EXPLORING FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY ON BEGINNER AND FALSE BEGINNER LEARNERS' SPEAKING SKILLS

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) on the speaking performance of French language beginners and learners, a critical yet underexplored area in language acquisition research. In particular, the interplay of gender and prior knowledge of other foreign languages in the expression of anxiety is investigated, with a focus on understanding how these factors influence learners' confidence and speaking performance. By identifying the key factors that contribute to FLA, the research aims to develop strategies that educators can use to alleviate anxiety and improve learners' linguistic and academic outcomes.

A quantitative study design was employed using a structured questionnaire based on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) modified to assess speaking performance anxiety. Data were collected from a representative sample of French language learners and analysed using bivariate statistical analysis to examine the interrelations among FLA, gender, and prior experience with other foreign languages.

Preliminary results show that prior experience in acquiring other foreign languages is a significant factor in reducing learners' anxiety, with those having such experience reporting lower levels of speaking anxiety. However, no statistically significant differences were found between male and female learners. The findings also report the main characteristics of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) that hinder speaking performance, including fear of making mistakes and difficulty maintaining fluency in oral activities.

The study provides valuable insights into the psychological challenges faced by language learners and emphasises the need for targeted interventions to alleviate FLA. Recommendations include creating a supportive classroom environment, using customised teaching methods, and implementing confidence-building measures to promote better speaking performance. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of FLA and its role in language learning, ultimately aiming to improve learners' confidence, participation, and academic success.

Keywords: FLA, FLCAS, foreign language anxiety, language learners, speaking proficiency

1. INTRODUCTION

In the field of language acquisition, the condition of foreign language anxiety (FLA) represents one of the major obstacles, especially for beginners and false beginners. This preliminary research aims to clarify the complex phenomenon of FLA and its noted influence on speaking skills, which are frequently the most susceptible to anxiety-induced disruptions. Learning a second language is a challenging task, as the learner faces the difficulties with pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical rules typically in contexts marked by increased self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation. Furthermore, varying levels of familiarity and previous exposure to language among lower-level language learners (i.e., beginners and false beginners) may contribute to these anxieties and result in differences in their speaking abilities. Thus, an understanding of FLA is vital for both educators and learners to develop successful strategies that foster a more comfortable learning environment, one that promotes speaking confidence and proficiency.

Additionally, other factors related to the language learning context play a role in the process of FLA, such as situational variables (including task difficulty, classroom management, and type of language assessment), which can modulate students' emotional reactions both positively and negatively. Expressing coherent and expressive thoughts in a foreign language can be challenging for students, and these demands can lead to feelings of incompetence, which in turn can increase their level of anxiety. As previously noted, learning to manage emotional reactions is a significant obstacle that learners must overcome in the process of learning a new language. The identification and correction of FLA is increasingly important for teachers, as it has the potential to affect the success of individual students and the classroom dynamic. Well-handled anxiety using supportive pedagogical strategies can prevent some of the negative consequences, contributing to a more favourable language learning environment and consequently enhancing both the affective and academic achievements of learners.

By identifying the key factors that contribute to FLA, this paper aims to develop strategies that educators can use to alleviate anxiety and improve learners' linguistic and academic outcomes.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Conceptual definition of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)

Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) refers to emotional discomfort or anxiety learners experience while using or learning a foreign language. First conceptualized by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), FLA is now widely recognised as a situation-specific form

of anxiety, distinct from general anxiety, and one that affects learners' performance in every aspect of language learning, especially speaking.

Although the concept of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) was initially introduced in 1974 (Horwitz, 2010), ongoing research and publications on the subject have led to a growing number of similar literature reports each year. A review of the early literature reveals that much of it was predominantly authored by individuals who have themselves learned foreign languages or by educators, primarily linguists, along with some psychologists and pedagogues.

FLA has been identified as a notable barrier to effective communication and language acquisition, particularly when it involves speaking activities. Anxiety remains a key hurdle in learning a second language, especially in more traditional, instruction-based environments (Fattahi Marnani & Cuocci, 2022). Foreign language anxiety has been recognized as a problem that significantly impedes second language learning for learners. Understanding different dimensions of foreign language anxiety and its impact on the learning process helps educators adopt tailored approaches to equip learners with techniques that will help reduce anxiety levels (Fattahi Marnani & Cuocci, 2022). Furthermore, Liang et al. (2024) discuss in their article how personal sensitivity can vary in the way that some individuals may be more anxious than others in more stimulus-rich environments, while others are more relaxed and less anxious in a broad range of social situations.

Fredrickson (2005) defined anxiety as a negative emotional state characterised by mental discomfort stemming from fear of potential danger or misfortune, highlighting it as one of the main challenges learners must confront during language classes. Research indicates that FLA is multifaceted, encompassing components such as test anxiety and apprehension regarding negative evaluation, which can significantly affect learners' confidence and willingness to engage in speaking tasks. Negative and positive impacts of anxiety on the learning process were still an actual topic eleven years later when Aguila and Harjanto (2016) in their research explored and concluded that anxiety can decrease the effectiveness of a student's ability to learn by disturbing them intellectually and psychologically. Furthermore, they revealed that anxiety can serve as a stimulus factor because of the experienced pressure. In this study, the aim was to find out the cause of students' foreign language anxiety and how it influences their ability to speak. Class observations were conducted to assess the learners' oral proficiency, and the FLCAS questionnaire and interviews were used. An assessment was made that the learners achieved a moderate to high level of anxiety, and there was an inverse correlation between the anxiety level and the scores in speaking. Key causes of student anxiety were established, and it was found that anxiety has the most negative effect on the ability of the student to communicate and interact (Aguila & Harjanto, 2016).

Foreign Language Anxiety has increasingly captured attention from both the public and researchers in the field of second language acquisition, especially among novice learners. It is viewed as a distinct emotional experience marked by feelings of anxiety, nervousness, and worry associated with learning a foreign language (Zybert, 2018). Learners often encounter specific tasks that provoke anxious responses—particularly when required to communicate in their second language—which can escalate into emotional distress due to fears of making mistakes in front of teachers and peers. This emotional dynamic is crucial given its implications for the success of second language acquisition (Dieguez Bergara, 2018). Research has shown that low levels of anxiety can serve as motivational drivers that enhance student performance and involvement. However, high levels of anxiety can severely hinder language acquisition by leading to avoidance behaviours and reduced classroom participation.

In the study conducted by Trang Tran and Karen Moni (2015) regarding EFL students' and teachers' experiences with managing FLA, there is an extensive review of existing literature on FLA that not only outlines the origins of research of foreign language anxiety across various skills but also examines its effects within different cultural contexts. Additionally, Tran and Moni (2015) point out that much research on anxiety provides educational insights into individual coping strategies rather than focusing on how students and teachers jointly navigate these challenges (Tran & Moni, 2015).

Most scholars agree that learners encounter anxiety throughout the process of acquiring a foreign language (Alrabai, 2014). Consequently, FLA has attracted considerable academic interest, due to its impact on students' speaking abilities. Marwan's research (2008) indicates that contemporary students often feel high level of discomfort while identifying direct contributing factors such as low self-confidence and insufficient preparation. He also observes notable gender differences over time related to anxiety levels. Moreover, he identifies varying challenges associated with different proficiency levels among learners of English overall. Recognizing the complexities of FLA is essential for gaining a deeper understanding of its impact on linguistic competencies.

2.2. The components of FLA

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), FLA consists of three primary dimensions: fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and communication apprehension. These components directly influence learners' participation in classroom activities and their willingness to speak. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was developed to validly measure these dimensions. In their framework, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) recognised the distinct nature of foreign language anxiety (FLA) and developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to assess anxiety levels. This assessment is based on indicators such as negative expectations

regarding performance, social comparisons, psychophysiological symptoms, and avoidance behaviours. The FLCAS comprises 33 statements that exhibit significant correlations between individual items and the overall scale. However, four aspects of Horwitz et al.'s (1986) theory have faced scrutiny: 1. the directionality of the causal link between FLA and challenges in language acquisition; 2. the significance attributed to FLA; 3. the various components encompassed by FLA; and 4. the credibility of the FLCAS itself.

Dewaele et al. (2008) further advanced this discussion in the context of adult multilinguals by emphasising the role of trait emotional intelligence in mitigating communicative anxiety. Their development of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) signifies an increasing awareness of how Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) affects language learning beyond traditional classroom settings. This shift highlights the necessity of considering individual differences pertaining to emotional dynamics across diverse learning scenarios.

In another research, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) examined the relationship between FLA levels and class attendance among immigrants. They found that individuals who require less exposure to learn the host community's language exhibit lower levels of FLA, provided they have prior experience in interacting with that community. Their findings emphasise the significant role of FLA as an obstacle to language learning, as it affects cognitive processes essential for acquiring new languages, reinforcing the need for teaching strategies that effectively address these emotional barriers. In their subsequent work, Dewaele and Dewaele (2017) adopted a dynamic perspective on FLA by exploring how internal learner factors interact with teacher-related variables over time. This nuanced approach recognises the complexity of anxiety management, while advocating for viewing FLA not merely as a static condition but rather as an evolving process that influences both learner experiences and instructional practices.

2.3. Gender and prior language knowledge

In exploring various aspects of FLA, many studies show that female learners are more likely to experience increased language anxiety due to increased sensitivity to classroom interaction (Alrabai, 2014). However, others identify no gender difference (Dewaele et al., 2017). Within the study, gender differences are apparent concerning the degree of anxiety, with female participants reporting higher anxiety levels when speaking than their male counterparts. This aligns with previous research on gender differences in language learning, which points to both psychological and social factors as contributing to this disparity. Novikasari (2019), for example, demonstrated that FLA influences speech performance, revealing that anxiety may hinder student's participation during speech activities. Rather than being an inevitable component of foreign language learning, anxiety appears to be a significant barrier to learning

that can lead to poorer performance and reluctance to engage in speaking activities. This issue is particularly relevant in the Indonesian education system, where gender differences in speech performance are pronounced. It is therefore necessary that teachers consider these factors when designing teaching strategies. Understanding the causes of students' anxiety may enable the development of more effective teaching strategies that cater to different learner profiles. Finally, Almotiary (2022) conducts an assessment focused on the challenges faced by Saudi female university students, concluding that test-related anxiety and communication apprehension significantly contribute to FLA. This study highlights the cultural aspects of anxiety and their potential effects on language learners in different contexts.

On the other hand, one variable that has been shown to help reduce anxiety levels in foreign language learning is prior foreign language experience. Novikasari's research (2019) also finds that prior exposure to learning other foreign languages can lower anxiety levels. This implies that students who are already familiar with other languages may develop coping strategies or self-efficacy, enabling them to mitigate their anxious reactions to new languages.

3. THE AIM AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Although a growing body of research has investigated FLA, few studies have examined how it affects beginner-level learners of French, particularly regarding speaking anxiety and individual learner differences such as gender and language background. This study aims to address this gap by examining the impact of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) on the speaking abilities of beginner learners of French, a significant yet relatively under-explored area in language acquisition research. A key focus will be on how gender and previous experience with other foreign languages influence reported anxiety levels, as well as how these factors affect learners' confidence and speaking performance. By pinpointing the most critical elements contributing to FLA, this study aims to develop strategies that instructors can implement to reduce anxiety and improve students' linguistic and academic outcomes. The exploration of FLA among beginners and false beginners, especially regarding their speaking proficiency, has received considerable attention in academic literature. For example, Dewaele (2017) identifies psychological and sociodemographic factors affecting language anxiety, asserting that improvement in language skills does not necessarily reduce such anxiety. He draws attention to personal variables such as age, academic performance, and social connections, arguing that anxiety can be transferred among peers, and thus influences second language production. This is followed by a discussion on the essential role of social interactions in the process of language learning process. Abrar's research (2017) specifically examines the relationship between FLA and speaking skills among Indonesian EFL university students, further

supporting the idea that heightened anxiety correlates with diminished performance. This study contributes to ongoing discussions by emphasising speaking as a crucial language skill and shedding light on the specific challenges posed by anxiety in this domain.

The direct connection between anxiety and speaking performance was explored by Ibarra Martínez (2019) among Spanish adult learners. This research highlights the diverse learner experiences, while also noting that suitable methods for various contexts have yet to be proposed. Lastly, Yu (2024) reviews the historical context of FLA research, underscoring its importance in understanding the emotional challenges faced by language enthusiasts. His analysis indicates a growing maturity within this field, with new insights into how anxiety may relate to various language skills over time. Collectively, these studies emphasise a strong link between foreign language anxiety and learners' speaking capabilities, emphasising the necessity for ongoing interventions in the language acquisition processes.

Oral production of the foreign language(s) is often the situation in which students feel the highest levels of anxiety. In this context, Beltrán (2013) analysed the effects of anxiety on the oral communication of learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). Using qualitative research involving three students from a public university in Colombia, the study provides a detailed insight into how anxiety manifests in the classroom. Beltrán's research emphasises that anxiety considerably affects learners' self-image and confidence in their oral communication skills. This observation aligns with the idea that gender differences may influence levels of anxiety, as it examines diverse student experiences suggesting that male and female learners may react differently to anxiety-inducing situations. Although the article does not explicitly categorise students based on gender explicitly, it implies varying experiences which highlight the necessity for a deeper understanding of how these dynamics might affect anxiety levels in language learning settings. Additionally, the article identifies several negative emotional factors contributing to increased anxiety among EFL learners. These include unfavourable attitudes toward learning new languages, lack of motivation, and negative influences from educators. Such findings support the notion that prior knowledge and experience can alleviate anxiety; learners familiar with foreign languages may have developed strategies to manage speaking tasks more successfully. The study indicates that students' anxiety is not merely an individual issue but is significantly influenced by their educational environment and interpersonal relationships within the classroom. Beltrán's findings also categorise common types of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), such as fear of making errors and difficulties in maintaining fluency during speaking activities. Recognising these triggers is essential for educators who aim to create supportive learning environments that enhance student confidence and minimise anxiety.

In an effort to identify effective ways to reduce anxiety associated with speaking a foreign language, this study aims to examine the following correlations based on the following research questions:

(1) What is the impact of gender on foreign language speaking anxiety?

(2) Does knowledge of other foreign languages influence the level of anxiety experienced when speaking a foreign language?

(3) Does knowledge of other foreign languages influence the anxiety of speaking a foreign language?

4. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between foreign language anxiety and two variables: gender and prior knowledge of other foreign languages. The research was carried out from May 2024 to June 2024, involving 90 undergraduate students enrolled in a beginner-level French course at the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Opatija, Croatia. These students, aged between 19 and 22, were in their second or third year of study and were pursuing degrees in Business Economics, Tourism Management, or Hospitality Management. The French course was compulsory and lasted one semester, comprising 15 weekly 90-minute sessions. Class sizes ranged from 15 to 30 students and included both male and female participants.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via the Moodle platform (Merlin), which students regularly use to access course materials. The instrument used was a modified version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) adapted from the original developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). It consisted of 23 items rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5 (*1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree*). In addition to the original FCLAS items, the questionnaire also included both the original FLCAS items and additional questions designed by Ran et al. (2022) to assess participants' prior knowledge of other foreign languages, as well as basic demographic information. The responses were collected anonymously to ensure confidentiality. Data were analysed using SPSS version 23. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequencies, were calculated. To examine the relationship between foreign language anxiety and the variables of gender and prior language experience, bivariate statistical methods were applied. These included Pearson's correlation for continuous variables and the t-test or Spearman's rho, as appropriate, for group comparisons.

The online questionnaire created using Google Forms was sent to the students via the online platform Moodle (Merlin), through which the students have online access to their courses. Responses were collected anonymously to protect participants'

privacy. Data were collected from a representative sample of French learners and analysed using bivariate statistical methods to investigate relationships between FLA, gender, and previous experience with other foreign languages.

To determine the extent and underlying causes of FLA experienced by false-beginners and beginners of the French language at the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Opatija, SPSS version 23 was used to obtain descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and ranks. The T-test was also utilised to ascertain whether there were significate differences in FLA between male and female participants. Descriptive information was obtained from the questionnaire (e.g., percentages, means, standard deviations, ranks, frequencies).

To examine the relationship between foreign language speaking anxiety and prior knowledge of other foreign languages, as both variables were treated as continuous and approximately normally distributed values, Person's correlation coefficient was applied. In contrast, Spearman's rank order correlation was used to assess the relationship between gender (a categorical variable) and speaking anxiety, as it is a non-parametric test suitable for ordinal or ranked data.

The hypotheses being examined are as follows:

H1: Learners who have previous experience in other foreign languages will exhibit significantly lower levels of anxiety when speaking a foreign language compared to those without such experience.

H2: There is a significant difference in the levels of foreign language speaking anxiety between male and female learners.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the influence of two factors—prior knowledge of other foreign languages and gender—on foreign language speaking anxiety among beginner French learners. Correlation analyses were conducted to assess the strength and significance of these relationships. Descriptive statistics for the key variables are presented in Table 1.

The study sample consisted of 90 undergraduate students enrolled in a beginner-level French language course. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 35 years, with the majority between 20 and 22 years old (61.2%). Specifically, 27.8% were 20, 16.7% were 21, and another 16.7% were 22 years old. The sample included 21 male (23.3%) and 69 female (76.7%) students.

In terms of prior language experience, most participants reported knowledge of at least one other foreign language. The majority (83.3%) indicated English as a known language, followed by Italian (8.9%) and German (7.8%).

Descriptive statistics were calculated for each item on the modified Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to assess students' anxiety levels related to speaking French.

Among the items indicating **higher anxiety**, students reported the greatest agreement with the following statements:

- *"I get nervous when the French teacher asks questions which I have not prepared in advance"* (M = 3.18, SD = 1.31),

- *"I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my French class"* (M = 3.16, SD = 1.23),

- *"I keep thinking that the other students are better at French than I am."* (M = 3.12, SD = 1.09).

Items reflecting **lower levels of confidence** or **self-perceived anxiety** included:

- *"I feel very self-conscious about speaking French in front of other students. "* (M = 2.40, SD = 0.97),

- *"I feel confident when I speak in French."* (M = 2.46, SD = 0.90),

- *"I would probably feel comfortable around French native speakers."* (M = 2.39, SD = 0.97).

Items addressing the **positive effects of prior language knowledge** showed relatively high mean values:

- *"Knowledge of other foreign languages helps me understand French."* (M = 3.77, SD = 0.78),

- *"Knowledge of other foreign languages helps me learn French."* (M = 3.67, SD = 0.82).

Overall, the responses suggest **moderate anxiety levels**, particularly when speaking without preparation or when comparing oneself to peers. In contrast, prior knowledge of other foreign languages appears to have a **positive impact on perceived learning and comprehension**.

To examine the relationship between students' speaking anxiety in French and their knowledge of other foreign languages, a Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted.

Table 1

Correlation Between Anxiety of Speaking a Foreign Language and Knowledge of Other Foreign Languages

		Speaking FL anxiety	Knowledge of other FLs
Speaking FL anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	-.402[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	90	90
Knowledge of other FLs	Pearson Correlation	-.402[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	90	90
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The analysis revealed a moderate, negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.402$, $p < .01$, indicating that students with prior knowledge of other foreign languages reported lower levels of speaking anxiety in French. This statistically significant correlation suggests that multilingual learners may experience reduced anxiety when speaking a new foreign language, possibly due to the transfer of linguistic strategies or increased confidence from previous language learning experiences. As shown in Table 1, the mean score for speaking anxiety was 2.80 (SD = 0.55), while the mean score for prior foreign language knowledge was 3.37 (SD = 0.71). These values reflect a tendency toward reduced anxiety among learners with a broader linguistic background.

A **Spearman's rank-order correlation** was conducted to examine the relationship between gender and speaking anxiety in French.

Table 2

Correlation Between Anxiety of Speaking a Foreign Language and Gender

			Speaking FL anxiety	Gender
Spearman's rho	Speaking FL anxiety	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	.155
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.145
		N	90	90
	Gender	Correlation Coefficient	.155	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.145	.
		N	90	90

The analysis revealed a weak, positive correlation that was not statistically significant ($\rho = .155$, $p = .145$). This result suggests that gender was not significantly associated with the level of foreign language speaking anxiety among the participants in this sample.

The results of this research offer important insights into the complex nature of foreign language anxiety in beginners and false beginners, especially regarding speaking skills.

The findings indicate a link between previous foreign language knowledge and lower anxiety levels supporting the view that learners with more language experience may benefit from applying previously acquired strategies or may feel more confident due to earlier learning. It is reasonable to think that knowing how to learn languages, grasping grammatical ideas, or having a larger vocabulary in another language can help learners feel better prepared and more capable when facing a new language.

Interestingly, the analysis did not find a significant association between gender and foreign language anxiety. Although some studies suggest there may be gender differences in speaking anxiety, this study's results indicate that, at least in this sample, gender is not the main factor in speaking anxiety. This highlights the need to consider individual differences and situational elements when examining foreign language anxiety.

These findings have several important implications for language teaching. Firstly, educators should recognize how prior language learning experiences can affect students' anxiety levels. Providing opportunities for learners to draw on their existing language knowledge and skills could help lower anxiety and boost confidence. Secondly, since there is no significant gender effect, it is essential to avoid assuming students' anxiety levels based on their gender. Instead, teachers should focus on identifying and addressing the specific needs and concerns of individual learners.

6. CONCLUSION

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) is a common concern among students learning a new language. Research in this field has documented various aspects of FLA that affect the learning process and related emotional responses. Overall, FLA is recognised as having a significant impact on language acquisition and highlighting the importance of addressing it in educational contexts. By understanding the factors and consequences associated with FLA, language teachers can take proactive steps to create a more supportive and effective language learning environment.

Preliminary results indicate that prior knowledge significantly influences learners' anxiety. Male and female learners show different levels of anxiety under similar conditions. Furthermore, students with previous experience in other foreign languages tend to show lower levels of anxiety in speaking tasks. These results also highlight key categories of FLA that hinder speaking performance, such as the fear of making mistakes and the difficulty of maintaining fluency during oral activities.

This study provides valuable insights into the psychological challenges faced by language learners and emphasises the need for targeted interventions to reduce FLA. Recommendations include a supportive classroom environment, customised teaching methods, and confidence-building measures to promote better speaking performance. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of FLA and its role in language learning, ultimately aiming to improve learners' confidence, participation, and academic success.

However, it is important to recognise the limitations of this research. The students involved were selected on the basis of their prior knowledge of French as a foreign language, and all were already familiar with the teacher's teaching methods. Consequently, the moderate levels of anxiety were mainly based on a positive attitude towards the teacher.

Future research should be conducted with different groups of language learners and a larger sample of participants. To reduce foreign language anxiety, consideration should also be given to introducing more digital tools to improve confidence, especially when speaking in a foreign language. Further research could also investigate how specific types of prior language knowledge, such as grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation, are related to foreign language anxiety (FLA). In addition, future studies could explore the influence of other factors such as personality traits, learning styles, and the classroom environment, on the relationship between prior knowledge and anxiety.

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ISTRAŽIVANJE STRAHA OD STRANIH JEZIKA NA VJEŠTINE GOVORENJA POČETNIKA I LAŽNIH POČETNIKA

Ovaj rad istražuje utjecaj straha od stranog jezika na govorne vještine početnika i lažnih početnika koji uče francuski jezik, kao kritičnog, ali i nedovoljno istraženog područja u istraživanju usvajanja stranog jezika. Poseban naglasak stavlja se na povezanost spola i prethodnog znanja drugih stranih jezika sa strahom, s ciljem boljeg razumijevanja načina na koji ti čimbenici utječu na samopouzdanje studenata i njihove govorne vještine. Identificiranjem ključnih čimbenika koji pridonose strahu od stranih jezika, istraživanje nastoji ponuditi strategije koje nastavnici mogu primijeniti za ublažavanje straha i poboljšanje jezičnih i akademskih ishoda studenata.

Kvantitativni dio istraživanja korišten je pomoću strukturiranog upitnika putem Skale za mjerenje straha od stranog jezika u razrednoj situaciji, modificirane za procjenu straha prilikom govora. Podaci su prikupljeni na reprezentativnom uzorku studenata francuskog jezika te su analizirani bivarijatnom statističkom analizom kako bi se ispitali međusobni odnosi između straha od stranog jezika, spola i prethodnog znanja drugih stranih jezika.

Preliminarni rezultati pokazuju da je prethodno iskustvo učenja i poznavanje drugih stranih jezika značajan čimbenik u smanjenju straha, pri čemu studenti s tim iskustvom iskazuju niže razine anksioznosti pri govoru. Međutim, nisu pronađene statistički značajne razlike između muških i ženskih studenata. Nalazi također ukazuju na glavne karakteristike straha od stranog jezika koje ometaju govorne vještine, uključujući strah od pogrešaka i poteškoće u održavanju tečnosti u usmenim aktivnostima.

Ovo istraživanje pruža vrijedan uvid u psihološke izazove s kojima se suočavaju studenti koji uče strani jezik i naglašava potrebu za ciljanim intervencijama za ublažavanje straha od stranog jezika. Preporuke uključuju stvaranje poticajnog okruženja u učionici, primjenu prilagođenih metoda podučavanja i mjere za izgradnju samopouzdanja, s ciljem unapređenja govornog učinka. Ova nalazi doprinose dubljem razumijevanju straha od stranog jezika i njegove uloge u učenju jezika te imaju za cilj poboljšanje samopouzdanja, sudjelovanja i akademskog uspjeha studenata.

Ključne riječi: govorne vještine, strah od stranog jezika, strah od stranog jezika u razrednoj situaciji, studenti stranih jezika