| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Factors and Effects of Foreign Language Anxiety in EFL Classrooms: Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University as a Case Study

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| ABSTRACT

As we live in a globalized world, the demand for using English as a medium of communication between people around the globe has increased. Since English has become vital for accessing many domains, many students decide to enroll in English classes. However, a considerable number of foreign language learners may experience or face feelings of anxiety during the process of foreign language acquisition. This study aims to investigate the factors that contribute to foreign language anxiety and its effects on students studying at the University of Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah, Fes, Morocco. To deliver research objectives, this study employed a questionnaire as the main instrument. The researchers addressed and distributed the questionnaire online to students to acquire authentic views about the experience of students with anxiety in EFL classrooms. 240 students participated in this study. The results derived from this study revealed that there are cultural, academic and interpersonal factors that contribute to this form of anxiety. Furthermore, this research concluded that EFL anxiety leads to numerous cognitive, social, academic and personal effects that can negatively affect the learning process and hinder the creation of an enjoyable environment within the classroom.

1. Introduction

Before talking about foreign language anxiety, it is worth defining the concept first. Anxiety can be understood as a situation that is physical and mental and usually associated with precise behaviours that are described as emotional, physical and cognitive. It is an adaptive reaction which mobilizes the organism and helps it defend against an attack or avoid an anxiety stimulus. The stimulus may happen to be either external or internal. To state the definite causes of anxiety can be rather complicated as it is influenced by many factors that can be biological, psychological, and social (Doubek and Anders, 2013). Scovel (1991) further states, "*Anxiety is a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is indirectly associated with an object.*" (P.18). Moreover, Spielberger (1972) defines anxiety as "*the emotional reaction or pattern of response that occurs in an individual who perceives a particular situation as personally dangerous or threatening, irrespective of the presence or absence of objective danger.*" (P.489). About the learning environment, anxiety, in general, refers to an individual's state of developing a feeling of anxiousness and nervousness during learning and demonstrating his/her skills when asked to read, write, listen or speak publicly. Therefore, the feeling of fear, uneasiness, worry, and trepidation experienced during the process of learning or using a foreign language is known as foreign language anxiety (Koka et al.2019).

Foreign language anxiety has been an issue of much interest and research in recent years. A considerable number of foreign language learners experience and face the feeling of anxiety during the process of foreign language acquisition. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), foreign language anxiety is the feeling of pressure and uneasiness precisely connected to second

language contexts, including speaking, listening and learning. Horwitz et al. (1986) state that language anxiety is "*a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process.*" (p.128). Almost the same idea has been confirmed by Abdul Rahman (2017), who argues that language anxiety can be defined as the feeling of anxiety towards second language acquisition. Students who face language anxiety are often afraid of negative evaluations by their educators or native speakers. Horwitz et al. (1986) assume that FLA frequently shows up in listening and speaking activities, testing situations, over-studying, and certain beliefs. (For instance, everything that will be said in a foreign language should be correct) and so on.

Mastering English as a foreign language in Morocco has become essential in the era of digitalization to increase and develop individual's abilities in various industries and advance their professional career. As a result, young Moroccans consider English important for their future and start joining English classes. However, learning English may not be a pleasant experience as learners may face a feeling of anxiety during the journey of acquiring the language. Therefore, this study is an attempt to detect the effects and factors that contribute to students' anxiety during EFL classes, particularly at the University of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah fez, Morocco.

The current study aims to answer the following research questions:
➢ What are the major factors that contribute to foreign language anxiety?
➢ What are the possible effects of foreign language anxiety on students?
➢ Does foreign language anxiety deprive Moroccan students from enjoying the EFL classrooms?

2. Literature Review
2.1 Factors of Foreign Language Anxiety
Students' anxiety is a challenging psychological issue that plays a serious and influential role in the learning process in general and in foreign languages (FL), learning at all levels, in particular. According to different scholars, anxiety is outlined as "*a state of apprehension, a vague fear*" (Scovel, 1978, p.134). It is also defined as "*The subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system*" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.125). In other words, Anxiety refers to the experience of excessive worry, fear, or nervousness that significantly affects a student's well-being and ability to perform academically. When it comes to FL anxiety, Horwitz et al. (1986) were the first scholars to deal with anxiety in language learning. Horwitz et al. (1986) are the pioneers of developing and constructing the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), described it as "*a distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process*" (p. 31). These '*complexes*' can manifest in various ways, such as feeling overwhelmed by assignments and exams, fear of failure, lack of confidence, and social pressures or social interactions. They proposed a theory that explores the concept of language learning anxiety, consisting of three interconnected elements. The first component is communication apprehension, which can be described as a form of shyness manifested through fear or anxiety when communicating with others. The second component is the fear of negative evaluation, which involves concern and unease regarding how others perceive and judge one's performance. Lastly, the theory includes test anxiety, which represents a type of performance-related anxiety arising from the fear of failing.

As a result, numerous studies were conducted based on this model. Horwitz's (2001) research findings demonstrated that students with higher levels of anxiety achieved lower grades compared to those with lower levels of anxiety. Similarly, Saito and Samimy's (1996) study revealed that foreign language anxiety had a detrimental impact on learners' performance. Aida's (1994) investigation further supported this, highlighting a negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and foreign language learning. Nikolov and Djigunoví´c (2006) conducted a separate study that revealed that students experiencing high levels of language anxiety produced less continuous speech in the foreign language. Over time, researchers developed a growing interest in studying anxiety and its relationship to language skills, particularly focusing on speaking proficiency, which garnered the most attention.

Learning English in Morocco, a non-English speaking country has been an arduous subject for Moroccan students. Moroccan students start learning the English language in high school, compared to French, which is "*very much a second rather than a foreign language in Morocco, still extensively used as a medium of instruction and administration, and still seen as a key to knowledge and success.*" (El Hiani, 2022, p. 7). However, even though English is a mandatory subject in high schools, many Moroccan students remain silent during English lessons and cannot speak either with their classmates or with their teachers. This problem usually occurs once the speakers assume and believe that their oral performance is wrong, stupid or incomprehensible (Brown, 2001). They also have limited exposure to English outside the classroom, which is why most of them may struggle with basic communication skills. These lines with what Young (1990) claimed: "*Speaking in a foreign language is often cited by students as their most anxiety-producing experience*". (p.539)The anxiety experienced by foreign learners while speaking an FL may lead them to utter failure while learning the target language.

In contemporary foreign language classrooms, students are often required to engage in oral performances and participate in group discussions. However, these demanding speaking tasks can have a negative impact on learners, causing them to feel nervous when communicating in the target language, and it may turn worse when the language instructors' manner of correction, in some cases, is rigid and humiliating (Tanveer, 2008). Numerous researchers have also investigated students' anxiety levels concerning foreign language speaking. For example, Koch and Terrell (1991) highlighted that activities such as oral presentations, role-playing, and word definitions were particularly anxiety inducing for learners. Price (1991) also discovered that learners were anxious about making pronunciation mistakes, making speaking in front of their peers an anxiety-provoking activity. Additionally, Ay (2010) study demonstrated that learners' anxiety peaks when they are required to engage in spontaneous speaking without prior preparation.

In Morocco, many scholars made significant contributions to anxiety research. They mainly worked on the anxiety levels that Moroccan university students experience, and they attempted to find the sources from which anxiety derives. Laachir et al. (2022) reported that foreign language anxiety could be linked to deficiencies in either communicative skills or overall language proficiency. In other words, learners feel anxious when they struggle to convey effectively and appropriately their thoughts due to limited vocabulary or insufficient exposure to the target language.

On the other hand, the previous findings may not apply to most of the Moroccan students. Elkhayma (2020) conducted a research study focusing on the impact of anxiety in language education for Moroccan learners of English as a foreign language. The study examined students' anxieties in relation to speaking and testing in order to check whether anxiety hindered the students' participation in classroom communication activities. The results revealed that students experienced varying levels of anxiety depending on the educational and instructional contexts. It was also found that having a positive attitude towards the target language (English) was associated with lower levels of anxiety (Elkhayma, 2020).

Based on the previously conducted research, the factors that contribute to students' anxiety in EFL classrooms are multi-faceted:

➢ The fear of making mistakes: Students may feel anxious about speaking incorrectly or being judged by their peers and teachers.
➢ Lack of self-confidence related to language skills: Students who doubt their abilities to comprehend or express themselves in the target language may experience anxiety.
➢ The pressure to achieve high grades or meet academic expectations.
➢ The unfamiliarity with the teaching methods or materials.
➢ Cultural differences and the fear of being misunderstood or not conforming to societal norms.
➢ Language barrier: Students may feel overwhelmed by the difficulty of learning a new language, especially if they have limited exposure or previous experience with it.
➢ Lack of participation opportunities: Students who are shy or introverted may feel anxious about participating in class activities or speaking in front of others.
➢ Peer pressure: Students may feel the need to compare themselves to their classmates, leading to feelings of self-doubt and anxiety.
➢ Performance anxiety: The fear of not being able to perform well in language tasks such as presentations or exams can cause significant stress and anxiety.
➢ Teacher-student relationship: A tense or unsupportive relationship with the teacher can contribute to students' anxiety, making them hesitant to ask questions or seek help.

2. 2 The effects of foreign language anxiety
There are major effects of foreign language anxiety that appear during the process. MacIntyre (1999) argues that foreign language anxiety has several academic, cognitive, social and personal effects.

2.2.1 The Academic Effects
A plethora of research suggests that FLA has academic effects that affect the learners explicitly and straightforwardly. A substantial number of academic research and publications have proven that foreign language anxiety is a factor that leads the learner to achieve low grades during examinations. According to MacIntyre (1999), a learner who shows symptoms of anxiousness is always unwilling to communicate and rarely when he/she participates in class. Oteir and Al-Otaibi (2019) maintain that anxiety in foreign language classes is an important reason behind the learners' poor academic achievement. Additionally, students who experience anxiety in the classrooms of a foreign language may consider dropping out of the course; Bailey et al. (2003), who declared that learners with anxiety levels might decide to withdraw from the courses of the foreign language, confirm this idea.

2.2.2 Cognitive effects
Oteir and Al-Otaibi (2019) state that foreign language anxiety can be an effective filter that prevents information from reaching a learner's cognitive processing system. Tanveer (2008) assumes that the cognitive effect of anxiety is evaluated through three major phases: input, processing and output. Concerning the input phase, anxiety acts as part of a filter, which hinders knowledge from being processed by the learners' cognitive system, while in the processing phase, anxiety diverts the learners' focus, resulting in

the learners' inability to acquire the lessons accurately and effectively. Similarly, the productive skills of speaking and writing are affected in the output phase.

2.2.3 Social effect

The social effects of FLA can function in different phases. MacIntyre (1999) holds that for learners of a foreign language, the effects of anxiety may appear to be grave anxiety reactions, but for others, it can be perceived as a *"traumatic experience"*. Oteir and Al-Otaibi (2019), who assume that a high-level anxious student is not interested in communicating with others, have declared the same idea. Horwitz et al. (2010) highlight the same idea when they state that language anxiety leads students to be unwilling to communicate in English.

2.2.4 Personal effects

Hashemi and Abbasi (2013) suggested that the participants in their research declared that they had experienced effects of foreign language anxiety, such as headaches, sweating, embarrassment, discomfort in different parts of the body and tension. Furthermore, the participants added that they experienced atypical verbal conduct, such as unstable voice tone that is either slower or faster, hands rubbing, twisting the body, and unconsciously touching different parts of their hair and clothes. Additionally, learners may randomly touch different objects for no reason at all, hesitating or pausing, pitiable performances during easy tasks, less eye contact because of reading continuously from the screen of their devices or papers while giving presentations, etc. Oteir and Al-Otaibi (2019) suggested that learners who experience anxiety in learning a foreign language might show signs like being miserable, worried, forgetful and sweaty, confirming all these symptoms and signs.

3. Methodology

The nature of this study has dictated the use of quantitative research methodology. This methodology is practical for gaining authentic findings. Quantitative methodology was used to obtain accurate statistics and findings. This methodology is functional in terms of analyzing questionnaires distributed to research participants. In addition, it allows researchers to get large amounts of data, statistics and information in a short period. The questionnaire was administered to students from the University of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah via different platforms, including Gmail, WhatsApp and Facebook, to discover the sources of anxiety among English language learners as well as its effects.

The questionnaire used in this study is divided into three sections and was preceded by explanatory text to the students to explain to them the components of the questionnaire as well as to inform them that all responses are going to be anonymous and confidential. The first section dealt with basic demographic information (age and gender) and students' experience in EFL classrooms. The second section is concerned with the factors and reasons behind EFL anxiety. The third section is about the effects of EFL anxiety on students. The last section contains only one question that was concerned with the student's degree of satisfaction in EFL classes.

4. Research Procedures

Due to time constraints, the quantitative data were collected from a distance using Google Forms. The collection procedure took place during September and December 2023. The researchers were able to receive 240 filled-out questionnaires. To attain spontaneous responses and authentic perspectives, the participants were informed that their responses would be kept confidential.

5. Data and Results Analysis

5.1 Demographic variables

Table 1: Participants in the study and their experience of anxiety

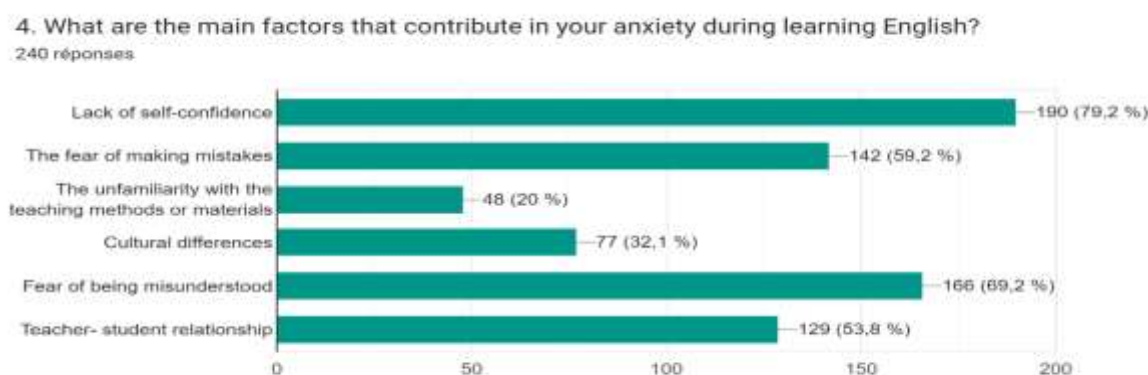| Demographics	Gender		Age Category			Experience of Anxiety in EFL classroo	
Specifications	Female	Male	18-20	21-23	24-29	Yes	No
Frequency	141	99	175	59	6	222	18
Percentages	58.7%	41.3%	72.9%	24.6%	2.5%	92.5%	7.5%
Total	240						

Participants of this research are all from the faculty of Art and Humanities at Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah University, Fes, Morocco. 240 students contributed to this study; 58.7% were female, and 41.3% were male, as shown by the diagram above. The researchers focused mainly on the students of departments that do not use English as a medium of instruction, such as the departments of History, Geography, Psychology, Sociology and others. None of the participants is from the Department of English, as the issue is not going to appear in a department in which students have chosen to study English as a major, knowing that to be

admitted to such a department, a student needs to show a high level of mastery of the four skills. Hence, the issue of Anxiety will be more apparent in departments in which English is taught as a foreign language.

The questionnaire was addressed to students from different age categories. The majority of the participants are young. Based on the results of the questionnaires and as shown in the table above, 72.9% of the participants are aged between 18 and 20, which means that they are still in the undergraduate program. 24.6% of the students are aged between 21 and 23 years old, and 2.5% are between 24 and 29 years old. The age categories that are mentioned in the table confirm the idea that foreign language anxiety is not linked to a specific age but can be associated with all learners from all academic backgrounds despite their age. Furthermore, 92.5% of the participants, which counts for 222 students, stated that they have experienced Anxiety in EFL classes, while only a percentage of 7.5% claimed that they have never experienced such feeling. Hence, we can deduce that anxiety in EFL can be linked to all age categories and all cultural and academic backgrounds and not only to young learners.

Most of the participants stated that they had experienced anxiety in EFL sessions, and this confirms the significance and the major aim of this study, which is to get the perspectives of students about the reasons and factors that contribute to increasing their anxiety in EFL classes. This suggests that EFL anxiety is a serious issue that students encounter during the learning journey.

5.2 Factors behind EFL anxiety

4. What are the main factors that contribute in your anxiety during learning English?
240 réponses

- Lack of self-confidence — 190 (79,2 %)
- The fear of making mistakes — 142 (59,2 %)
- The unfamiliarity with the teaching methods or materials — 48 (20 %)
- Cultural differences — 77 (32,1 %)
- Fear of being misunderstood — 166 (69,2 %)
- Teacher- student relationship — 129 (53,8 %)

F.1 Reasons behind EFL anxiety

In this section, the participants were asked to choose the possible reasons or factors behind students' anxiety during English language classes. Most of the students, 79.2%, confirm that lack of confidence is the major factor behind students' anxiety. Students who doubt their capacities and underestimate their skills are the ones who have low self-esteem. In other words, a lack of confidence as a sentiment of uncertainty about their self-worth can deprive students of learning English effectively and can increase the feeling of anxiety in students. The students who lack confidence are usually afraid of making mistakes, and they try to avoid failure in pronouncing English words accurately in front of the whole class.

69.2% of students assert that the fear of being misunderstood is another major factor that upsurges the feeling of anxiety among students. Many students who attend English classes are usually afraid of being misunderstood, as they have no mastery of the English language. Therefore, they are afraid of the reaction of their instructors as well as their classmates; that is why the interference of the instructor to solve this problem is significant. The instructor should create a friendly atmosphere within the class and encourage students to talk or participate in class activities that can allow learners to gain self-esteem and confidence.

59.2% of the students who participated in the study agreed that the fear of making mistakes is another serious factor behind students' anxiety in EFL classrooms. In language classes, particularly, students are afraid of making mistakes, and this hinders the development of language skills and the adoption of positive attitudes towards the English language. The fear of being wrong leads students to develop a fear of trying to learn new skills related to the English language. In this regard, the role of instructors is significant as they are the ones who can create a supportive environment in which students do not fear failure or making mistakes. Thus, the teacher's role is to guide students to learn from their mistakes by giving them examples of successful people who learned from their mistakes and made their failures a stepping-stone to their success.

Another serious reason behind students' anxiety is the teacher-student relationship. 53.8% of students believe that student-teacher relationships can increase the feeling of anxiety in EFL classes. Students spend much of their time at the university, where

interactions with instructors take place, and students can develop their learning practices. Hence, the teacher should maintain a good relationship with students by showing them fairness, respect, kindness, compassion, understanding and trustworthiness. In addition, the teacher should establish or build a strong relationship with learners through comprehending their needs and creating a warm environment that is based on trust and respect. Therefore, supportive and strong teacher-student relationships can lead to greater student achievement in the university and develop the cognitive skills of learners. However, if the teacher does not provide a friendly atmosphere in the classroom, this may lead students to adopt negative attitudes towards the language and contribute to increasing the feeling of anxiety during the learning process.

A percentage of 32.1% of students confirm that cultural differences are one of the reasons behind students' anxiety in EFL classrooms. Cultural differences can contribute to and affect students' anxiety levels in EFL classrooms in many ways, such as language and communication barriers, different learning styles, and the fear of making mistakes. Students coming from different cultural backgrounds may face language and communication issues in an EFL classroom. This can produce anxiety as they struggle to express themselves efficiently or understand the teacher's instructions. In addition to that, different cultures have various approaches and methods to education and learning. Students who are used to a more passive learning environment may feel anxious in EFL classrooms that urge active participation, group work, and public speaking. They may find it challenging to fit into a new learning style. Additionally, in some cultures, making mistakes in front of others is seen as embarrassing. This fear can increase anxiety in EFL classrooms, where making is normal while speaking or writing in English, as it is considered a natural part of the learning process.

A percentage of 20 % of the participants in the study confirm that the unfamiliarity with the teaching materials and methods can result in anxiety in EFL learners. University students may experience anxiety during the process of learning English as a result of changing the material that instructors use during their lessons; most of the lessons in the university are handouts-based, which is a new material for learners who are used to textbooks during the high school years. The handouts as material are meant to encourage students to do research and guide them towards self-learning, a process in which the teacher plays the role of a facilitator and guide. The strategy of handouts is opposed to textbooks that aim at teaching the students specific segments of language, a process in which the teacher enacts the role of a sage on the stage. The change in the teaching materials also affects the methods that the university teachers adopt in their lessons. Most of the lessons and the lectures are based on group work, participation and public speaking, a process in which the learners learn from each other and absorb knowledge through practising it as active participants rather than passive recipients. These changes in materials used in classrooms and methods adopted in the lesson delivery may push the learners to develop a feeling of anxiety towards English as a foreign language and as a subject, as suggested by the results of the questionnaire in Figure 1.

5.3 The effects of EFL anxiety on students

Learners' view of whether EFL has a Negative effect or not			
Items	Yes	No	Partially
Frequency	197	9	34
Percentages	82.1%	3.7%	14.2%
Total	240		

Table 2: Learners' viewpoint about EFL's possibility of having negative effects

5. Do you agree that foreign language anxiety in general and English in particular has negative effects on students?

240 réponses
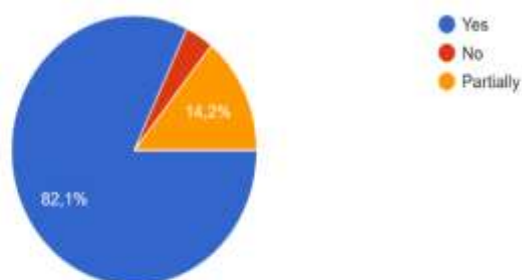
F2. Learners' viewpoint about EFL's possibility of having negative effects

In this section, students are asked whether they think that Anxiety in EFL classrooms may have some undesirable effects on them. The unwanted effects of anxiety can affect the learners in many ways that can be either personal or academic. According to the result of the study, 82.1% of the participants suggested that the anxiety resulting from EFL has negative effects on them, while 14.2% stated that this type of anxiety affected them partially, and a third category of 3.7% holds that EFL anxiety does not affect them. Based on the diagram above, we can notice that the majority of students admit that this form of anxiety has affected them both at the personal and academic levels. The second category of students states that they have been affected either at the personal or the academic level, and the third category of learners is a minority that does not show any anxiety concerning EFL.

6. What are the effects of EFL anxiety on you as an English learner?

240 réponses
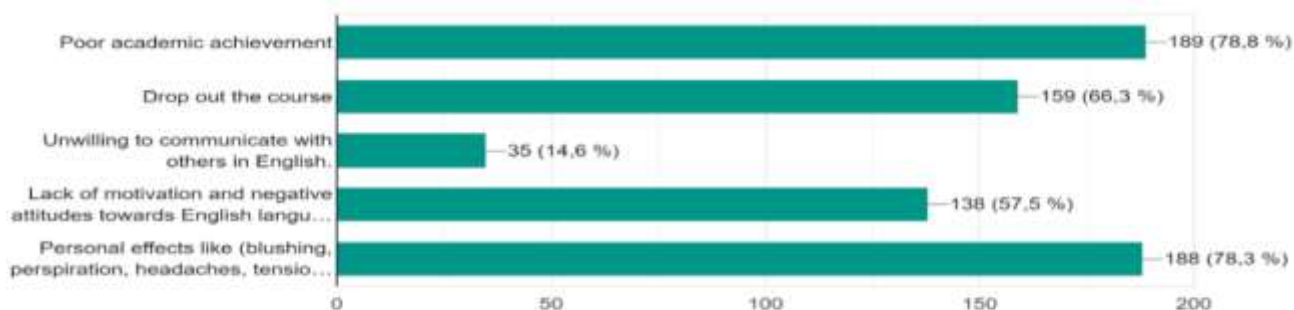
F3. Types of effects of EFL anxiety on learners.

The effects of EFL anxiety, as mentioned previously, are divided into two categories. They are either academic or personal. The academic are: 1. Poor academic achievements 2. Drop out the course 3. Lack of motivation and negative attitudes towards the English language, while the personal effects are 1. Unwillingness to communicate with others in English 2. Blushing, perspiration, headaches and tension. Most of the participants in the study stated that they had experienced one or more of these effects, as suggested by Figure 3 above.

The majority of the participants specified that EFL anxiety caused their academic achievement to be poor. A percentage of 78.8% of the participants linked EFL anxiety and poor academic achievements; since English at the university is a course that is subject to examination like any other course, feeling anxious during the lessons can affect the students psychologically and hinder them from grasping the lessons resulting in low grades at examinations. The teacher here, as a facilitator and guide, must take action to remedy the issue to help the learners at the academic level. The teachers can either prepare the students for exams through mock tests or try to provide the students with extra readings in the shape of textbooks that will make them feel at a psychological level that they are studying something practical instead of basing the lessons only on handouts. Moreover, a radical solution could be

the separation between the lesson and the examination since the lessons of English are not meant to prepare the learner for the examination, but rather, they are meant to help them practice English and learn to communicate using it. Examination, in this case, can take the shape of an oral presentation delivered by the students on a topic defined by the teacher and a writing task on a topic that has been discussed in the classroom for receptive skills of listening and reading they are automatically integrated into the productive skills of speaking and writing.

A percentage of 66.3% suggested that anxiety caused them to drop out of the course. Students with little knowledge of English or who have never been introduced to it as a subject may suffer from a high level of anxiety that has the effect of making them drop out of the course. These learners may feel frustrated, ashamed of their low level, fear of being subject to bullying and hence decide to drop out of the course. A possible solution for this issue can be the employment of pre-tests or placement tests. These forms of tests can be utilized by the teachers at the beginning of each academic year to have an idea about the level of the learners and, therefore, divide the students into groups based on their level. This possible solution aids the teacher in designing lessons and choosing material that respects the level of each group of students.

A percentage of 57.5% of the participants in the questionnaire stated that EFL anxiety can lead to a lack of motivation and negative attitudes towards the English language. This effect is closely interrelated with the previously mentioned effects; most students who are low achievers at the academic level or have never been introduced to English as a foreign language develop a passive reaction to lessons in English and unwelcomed perceptions of English as an academic subject. A teacher can tackle this issue and attempt to fix it by getting closer to the learners at the interpersonal level. The teacher may try to befriend the learners and establish a social relationship with them. This friendly relationship must be put as an aim to convince the students of the importance of English and remove all negative attitudes towards it; furthermore, a friendly environment in the classroom may lead the learners to partake in the classroom activities and hence start the journey of learning.

Unwillingness to communicate with others in English is another effect of anxiety in EFL classrooms. A percentage of 14.6% suggested that being anxious inside the classroom is an obstacle that pushes the students to be unwilling to use English as a medium of communication. This issue is mainly caused by the fear of committing mistakes, the inability to find the exact lexical items to express themselves or their ideas, and the fear of being humiliated by their classmates. A possible solution for the teachers to deal with this issue is to normalize committing mistakes during the lesson as an inescapable part of the process of learning and convince students of this idea. Furthermore, it is practical to use the first language as a tool to give instructions, ease the process of learning, alleviate all kinds of hesitation on the part of the students and encourage them to participate in the lesson.

The inability to be part of the English lesson inside the classroom may cause the learners to feel anxious. This type of anxiety may lead the learners to develop certain symptoms such as bruising, perspiration, headaches and tension. 78.3% of the participants in the study suggested that they have experienced such indicators. Learners, in this case, may feel alienated and not able to mingle with their classmates in the lesson because of their level of English or the nature of the classroom environment, which could be unhealthy. Teachers, in this case, have to tackle this issue by instructing the students to work in pairs or groups to make sure that all learners are part of the lesson and no student is left out of the group. Teachers also may avoid asking low-level students questions that may cause them embarrassment, such as grammatical questions; it is always advised to address students as a group, not individually. Teachers also need to use an easy form of language while addressing the learners, speak at the level of learners, enact and perform the instructions, and use real situations and scenes in order to clarify the lesson.
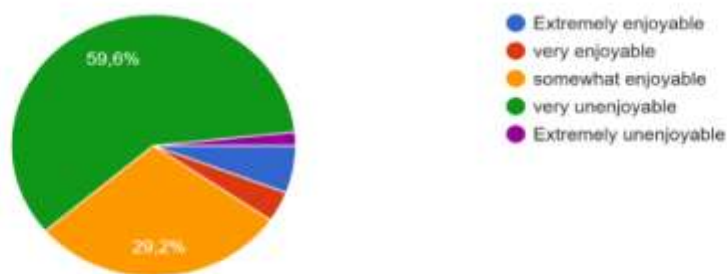
5.4 Learners' Satisfaction of EFL Lessons

Satisfaction with EFL Lessons					
Items	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5
Frequency	4	143	70	9	14
Percentages	1.7%	59.6%	29.2%	3.7%	5.8%
Total	240				

Table 3: learners' rating of their satisfaction with EFL lessons

19. Using a five- point scale (where 1 extremely unenjoyable, 5- extremely enjoyable) rate how much do you enjoy English classes

240 réponses

F.4 Learners rating of their satisfaction with EFL lessons

The last section of the questionnaire is composed of only one question that aims to rate the learners' satisfaction with learning English in relation to EFL anxiety. The majority of the students, 59.6%, confirmed that their experience was very unenjoyable. 29.2% indicated that they somewhat enjoyed the experience. 5.8% of the participants suggested that they extremely enjoyed the lessons, while 3.7% found the lessons to be very enjoyable, and 1.7% claimed that the sessions of English are extremely unenjoyable. The results of the questionnaire in this section stand as proof of the results of the previous sections of the questionnaire and a confirmation of the review of the literature. EFL anxiety stands as a major obstacle that hinders Moroccan learners from achieving their academic purposes and developing the skill of communicating in a major foreign language like English.

6. Conclusion

Language anxiety is a critical issue in language teaching and learning. Based on the review of the literature, which is confirmed by the result of this study, anxiety in EFL classrooms foregrounds itself as a chief obstacle that hinders learners from achieving academic success and communicating in English. The outcomes of this study revealed that EFL anxiety is the product of various factors such as learners' cultural background, unfamiliarity with teaching materials and methods and other personal and interpersonal factors.

Moreover, we can conclude from this study that this form of anxiety has many destructive effects on learners. The effects of EFL anxiety are academic, personal, cognitive and social, and it can fail the process of acquiring knowledge, learning new skills and accomplishing success in foreign language acquisition. As a result, many learners who have participated in this study confirmed that EFL anxiety hampers them from enjoying the lessons of English. Hence, creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment, along with implementing effective teaching strategies, can help reduce students' anxiety and enhance their language learning experience.

6.1 Recommendations

The current study tackles the issue of foreign language anxiety only from the perspectives of students. Thus, it is advisable to include the opinions of teachers to have a complete vision of the subject matter. Moreover, it is highly recommended that future research should take the issue of anxiety from the psychological perspective as well to have a comprehensive explanation of the real factors of foreign language anxiety.

6.2 Research Limitations

The current study has some limitations. First, the number of participants who responded to the questionnaire is only 240 respondents, which is a number that cannot represent students from different universities all around Morocco. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized. Second, this study focused only on studying foreign language anxiety in general rather than examining anxiety about each language skill separately: speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Finally, foreign language anxiety is a complex issue that is also time-related. To put it differently, some students may feel anxious by the beginning of the course while others by the end, so it is advisable to note the development or disappearance of anxiety in students throughout the development of the course. Applying this strategy would enable the researcher to get more data as he/she would notice the elements and circumstances that help the students to overcome anxiety or those that make the learners anxious. Unfortunately, this study could not adopt this strategy as no class volunteered to participate in such an experiment that we can call a focus group.

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