How do learners’ perceptions of language anxiety towards learning English differ with respect to gender?” potential connection were found between the results of the FLCAS and the comments uttered by the participants. The results showed that the amount of females’ comments (58.13%) were higher than males (41.86%). This describes that females are more willing to express their feelings. This indicates that females tend to be more expressive compared to males who proved harder to discover. It could be argued this inequality is culture-specific and might not be projected as a global finding. This is in line with the findings of the Abu-Rabia’s (2004) study who concluded that females were more likely to openly express their feelings of anxiety especially in a female dominated environment.

The fifth research question, also, takes the second approach to answer this question by providing other answers. It demonstrated various prioritizations of the sources of language anxiety among males and females. As regards to females' precedence in sources of foreign language anxiety, Self-Regulation, Teacher Characteristics, and Social and Cultural factors rank first respectively; whereas, for males the order is completely different with those of females. Male participants believed Anxieties, Genetic and Personal Characteristics, Self-Regulation, and Individual Learning Approach are the most anxiety producing variables.

This leaves a clear message to teachers: Iranian male learners might be equally concerned (FLCAS results) but not able to express themselves as females do. Therefore, effective techniques are supposed to be required to make male learners start sharing their feelings in order to be taken into use in syllabus modification and classroom activities.

All in all, the findings support the notion that as long as projecting the social status and learners' social face is concerned, it is the females who get more and more anxious; on the other hand, personal achievement along with career development tend to be something that males care most about.

5.2.6 Individual Perception of Anxiety

And finally, regarding the last research question, "How do participants' senses of anxiety differ in terms of their learning features?" it is worth mentioning that the most credible understanding of such versatility among a very small community can be the fact that anxiety as non-language and external factor is perceived as a *relative* term with unpredictable domain of possible meanings. When participants of such a small group do

not agree over such a so-called clear term we see how fragile these common terms might be.

As a result of intimate socialization with each participant, the researcher developed a character-specific familiarity with them based on ethnographic and personal features from the comments they provided under each affinity. This equipped her with the ability to distinguish between generic and specific experiences of anxiety feeling.

5.3 Conclusion

The present study was carried out to investigate the perceived sources of foreign language anxiety, for the purpose of cross-cultural validation with a group of Iranian English language learners who studying in Eastern Mediterranean University in Cyprus with their counterpart Chinese learners in the Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study through analyzing their self-expression reports. It was also decided to seek for further possible factors that could trigger senses of anxiety among learners as well as both genders' view in this regard.

Based on the results of the study, fourteen affinities were discovered as the major sources of foreign language anxiety including: Self-Regulation, Anxieties, Teacher characteristics, Genetic and Personal Characteristics, Class Arrangements, Social and cultural factors, Situational Differences, Achievement, Contextual Differences, Motivation and Interests, Individual Learning Approach, Influence of first Language, Assessment, and Assignment Load.

Among the fourteen affinities causes the foreign language anxiety, five was newly generated, including: Self-Regulation, Situational Differences, Contextual Differences, Assessment, and Assignment Load.

The fourth objective of the research was to study the sources of anxiety from the perspective of high and low anxious groups formed by the results of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The study revealed high anxious students (78.55%) express more than low anxious students (21.44%). Also, a great difference has been seen between high and low anxious language learners regarding the major sources of foreign language learning anxiety. High anxious participants believed Self-Regulation, Anxieties, Teacher characteristics, Genetic and Personal Characteristics affinity as the major sources of foreign language anxiety whereas low anxious participants considered Situational Differences affinity as the major sources of foreign language anxiety.

The fifth objective of this research was to investigate the differences between males and females perception towards foreign language anxiety. Two major differences were discovered. The first difference refers to the amount of expressed comments. The study revealed that females (58.13%) are more expressive than males (41.86%). The second difference refers to the way both gender perceive the major sources of foreign language anxiety. Female participants believed Self-Regulation, Teacher Characteristics, and Social and Cultural factors as the major causes of foreign language anxiety where as for male participants the sources are Anxieties, Genetic and Personal Characteristics, and Achievement.

5.4 Teaching Implications

First and for most, the research implicates that Foreign Language Anxiety, viewed from multiple windows, is above all a relative, elusive, and soft conception which needs to be dealt with ultimate consideration regarding the way it gets defined, operationalized, and investigated in the field. Hence, TESOL scholars have a long way to reach at a comprehensive model taking into account anxiety as not as an independent but integrative variable.

The results of the study revealed the fact that the factors that contribute to foreign language anxiety are different not only regarding students' perceptions from different nationalities but also among individual second/foreign language learners.

Moreover, regarding the diversity of learners' points of view towards the sources of language anxiety, instructors are further encouraged to base their methods on locally informed decisions through administering questionnaire and self-report of their students.

The findings of the study suggests that a mixture of both narrative and interpretive reports from the students can raise teachers' awareness on what strategies they select in order to maintain ongoing reflection.

Finally, this study could be wound up by warning teachers about the possible contradiction between the factors they assumed as the sources of anxiety and the perception of the learners. Hence, the research calls for incorporating a rather

comprehensive approach including both learners' perception and their views in order to be able to come up with a working method on instruction.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

While conducting the research, a number of limitations were encountered that are listed below:

- Since learners' comments are analyzed based on coding systems, interpreting the verbal data is subject to bias.
- Despite the researcher's attempt to avoid rating fluctuations through frequent revisions, the presence of more raters would possibly enhance the reliability of the findings.
- It has to be mentioned that only those experiences of anxiety which were explicitly mentioned in comments were counted in the affinities. The researcher did not leave any room for implicit and indirect interpretation.
- Also, highly frequent reference of one participant to a certain affinity might be the source of some biased judgments in case we only rely on quantitative information.
- Although participants were encouraged to provide the answers with optimal commitment in friendly and stress-free contexts, it could not be guaranteed all participants wrote as dutifully as they were expected.
- In some cases participants were not able to express their true feelings (even in their mother tongue) which might have possibly affected the results of the study. But, since it could be linked to participants' personal characteristics, no remedial procedure was established to compensate this variability.

5.6 Recommendation for Further Research

The critical and qualitative nature of the study along with numerous entailments of discussion and results has created promising grounds that could spark future explorations some of which are as follows:

1) The most relevant question directly raised from the current study would be conducting a research to look for the possible relationship among affinity variables. The answer to this question would enable the field scholars to conceptualize a model which could lead to a better understanding of the nature of anxiety and its relationship as a whole with second language achievement.

2) A great majority of the sources of learners' concern come from their inherent beliefs about learning process which, if modified and reoriented in a useful manner, could assist them to cope with anxiety problems much more efficiently. Therefore, using Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), one can start from the findings of this study to investigate how learners' belief could eliminate anxiety.

3) In Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study, the prioritization of Chinese language learners on the sources of anxiety revealed totally different results compared to those of Iranian group. As a result, a further investigation could search whether the preference of the sources of language anxiety from the learners' point of view is regionally distinctive or not? Challenging the findings might be achieved if this study could be conducted using various sample groups.

4) A great suggestion for further research would be a similar study carry out in various context for the purpose of cross-cultural validation to discover the levels of similarity between other English language learners in various context.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Background Questionnaire

My Dear Friends,

The following questionnaire is my master degree thesis that investigates the opinion of Iranian students about English language learning process. If you are willing to participate, please fill the sections in below:

- 1) Age
- 2) Gender
- 3) You class in Preparatory School
- 4) When did you start learning English?
- 5) Do you know any languages other than Persian and English? Yes No

If your answer is positive,

- a) Which language(s)?
- b) How long did you study them?
- c) When did you start studying them?
- 6) Have you ever traveled to an English speaking country? Yes No

If your answer is positive,

- a) Which country or countries?
- b) How long did you stay there?
- 7) Please write your phone number

Appendix B: Persian Version of the Background Questionnaire

پرسشنامه پس زمینه

دوستان عزیزم،

پرسشنامه ی زیر بخشی از پایان نامه ی فوق لیسانس من است که نظر دانشجویان ایرانی در مورد فرایند یادگیری زبان انگلیسی مورد بررسی قرار می دهد. اگر مایل به شرکت در این تحقیق هستید، قسمت زیر را پر کنید.

پیش زمینه،

(۱) سن -----

(۲) جنسیت مؤنث مذکر

(۳) در کدام مقطع کلاسهای زبان هستید؟ -----

(۴) از چه سنی شروع به یادگیری زبان انگلیسی کردید؟ -----

(۵) آیا بجز زبان فارسی و انگلیسی زبان دیگری می دانید؟

در صورتی که جواب شما مثبت است:

الف) چه زبان و یا زبان هایی؟ -----

ب) چه مدت زمان آنها را مطالعه کرده اید؟ -----

پ) از چند سالگی مطالعه ی آنها را شروع کردید؟ -----

۶) آیا تا به حال به یک کشور انگلیسی زبان مسافرت کرده اید؟ خیر بله

در صورتی که جواب شما مثبت است :

کدام کشور و یا کشورها؟ -----

برای چه مدت آنجا بودید؟ -----

۷) لطفا شماره ی تلفن خود را بنویسید : -----

Appendix C: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS),

Developed by Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B. and Cope (1986)

Directions: For each item, indicate whether you (1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neither agree nor disagree (Neutral) (4) agree or (5) strongly agree.

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

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

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

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

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

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.

- 1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.
- 1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree
12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
- 1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.
- 1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree
14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.
- 1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
- 1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree
16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.
- 1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree
17. I often feel like not going to my language class.
- 1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree
18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.
- 1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree
19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
- 1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.
- 1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree
21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.
- 1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.
- 1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

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

1) Strongly disagree 2) disagree 3) neutral 4) agree 5) strongly agree

Appendix D: Persian Version of the Foreign Language Classroom

Anxiety Scale

FLCAS ترجمه شده به زبان فارسی

برای هر مورد، نشان دهید آیا شما (۱) کاملاً مخالفید (۲) مخالفید (۳) نه موافق و نه مخالفید (۴) موافقید (۵) کاملاً موافقید

- ۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
- (۱) هنگامی که در کلاس زبان خارجه صحبت می‌کنم هرگز نسبت به خودم احساس اطمینان نمی‌کنم
- (۲) من در کلاس زبان نگران اشتباه کردن نیستم
- (۳) وقتی نام من در کلاس زبان خوانده می‌شود به خود می‌لرزم
- (۴) اینکه متوجه نمی‌شوم معلم در کلاس چه می‌گوید مرا می‌ترساند
- (۵) از اینکه در کلاس های زبان خارجه بیشتری شرکت کنم آزرده نمی‌شوم
- (۶) متوجه شدم که در طول کلاس زبان به مسائلی می‌اندیشم که هیچ ارتباطی به زبان ندارد
- (۷) من همیشه فکرمی‌کنم که بقیه شاگردها در یادگیری زبان بهتر از من هستند
- (۸) من معمولاً در زمان امتحان در کلاس زبان آرامش خاطر دارم
- (۹) زمانی که مجبور می‌شوم بدون آمادگی در کلاس زبان صحبت کنم احساس ترس می‌کنم
- (۱۰) من نگران پیامدهای ناشی از رد شدن در کلاس زبان هستم
- (۱۱) من متوجه نمی‌شوم چرا برخی افراد نگران کلاس زبان خارجه هستند؟
- (۱۲) در کلاس زبان چنان آشفته می‌شوم که تمام چیزهایی را که می‌دانم فراموش می‌کنم

- (۱۳) از اینکه در کلاس زبان داوطلبانه به سوالات پاسخ دهم خجالت میکشتم
- (۱۴) از صحبت کردن با افرادی که زبان مادریشان انگلیسی است هیجان زده نمی شوم
- (۱۵) زمانی که متوجه نمی شوم معلم در حال اصلاح چه چیزی است ناراحت می شوم
- (۱۶) حتی زمانی که کاملاً برای کلاس زبان آمادگی دارم احساس اضطراب می کنم
- (۱۷) بیشتر اوقات دوست ندارم به کلاس زبان بروم
- (۱۸) وقتی در کلاس زبان صحبت می کنم اعتماد به نفس دارم
- (۱۹) می ترسم از اینکه معلم همیشه آماده است تا هر اشتباهی را که مرتکب می شوم اصلاح کند
- (۲۰) وقتی قرار است اسمم در کلاس خوانده شود قلبم به شدت می تپد
- (۲۱) هرچه بیشتر برای امتحان زبان درس می خوانم بیشتر گیج می شوم
- (۲۲) برای اینکه خیلی خوب برای کلاس زبان آماده شوم احساس فشار نمی کنم
- (۲۳) همیشه احساس می کنم که شاگردهای دیگر کلاس بهتر از من انگلیسی صحبت می کنند
- (۲۴) از اینکه مقابل شاگرد های دیگر انگلیسی صحبت کنم خجالت می کشم
- (۲۵) سرعت کلاس زبان چنان زیاد است که می ترسم عقب بمانم
- (۲۶) من در کلاس زبان نسبت به سایر کلاسها احساس تنگی و نا آرامی بیشتری دارم
- (۲۷) وقتی در کلاس زبان صحبت میکنم گیج و آشفته می شوم
- (۲۸) هنگام رفتن سر کلاس زبان احساس اطمینان و آرامش می کنم
- (۲۹) مضطرب می شوم از اینکه تمام حرفهایی را که معلم می زند متوجه نمی شوم

۳۰) تعداد بالای قواعد مورد نیاز برای یادگیری زبان انگلیسی را دستبیاچه می کند

۳۱) میترسم که شاگرد های دیگر کلاس زبان وقتی انگلیسی صحبت می کنم به من بخندند

۳۲) من احتمالاً در کنار کسانی که زبان مادریشان انگلیسی است احساس راحتی می کنم

۳۳) وقتی که معلم زبان از من سوالاتی می پرسد که از پیش برای آنها آماده نبوده ام آشفته میشوم

Appendix E: Written Permission from the Dean of the Preparatory

School

April 3, 2012

Dear Assist Prof. Dr. Nilgun Hancioglu:

I am writing to request your permission to distribute the questionnaire among Iranian students at all proficiency levels in the Preparatory School Department for my master thesis. I propose to explore Iranian university students' perception of foreign language anxiety. Also, my research investigates the affiliations that Iranian learners prioritize compared to other studies.

This study will follow a mixed method approach in all steps. The subjects include 30 Iranian English language students at Eastern Mediterranean University. Random method of sampling will be used to specify the target population of the study. The sampling procedure does not limit itself to gender, age, and birth place.

On theoretical and practical levels, the following lines of research implications are assumed:

- a)** Any possible contribution to anxiety as being cause or effect for L2 achievement.
- b)** To figure out the context dependency of the anxiety elements and their potential to be generalized.

The following research questions might be developed based on Horwitz (2009) model:

- 1) Is there any similarity between Iranian learners' perception and Chinese L2 learners?
- 2) What affinities Iranian learners prioritize compared to other studies?
- 3) What new factors can be added to the existing model?
- 4) How anxiety of Iranian language learners is related to their achievement?

In conclusion, I would like to ask your permission to study some of the Preparatory School students for this research. I have enclosed a copy of questionnaire forms as well as my consent letter form for this research participation on the part of students. Should

you have any questions or concerns regarding this letter or my research, please contact me at my email address below.

You may also want to contact Assoc. Prof. Dr Naciye Kunt, my thesis advisor, at naciye.kunt@emu.edu.tr.

Sincerely yours,

Anna Hajizadeh

M.A candidate

Phone No. 05338863845

Email address:

Anna.4616@yahoo.com

Appendix F: Original Affinities Yan and Horwitz (2008)

The Interview Protocol Based on Affinities grounded by Yan, J. X., & Horwitz, E. K. (2008), taken from a published article “Learners’ Perceptions of How Anxiety Interacts With Personal and Instructional Factors to Influence Their Achievement in English: A Qualitative Analysis of EFL Learners in China”.

Interview protocol

A) GENETIC AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 1) Some students stay that one needs to have special talents in order to learn a foreign language, some think that gender can make a difference..... What personal characteristics do you think one needs to have in order to learn English well?
- 2) What they think that schools or individuals can do to make up for the lack of these characteristics?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

- 1) Is there anything about you that could make learning another language easier or more difficult?
- 2) What have you experienced in an English program that helps people of different personalities to learn what they need to learn?

B) SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ELEMENTS

- 1) How much do you think others people’s opinions could affect one in learning the language?
- 2) What, if any, is the parents’ role in learning language?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

- 1) Do you think peer pressure could affect you? How?
- 2) How would you rate your English compared with others?

C) MOTIVATION AND INTERESTS

- 1) How motivated does one need to be in order to learn the language well? What is your motivation in learning English?
- 2) English is required in your program. What part do you think “interest” plays in learning the language?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

- 1) How useful do you think English is in your life?
- 2) When did you start to feel interested in learning English?

D) INFLUENCE OF THE FIRST LANGUAGE (CHINESE)

- 1) How do you feel one’s level of Chinese can help or interfere with English learning?
- 2) How similar do you think Chinese and English are?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

- 1) What are some of the errors you or others make because of the influence of Chinese?
- 2) Some people say that because their Chinese is very good, they can't tolerate the fact that their English is not as satisfactory, and therefore they decide to give up. What do you think about this?

E) CLASS ARRANGEMENTS

1) If you were an English teacher, how would you change the way English is taught in class?

2) How much pressure do you feel concerning your English classes?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

1) What is the format of your English classes?

2) What are the things you like most about your English classes? What are those you dislike most?

F) REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

1) How (and how much) do you think one's dialect could affect his/her English?

2) Which regions produce better language learners?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

1) What is your dialect? How does it affect your foreign language learning?

2) Where are you from? How well do you think people from your area can learn the language?

G) TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

1) How are your western English teachers compared with your Chinese English teachers?

2) What influences have you received from your teachers in learning English?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

1) What kind of English do you like most?

2) Which teacher do you think has influenced you most? In what way?

H) TEST TYPES

- 1) What is the focus of English tests in your program?
- 2) How does the focus of English tests affect your focus of learning?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

- 1) What kind of tests do you have in your class is? What other kinds of tests have you taken or prepared to take outside class?
- 2) How do you prepare for these tests? How important do you think your preparation for the tests is to your day-to-day learning?

L) ANXIETIES

- 1) Some students report that they experience anxiety in learning English. What do you think makes people feel anxious about a process?
- 2) How does anxiety affect one's language learning?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

- 1) When do you feel anxious about learning the language?
- 2) What do you think should be changed in the program that could reduce people's anxiety in language learning?
- 3) If a student were nervous about learning English, what kind of advice you would give him/her?

J) INDIVIDUAL LEARNING APPROACHES

- 1) What method(s) do you think is/are most effective in learning English?
- 2) What other learning activities are you involved in besides your English classes in the program?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

- 1) How do you learn vocabulary? How do you practice listening, speaking, reading and writing?
- 2) How effective is your own learning method compared to the ones teachers suggest?

K) ACHIEVEMENT

- 1) What do you think makes some people better in learning English than others?
- 2) What are the chances of you not achieving much in the English?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

- 1) How do you to study better in the future?
- 2) What measures would you use to define “achievement” in English?

Appendix G: Final version of the revised affinities taken from Yan and Horwitz (2008)

Interview protocol

A) Genetic and personal characteristics

1) Some of the students state that one needs to have special talents in order to learn a foreign language. Some think that gender can make a difference..... What personal characteristics do you think one needs to have in order to learn English well?

2) What do you think that schools or individuals can do to make up for the lack of these characteristics?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

1) Is there anything about you that could make learning another language easier or more difficult?

2) What have you experienced in an English program that helps people of different personalities to learn what they need to learn?

B) Social and cultural elements

1) How much do you think others people's opinions could affect one in learning the language?

Have you ever experienced someone making any comments about your language learning? How did you feel?

2) What, if any, is the parents' role in learning language?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

- 1) Do you think peer pressure could affect you? How?
- 2) How would you rate your English compared with others?

C) Motivation and interests

- 1) How motivated does one need to be in order to learn the language well? What is your motivation in learning English?
- 2) English is required in your program. What part do you think “interest” plays in learning the language?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

- 1) How useful do you think English is in your life?
- 2) When did you start to feel interested in learning English?

D) Influence of First Language (PERSIAN)

- 1) How do you feel one’s level of Persian can help or interfere with English learning?
- 2) How similar do you think Persian and English are?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

- 1) What are some of the errors you or others make because of the influence of Persian?
- 2) Some people say that because their Persian is very good, they can't tolerate the fact that their English is not as satisfactory, and therefore they decide to give up. What do you think about this?

E) Class Arrangements

1) If you were an English teacher, how would you change the way English is taught in class?

2) How much pressure do you feel concerning your English classes?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

1) What is the format of your English classes?

2) What are the things you like most about your English classes? What are those you dislike most?

F) Situational Differences

1) What are the differences between learning English in Iran and Cyprus?

2) What are the similarities between English in Iran and in Cyprus?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

1) What are the learning situations in Iran and Cyprus that bothers you?

2) Do you think the lifestyle in Iran and Cyprus has different effects on your learning English?

G) Contextual Differences

1) How would you see learning English in the preparatory school?

2) How do you feel about learning English in the preparatory school?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

1) Do you have any problem in adapting yourself with learning and teaching in preparatory school?

2) Do you think other people in preparatory school learn English in a different way?

H) Teacher Characteristics

1) How do you compare your Cyprus teachers either native or non-native with your Persian teachers?

2) What influences have you received from your Cypriot teachers in learning English?
What influences have you received from your Iranian teachers in learning English?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

1) What kind of English do you like most?

2) Which teacher do you think has influenced you most? In what way?

I) Anxieties

1) Some students report that they experience anxiety in learning English. What do you think makes people feel anxious about a process?

2) How does anxiety affect one's language learning?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

1) When do you feel anxious about learning the language?

2) What do you think should be changed in the program that could reduce people's anxiety in language learning?

3) If a student were nervous about learning English, what kind of advice you would give him/her?

4) Have you ever experienced being anxious in the class? Tell me about that moment.

K) Individual Learning Approaches

- 1) What method(s) do you think is/are most effective in learning English? Provide some examples.
- 2) What other learning activities are you involved in besides your English classes in the program?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

- 1) How do you learn vocabulary? How do you practice listening, speaking, reading and writing?
- 2) How effective is your own learning method compared to the ones teachers suggest?

L) Achievement

- 1) What do you think makes some people better in learning English than others? Why?
- 2) What are the chances of you not achieving much in the English? Why?

Potential probes or alternatives forms if little or no response:

- 1) How do you to study better in the future?
- 2) What measures would you use to define “achievement” in English?

In your opinion, what is anxiety and nervousness in learning English and how does it initiated?

Appendix H: Persian Version of the Affinities Taken from Yan and

Horwiz's (2008) Study

پیوند هی ترجمه شده به زبان فارسی

الف) خصوصیات ذاتی و شخصی

۱) بعضی از دانش آموزان معتقدند که شخص برای یادگیری يك زبان خارجي نیاز به يك استعداد خاص دارد، برخی بر این باورند که جنسیت باعث ایجاد تفاوت می شود..... شما فکر می کنید که فرد برای بهتر یادگیری زبان انگلیسی به کدام خصوصیات شخصی نیاز دارد؟

۲) به نظر شما مدارس ویا افراد (مسئولین) چه کارهایی برای جبران کمبود این خصوصیت ها می توانند انجام دهند؟

در صورت عدم پاسخ یا پاسخ کوتاه توضیح شخصی خود را قید نمایید

۱) آیا شما دارای خصوصیتی هستید که یادگیری زبان دیگر را برایتان ساده تر یا دشوارتر کند؟

۲) شما در طول دوره یادگیری زبان چه چیزی را تجربه کرده اید که به افراد با خصوصیت های مختلف کمک می کند تا چیزی را که می خواهند، یاد بگیرند؟

ب) عوامل فرهنگی و اجتماعی

۱) به نظر شما تا چه حد عقاید افراد دیگر می تواند یادگیری يك شخص را تحت تاثیر قرار دهد؟

آیا به یاد می آورید که شخصی در مورد یادگیری زبان انگلیسی شما ابراز نظر کرده باشد؟ شما چه حسی پیدا کردید؟

۲) والدین در یادگیری زبان انگلیسی چه نقشی دارند؟ تا چه اندازه؟

در صورت عدم پاسخ یا پاسخ کوتاه توضیح شخصی خود را قید نمایید.

۱) فکر می کنید آیا فشار ناشی از رقابت بین هم کلاسی هایتان می تواند روی شما تاثیر داشته باشد؟ چگونه؟

۲) در مقایسه با دیگران، انگلیسی خود را چگونه ارزیابی می‌کنید؟

ج) انگیزه و علاقه

۱) چقدر باید فرد با انگیزه باشد تا بتواند زبان انگلیسی را به خوبی یاد بگیرد؟ انگیزه‌ی شما در یادگیری زبان انگلیسی چیست؟

۲) در رشته تحصیلی شما انگلیسی مورد نیاز است. به نظر شما علاقه چه نقشی در یادگیری زبان دارد؟

در صورت عدم پاسخ یا پاسخ کوتاه توضیح شخصی خود را قید نمایید.

۱) به نظر شما انگلیسی چقدر در زندگی شما مفید است؟

۲) چه زمان احساس کردید که به یادگیری زبان انگلیسی علاقه پیدا کرده‌اید؟

د) تاثیر زبان اول (فارسی)

۱) به نظر شما سطح دانش زبان مادری به یادگیری انگلیسی شما کمک می‌کند یا مانع از آن می‌شود؟

۲) به نظر شما فارسی و انگلیسی تا چه حد به هم شبیه هستند؟

در صورت عدم پاسخ یا پاسخ کوتاه توضیح شخصی خود را قید نمایید.

۱) چند نمونه اشتباهاتی که شما و یا افراد دیگر به خاطر تاثیر زبان فارسی مرتکب می‌شوید چیست؟

بعضی از افراد معتقدند که چون فارسی آنها بسیار خوب است پس آنها نمی‌حقیقت را تحمل کنند که انگلیسی ۲) توانند این

آنها به رضایت بخشی فارسیشان نیست بنابراین آنها تصمیم می‌گیرند که یاد گرفتن انگلیسی را رها کنند. نظر شما در این

مورد چیست؟

ه) ساختار کلاس

۱) اگر شما معلم انگلیسی بودید چگونه شیوه ای که انگلیسی تدریس می شود را تغییر می دادید؟

۲) تا چه اندازه در کلاس های انگلیسی احساس فشار می کنید؟

در صورت عدم پاسخ یا پاسخ کوتاه توضیح شخصی خود را قید نمایید.

۱) ساختار فیزیکی کلاس های انگلیسی شما چگونه است؟

۲) از چه چیزهایی در کلاس انگلیسی خود خیلی خوشتان می آید؟ و از چه چیزهای بدتان می آید؟

و) تفاوت در شرایط

۱) چه تفاوت هایی بین یادگیری زبان انگلیسی در ایران و قبرس وجود دارد؟

۲) چه شباهت هایی بین یادگیری زبان انگلیسی در ایران و قبرس وجود دارد؟

در صورت عدم پاسخ یا پاسخ کوتاه توضیح شخصی خود را قید نمایید.

۱) کدام شرایط یادگیری در ایران و قبرس برای شما آزار دهنده است؟

۲) فکر می کنید سبک زندگی در ایران و قبرس چه تفاوتی در یادگیری زبان انگلیسی شما دارد؟

ز) تفاوت های اقلیمی

۱) نظر شما در مورد یادگیری زبان انگلیسی در دانشکده آموزش زبان های خارجی قبرس چیست؟

۲) چه احساسی در مورد یادگیری زبان انگلیسی در دانشکده آموزش زبان های خارجی قبرس دارید؟

در صورت عدم پاسخ یا پاسخ کوتاه توضیح شخصی خود را قید نمایید.

آیا با مطابقت دادن خود با یادگیری شیوه ی تدریس زبان انگلیسی در دانشکده آموزش زبان های خارجه مشکلی د
(۱) ارید؟

(۲) آیا فکر می کنید شیوه ی یادگیری سایر دانشجویان در دانشکده آموزش زبان های خارجی با شما متفاوت است؟

ح) خصوصیات معلم

ارزیابی شما از مقایسه ی مدرسین انگلیسی زبان و غیر انگلیسی زبان در دانشکده آموزش زبان های
(۱) خارجی با مدرسین

ایران چیست؟

(۲) مدرسین قبرسی شما چه تاثیری بر یادگیری زبان انگلیسی داشتند؟

تاثیر مدرسین ایرانی شما بر یادگیری زبان انگلیسی شما چیست؟

در صورت عدم پاسخ یا پاسخ کوتاه توضیح شخصی خود را قید نمایید

(۱) کدام گویش یا لهجه انگلیسی را از همه بیشتر دوست دارید؟

(۲) فکر می کنید کدام معلم بیشترین تاثیر را روی شما گذاشته است؟ چگونه؟

ط) اضطراب

(۱) بعضی از دانش آموزان اعلام کرده اند که در یادگیری انگلیسی اضطراب دارند. به نظر شما چه عواملی
باعث می شود که فرد احساس اضطراب در مورد فرایند یاد گیری کند؟

(۲) چگونه اضطراب یادگیری فرد را تحت تاثیر قرار می دهد؟

در صورت عدم پاسخ یا پاسخ کوتاه توضیح شخصی خود را قید نمایید

(۱) چه زمانی هنگام یادگیری زبان احساس اضطراب می کنید؟

(۲) به نظر شما در یادگیری زبان چه چیزی باید تغییر کند تا باعث کم شدن اضطراب افراد شود؟

(۳) اگر دانش آموزی در مورد یادگیری زبان اضطراب داشته باشد چه توصیه هایی به او پیش نهاد می کنید؟

(۴) آیا شما تا به حال تجربه اضطراب در کلاس را داشته اید؟ آن لحظه را برای من تعریف کنید؟

ی) دیدگاه یادگیری شخصی

(۱) به نظر شما چه روش یا روشهایی برای یادگیری زبان از همه موثرتر هستند؟

(۲) در کنار کلاس های زبان در رشته تحصیلی خود چه فعالیتهای یادگیری دیگری انجام می دهید؟

در صورت عدم پاسخ یا پاسخ کوتاه توضیح شخصی خود را قید نمایید

(۱) شما چگونه لغت یاد می گیرید؟ چگونه مهارت های شنیداری گفتاری نوشتاری و خواندن را تمرین می کنید؟

(۲) تا چه حد روش یادگیری خودتان در مقایسه با روشی که معلم ها پیش نهاد می کنند موثر تر است؟

ک) پیشرفت

(۱) به نظر شما چه چیزی باعث می شود برخی افراد در یادگیری انگلیسی بهتر از افراد دیگر باشند؟ چرا؟

(۲) چند درصد احتمال می دهید که در انگلیسی پیشرفت نکنید؟ چرا؟

در صورت عدم پاسخ یا پاسخ کوتاه توضیح شخصی خود را قید نمایید

۱) چه برنامه‌ای در آینده برای بهتر مطالعه کردن انگلیسی دارید؟

۲) چه معیاری برای تعریف کردن پیشرفت در انگلیسی دارید؟

نظر شما در مورد اضطراب و تنش در یادگیری انگلیسی چیست؟ چگونه به وجود می‌آید؟

Appendix I: Distribution of the Anxiety Level of the Whole Group

| Participants | Gender | Anxiety Level | Anxiety Score |
|--------------|--------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | F | 1.36 | 45 |
| 2 | M | 1.39 | 46 |
| 3 | M | 1.69 | 56 |
| 4 | F | 1.72 | 57 |
| 5 | F | 1.78 | 59 |
| 6 | F | 1.84 | 61 |
| 7 | M | 1.87 | 62 |
| 8 | M | 1.93 | 64 |
| 9 | M | 2.03 | 67 |
| 10 | F | 2.06 | 68 |
| 11 | M | 2.09 | 69 |
| 12 | M | 2.12 | 73 |
| 13 | F | 2.18 | 72 |
| 14 | F | 2.18 | 72 |
| 15 | M | 2.24 | 74 |
| 16 | M | 2.24 | 74 |
| 17 | F | 2.27 | 75 |
| 18 | F | 2.30 | 76 |
| 19 | M | 2.33 | 77 |
| 20 | F | 2.36 | 78 |
| 21 | F | 2.36 | 78 |
| 22 | F | 2.36 | 78 |

| | | | |
|----|---|------|-----|
| 23 | M | 2.36 | 78 |
| 24 | M | 2.39 | 79 |
| 25 | M | 2.45 | 80 |
| 26 | M | 2.48 | 82 |
| 27 | M | 2.63 | 87 |
| 28 | M | 2.66 | 88 |
| 29 | M | 2.66 | 88 |
| 30 | M | 2.66 | 88 |
| 31 | F | 2.72 | 90 |
| 32 | F | 2.87 | 95 |
| 33 | M | 2.90 | 96 |
| 34 | M | 2.90 | 96 |
| 35 | F | 2.90 | 96 |
| 36 | F | 2.96 | 98 |
| 37 | F | 3.15 | 104 |
| 38 | M | 3.27 | 108 |

Appendix J: Prioritization of the Anxiety sources for Participant 1

| Participant 1 | Frequency | Total | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|------------|
| Genetic and Personal Characteristics | 16 | 33 | 25 |
| Anxieties | 9 | 42 | 14.06 |
| Achievement | 7 | 28 | 10.93 |
| Contextual Differences | 6 | 25 | 9.37 |
| Influence of the First Language | 5 | 17 | 7.81 |
| Self-Regulation | 4 | 44 | 6.25 |
| Class Arrangements | 4 | 31 | 6.25 |
| Social and Cultural | 4 | 30 | 6.25 |
| Teacher Characteristics | 3 | 39 | 4.68 |
| Motivation and Interests | 3 | 24 | 4.68 |
| Situational Differences | 2 | 30 | 3.12 |
| Individual Learning Approach | 1 | 23 | 1.56 |
| Assessment | 0 | 11 | 0 |
| Assignment Load | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| | Total: 64 | 100 | 100 |

Appendix K: Prioritization of the Anxiety sources for Participant 2

| Participant 2 | Frequency | Total | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|------------|
| Contextual Differences | 10 | 25 | 12.82 |
| Teacher Characteristics | 9 | 39 | 11.53 |
| Class Arrangements | 9 | 31 | 11.53 |
| Self-Regulation | 8 | 44 | 10.25 |
| Situational Differences | 8 | 30 | 10.25 |
| Motivation and Interests | 7 | 24 | 8.97 |
| Assessment | 7 | 11 | 8.97 |
| Achievement | 5 | 28 | 6.41 |
| Assignment Load | 4 | 10 | 5.12 |
| Anxieties | 3 | 42 | 3.84 |
| Genetic and Personal Characteristics | 3 | 33 | 3.84 |
| Individual Learning Approach | 2 | 23 | 2.56 |
| Influence of the First Language | 2 | 17 | 2.56 |
| Social and Cultural | 1 | 30 | 1.28 |
| | Total: 78 | 100 | 100 |

Appendix L: Prioritization of the Anxiety sources for Participant 3

| Participant 3 | Frequency | Total | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------|------------|
| Self-Regulation | 22 | 44 | 20.37 |
| Social and Cultural | 14 | 30 | 12.96 |
| Teacher Characteristics | 13 | 39 | 12.03 |
| Anxieties | 12 | 42 | 11.11 |
| Class Arrangements | 8 | 31 | 7.40 |
| Genetic and Personal Characteristics | 7 | 33 | 6.48 |
| Individual Learning Approach | 7 | 23 | 6.48 |
| Achievement | 5 | 28 | 4.62 |
| Influence of the First Language | 5 | 17 | 4.62 |
| Situational Differences | 4 | 30 | 3.70 |
| Motivation and Interests | 4 | 24 | 3.70 |
| Assignment Load | 3 | 10 | 2.77 |
| Contextual Differences | 2 | 25 | 1.85 |
| Assessment | 2 | 11 | 1.85 |
| | Total: 108 | 100 | 100 |

Appendix M: Prioritization of the Anxiety sources for Participant 4

| Participant 4 | Frequency | Total | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|------------|
| Anxieties | 9 | 42 | 16.66 |
| Class Arrangements | 7 | 31 | 12.96 |
| Individual Learning Approach | 7 | 23 | 12.96 |
| Teacher Characteristics | 5 | 39 | 9.25 |
| Situational Differences | 5 | 30 | 9.25 |
| Self-Regulation | 4 | 44 | 7.40 |
| Social and Cultural | 4 | 30 | 7.40 |
| Achievement | 4 | 28 | 7.40 |
| Motivation and Interests | 3 | 24 | 5.55 |
| Influence of the First Language | 3 | 17 | 5.55 |
| Contextual Differences | 2 | 25 | 3.70 |
| Assessment | 1 | 11 | 1.85 |
| Genetic and Personal Characteristics | 0 | 33 | 0 |
| Assignment Load | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| | Total: 54 | 100 | 100 |

Appendix N: Prioritization of the Anxiety sources for Participant 5

| Participant 5 | Frequency | Total | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|------------|
| Genetic and Personal Characteristics | 5 | 33 | 25 |
| Anxieties | 3 | 42 | 15 |
| Social and Cultural | 3 | 30 | 15 |
| Teacher Characteristics | 3 | 39 | 15 |
| Self-Regulation | 1 | 44 | 15 |
| Class Arrangements | 1 | 31 | 5 |
| Situational Differences | 1 | 30 | 5 |
| Individual Learning Approach | 1 | 23 | 5 |
| Influence of the First Language | 1 | 17 | 5 |
| Assessment | 1 | 11 | 5 |
| Achievement | 0 | 28 | 0 |
| Contextual Differences | 0 | 25 | 0 |
| Motivation and Interests | 0 | 24 | 0 |
| Assignment Load | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| | Total: 20 | 100 | 100 |

Appendix O: Prioritization of the Anxiety sources for Participant 6

| Participant 6 | Frequency | Total | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|------------|
| Anxieties | 4 | 42 | 14.28 |
| Situational Differences | 4 | 30 | 14.28 |
| Motivation and Interests | 4 | 24 | 14.28 |
| Individual Learning Approach | 4 | 23 | 14.28 |
| Teacher Characteristics | 3 | 39 | 10.71 |
| Genetic and Personal Characteristics | 2 | 33 | 7.14 |
| Assignment Load | 2 | 10 | 7.14 |
| Self-Regulation | 1 | 44 | 3.57 |
| Class Arrangements | 1 | 31 | 3.57 |
| Achievement | 1 | 28 | 3.57 |
| Contextual Differences | 1 | 25 | 3.57 |
| Influence of the First Language | 1 | 17 | 3.57 |
| Assessment | 0 | 11 | 0 |
| Social and Cultural | 0 | 30 | 0 |
| | Total: 28 | 100 | 100 |

Appendix P: Prioritization of the Anxiety sources for Participant 7

| Participant 7 | Frequency | Total | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|------------|
| Self-Regulation | 4 | 44 | 33.33 |
| Achievement | 2 | 28 | 16.66 |
| Motivation and Interests | 2 | 24 | 16.66 |
| Anxieties | 1 | 42 | 8.33 |
| Teacher Characteristics | 1 | 39 | 8.33 |
| Situational Differences | 1 | 30 | 8.33 |
| Individual Learning Approach | 1 | 23 | 8.33 |
| Genetic and Personal Characteristics | 0 | 33 | 0 |
| Class Arrangements | 0 | 31 | 0 |
| Social and Cultural | 0 | 30 | 0 |
| Contextual Differences | 0 | 25 | 0 |
| Influence of the First Language | 0 | 17 | 0 |
| Assessment | 0 | 11 | 0 |
| Assignment Load | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| | Total: 12 | 100 | 100 |

Appendix Q: Prioritization of the Anxiety sources for Participant 8

| Participant 8 | Frequency | Total | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|------------|
| Situational Differences | 5 | 30 | 21.73 |
| Social and Cultural | 4 | 30 | 17.39 |
| Achievement | 4 | 28 | 17.39 |
| Contextual Differences | 4 | 25 | 17.39 |
| Teacher Characteristics | 2 | 39 | 8.69 |
| Anxieties | 1 | 42 | 4.34 |
| Class Arrangements | 1 | 31 | 4.34 |
| Motivation and Interests | 1 | 24 | 4.34 |
| Assignment Load | 1 | 10 | 4.34 |
| Self-Regulation | 0 | 44 | 0 |
| Genetic and Personal Characteristics | 0 | 33 | 0 |
| Individual Learning Approach | 0 | 23 | 0 |
| Influence of the First Language | 0 | 17 | 0 |
| Assessment | 0 | 11 | 0 |
| | Total: 64 | 100 | 100 |