

Investigating the Factors that Influence Foreign Language Anxiety among Saudi ESL

Learners

by

Haifa Almotiary

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved November 2022 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Mark James, Chair
Elly Van Gelderen
Aya Matsuda

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2022

ABSTRACT

The goal of this research is to increase understanding of the experience of foreign language anxiety (FLA) of Saudi Arabian students who are studying English as a Second Language (ESL) in the United States. Anxiety has been shown to significantly influence foreign language learning. Researchers have reported a negative correlation between academic achievement and anxiety. A growing body of research has provided greater insight into anxiety associated with learning foreign languages. In the 1980s, researchers began to focus on the connection between anxiety with foreign language learning, sometimes referred to as foreign language anxiety (FLA). Many studies aimed to identify the underlying factors associated with FLA. However, researchers studying FLA have argued a need for more research. Due to the significant number of Saudi students studying English in the United States at the time of this study, more research is needed to better understand these students' experiences and the influences of FLA among this population. Therefore, the research question addressed in this study is: What are the factors that influence FLA among Saudi learners who are studying English in ESL classrooms in the United States? The study was conducted as a qualitative research design involving semi-structured interviews with 30 Saudi ESL students in the United States. My findings showed that these themes feeling unfamiliar with classroom activity, feeling unprepared for classroom activity, having unsuccessful attempts at communication, being judged negatively by others and having a negative perception of one's own language reflect the general view of FLA as consisting of these three components (e.g., communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative

evaluation). However, my findings also include some themes that do not fit neatly into the three-part model of FLA. The themes that emerged are: having a perception that English language is important, interacting with other sex from the same culture, encountering unfamiliar cultures, having teachers who behave in a negative way, and having teachers with negative characteristics. The findings of the current study suggests that the three component view of FLA might be insufficient for understanding FLA among Saudi Arabian ESL learners. So, I proposed three additional categories. The first category is teachers' role that contains two themes: having teachers who behave in a negative way and having teachers with negative characteristics. The second category is cultural influence that contains two factors interacting with the opposite gender from the same culture and encountering unfamiliar culture. The third category is learners belief about language learning which has the factor having a perception that English language is important

DEDICATION

In memory of my beloved father who was a constant inspiration throughout my years of graduate school.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Mark James for his continuous support and invaluable guidance with my work. His patience, suggestions, and wise comments throughout this work made this dissertation possible.

I would also wish to thank Dr. Aya Matsuda and Dr. Elly Van Gelderen who were insightful and perceptive in their valuable suggestions, and hints to complete the dissertation.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my mum, my sisters, my brother, and friends who were there for me when I needed them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	10
Introduction	10
Theoretical Perspectives of FLA and Effects on Learning	10
Early Perspectives on Anxiety and Language Learning.....	11
The Birth of FLA.....	15
Summary of the Section	20
FLA Studies Involving Saudi Arabian Learners	22
FLA Studies Involving non Saudi Arabian Learners of English.....	36
Summary of the Chapter	48
3. METHODOLOGY	51
Introduction	51
The General Approach of the Research.....	51
Participants	53
Data Collection Tools.....	57
Data Collection Procedures.....	60
Data Analysis Procedures.....	62

CHAPTER	Page
Ethical Issues	67
Summary of the Chapter..	68
4. FINDINGS	69
Introduction	69
Reporting the Findings	67
Summary of the Chapter	86
5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	88
Introduction	88
Discussion.....	88
Contribution to FLA Theory	100
Implications	105
Limitations	114
REFERENCES	118
APPENDIX	
A INVITATION EMAIL	127
B BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE	129
C CONSENT FORM	131
D IRB APPROVAL LETTER	133

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Definitions of Anxieties in Early Research.....	13
2. The Contrary Results of the Early Research on the Effects of Anxiety on Language Learning	21
3. The Studies that Investigated FLA that Involved Saudi Arabian Learners of English that were Discussed in this Section	33
4. The Studies that Investigated FLA that Involved non Saudi learners of Second Language	44
5. Background of Participants	56
6. Example of Units and Codes	63
7. The Steps of Data Collection and Analysis	67
8. The Frequency of Factors Mentioned by the Study Participant	87

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Generating Themes	63
2. The Propped Model of Factors that Influence FLA	105

Chapter one: Introduction

Introduction

Studies have shown that anxiety has a significant impact on foreign language learning (Aida, 1994; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). The anxiety symptoms students experience when learning a foreign language include: tension, fear, and apprehension. (Ortega, 2009). For example, foreign language students with high levels of anxiety experience two common scenarios: they freeze up when teachers call on them to speak in class, and they forget correct answers when taking tests, even though they are prepared and know the answers (Ortega, 2009). Several studies have shown a negative relationship between academic achievement and anxiety (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1987; McIntyre & Grander, 1991).

A growing body of research has provided greater insight into anxiety associated with learning foreign languages. In the 1980s, researchers began to focus on the relationship between anxiety and frustration with foreign language learning, sometimes referred to as foreign language anxiety (FLA) (Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1986). Horwitz and colleagues (1986) proposed that FLA is a distinct and unique form of anxiety specific to language learning and foreign language achievement. They define FLA 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” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 7). Using a specific definition of FLA has benefited researchers, and FLA research has flourished. Having a scale to measure FLA has also

contributed to the success. The definition leads to a construct that can be operationalized and measure FLA.

Many studies aimed to identify the underlying factors associated with FLA. For example, some studies (e.g., Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1987) suggested that factors such as fear of making mistakes in the classroom and being judged by peers and teachers influence the level of FLA. Students expressed worry that when they make mistakes in the classroom, their peers will laugh at them, or they will receive harsh feedback from their teachers. These students are concerned that they will be in a vulnerable situation if they make mistakes; in turn, their fears could increase their FLA. For example, Ohata (2015) suggested that culture has a role in influencing FLA among English as a second language (ESL) learners. The Japanese L2 learners in the US study reported experiencing FLA when they had to adapt to the American cultural standards. Other studies, such as Bailey (1983), suggested that competition in the classroom has a role in FLA among students learning L2. In her study, the relationship between learners' competitiveness and self-esteem was investigated as a possible source of FLA; the results showed that comparisons with others or idealized self-images could lead to anxiety in language learners.

Researchers studying FLA have argued a need for more research. For example, MacIntyre (2017), in an overview of FLA research trends and development, argued that more research on FLA is needed to understand these students' lived experiences. MacIntyre stated that future research that takes into account the trends in the literature and moves forward with new and interesting research questions will help to sharpen our

focus on language anxiety and what it means to be an anxious learner or to be a learner who is feeling anxious. Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001) also called for more research on FLA. They investigated the role of FLA, which they conceptualized as tension, in a 7-week intensive summer French school program in second language learning. They argued that the study should be duplicated to refine and examine FLA in L2 students' language acquisition using a qualitative approach involving different populations. Park and French (2013) also called for further research on FLA. They investigated the intersection of gender roles and FLA among 948 Korean students taking an English conversation course in Korea. The recommendation for future research concerns the limitation of their study to shed light on FLA inside and outside the classroom.

One gap in FLA research concerns a better understanding of the context for Saudi Arabian English learners in the United States. The Saudi government responded to calls for reform of the educational system over the last two decades and made changes. For instance, in 2005, the King Abdullah scholarship program was begun. This program has been one of the most successful programs instituted for social and educational change in the Kingdom (Altuwajri, 2018). The scholarship program is used to fund Saudi Arabian students studying overseas. The aim of the program is to support students to participate in uplifting the entire country in business terms. The program has allowed students to return to Saudi Arabia and participate in the technology sector on a competitive level with other nations. This educational opportunity has also increased the number of students studying in the United States. As a result, Saudi students constitute the second largest population of international students studying in intensive English program in the

United States at about 6880 students after Chinese students, who account for 18.4% (Open Door, 2020). Due to the significant number of Saudi students studying English in the United States at the time of this study, more research is needed to better understand these students' experiences and the influences of FLA among this population. In the following paragraph, I will address the four points of why research is important among this population:

First, Saudi Arabian students studying English in the United States may experience FLA as a result of the substantial differences between the Saudi Arabian and American English education contexts. Saudi students have relatively limited exposure to English back home, but in the United States, students have much more intensive and frequent exposure to English. For example, Saudi Arabian students studied English in EFL classes rather than ESL. ESL and EFL courses differ because they occur in two different social environments. In EFL classes, the target language is not the first language in the community. Learners do not have as many opportunities to access authentic situations outside the classroom to practice English communication skills compared to if they were in an ESL context (Tanveer, 2007). In contrast, ESL classes take place where the target language is the first language in the community (Tanveer, 2007). ESL learners can be immersed in authentic situations outside the classroom to practice their English skills. For example, they have to use English to get by their daily life (e.g., ordering at coffee shops, ordering food from restaurants, booking tickets or hotels etc.). The environment for EFL provides foreign language learners relatively less exposure to the target language than the ESL environment, in which the social context provides learners

with greater exposure to the target language. Limited exposure to the target language and lack of opportunities to practice speaking in a natural environment may not fully allow EFL learners to develop their communicative abilities. The lack of practice could result in embarrassing and stressful situations for EFL learners required to speak in and out of class.

Secondly, Saudi Arabian L2 teachers have utilized traditional instruction based on the grammar-translation method (i.e., the teaching of grammatical rules) followed by students translating material from second language to first language L1. For example, Alharbi (2015) discussed the dilemma of Saudi Arabian public school students' deficiency in English competence; the researcher described the language classrooms in Saudi Arabia as limiting the interactions among learners and between learners and educators. For example, these teaching methods leave little to no opportunity for interactive practice (i.e., presentation, group work). The effect is that the students neither take charge of their learning process nor own it (Alghamdi, 2005; Alharbi, 2015).

Alternatively, scholarly work has suggested that teaching in the United States has leaned towards a communicative approach in language classes. For example, The recent trends in pedagogy and education policy in the United States include integrating a communicative approach in language classrooms. Ennis (2015) suggested that the communicative approach which is a common practice in the the United States, where students are encouraged to have discussions and presentations can facilitate cultural exchange. When Saudi students encounter new teaching approaches, such as the

communicative approach in the ESL classes in the United States, they may be surprised and concerned.

The third point is that in Saudi Arabia, students are part of a collectivist culture, but when Saudi students study in the United States, they are immersed in an individualistic culture. For example, using culture dimension theory, Hofstede (1991, 2011) described Saudi Arabia and United States cultures as defined by having opposing cultural dimensions. Hofstede developed the value survey module (VSM) as consistent with the theory and designed to measure differences in cultural values and sentiments between two or more countries or cultural groups/regions within a country. Originally developed from empirical data from about 100,000 IBM employees working in 66 countries, the VSM is a questionnaire containing 30 items with six dimensions of national culture assessed using four questions per dimension. Six demographic questions are also included in the survey to collect descriptive data on participants' gender, age, job type, level of education, current nationality, and country or nationality of birth. Comparing the cultural dimensions of participants in Saudi Arabia versus the United States showed a relatively lower score of 38/100 (38 is referring to participants in Saudi Arabia) on the individualistic scale suggesting a score low on individualism and high on collectivism. While in contrast, participants in the United States scored 91/100 on the individualistic scale suggesting a score high on individualism and low on collectivism (Hofstede, 1991; 2011). According to Hofstede individualism and collectivism refer to the extent to which people are integrated into a group; it is more of a societal characteristic than an individual one. A relatively high score on the individualistic dimension refers to the extent to which

people are expected to be primarily independent without expecting the larger community to support them, versus a lower score on the individualistic dimension which refers to the strength of the ties and support that people have to others within their community.

Alternatively, in a collectivist society, people from a very young age feel integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups that frequently include extended families, for example, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. These groups provide them with protection; in return, the group members offer unwavering loyalty and opposition to others in groups.

Finally, in Saudi Arabia, students are placed in sex segregated classes, while in the United States, students mostly attend co-educational classes. The Islamic tradition emphasizes sex segregation throughout the school system in Saudi Arabia (Baki, 2004; Hamdan, 2005). The orthodox interpretation of several Islamic texts concerning the mixing of unrelated men and women underlies segregated education (Al-Munajjed, 1997). According to Hamdan (2005), implementing segregated education necessitated placing girls' education under the control of the general presidency for girls' education to preserve the original objective of girls' education: to educate women for decent wives and mothers, as well as suitable jobs (Hamdan, 2005, p. 44). Sex separation during education continues to be practiced in all educational institutions, including foreign schools (Moe, 2020). However, according to Sax (2008), the founder and executive director of the National Association for Single Sex Public Education, public education in the United States is predominantly mixed sex. Although single-sex classes have been allowed in certain instances, for example for physical education and sex education(US Dept. of Education, 2005), in most situations in the US education system classes are

mixed sex. Under the state religion, Islamic doctrine and Saudi culture interpret Saudi women's roles as symbolizing family honor and feminine character. Al-Rasheed (2013) described the ideology of traditional gender roles in Saudi Arabia as vesting men with legitimacy for speaking in public and prescribes that women must refrain from public speech. Moreover, strict rules exist concerning how men and women interact socially. For example, Algahtani (2011) explored the experiences of students from Saudi Arabia studying in sex- mixed classes for a degree in British universities. The study utilized questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation. Algahtani discussed that in Saudi Arabia, women are expected to avoid making contact with men other than relatives. Therefore, the cultural norms of Saudi Arabia underlie the stress that female students experience when they talk with male students about their views. Algahtani found that while observing Saudi women in classrooms, they tended to sit on the opposite side of the room from Saudi men. The result showed that these women practiced their home culture in foreign classrooms. According to Algahtani, pressure to follow cultural norms does not mean that Saudi women are unwilling to participate in class, but that they are conscious of their culture and customs, which uphold that they do not talk with men except when necessary.

In summary, a gap exists in the literature concerning Saudi Arabian students' experiences with FLA in the United States. Furthermore, a combination of factors, such as the increasing number of Saudi students studying in the United States, along with the differences between ESL-EFL contexts, and educational systems and cultural differences in the United States and Saudi Arabia (individualism vs. collectivism), create a unique

phenomenon and a motivation for studying FLA among this population. Thus, these circumstances are a basis for research to fill the gap in knowledge concerning FLA in this context. Therefore, the research question addressed in this study is:

What are the factors that influence FLA among Saudi learners who are studying English in ESL classrooms in the United States?

This dissertation has five chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and discussion and conclusion. Chapter 1 introduces the significance of the study, the aim of the study, and the research question. Chapter 2 presents the existing literature regarding how FLA is described and defined and the research findings concerning FLA in different language learning contexts worldwide. This review of the literature supports the originality of the study. Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methodology and the development of the research tools. The discussion details the methodological steps and outlines the research challenges and ethical issues. Chapter 4 contains the findings. In the first section of Chapter 5, findings are discussed regarding the main research question. The second section contains tentative recommendations to reduce FLA, particularly for ESL Saudi learners in United States classrooms. Finally, the third section of Chapter 5 concludes with the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

Chapter two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter is a review of literature on general anxiety when learning languages, and FLA specifically. The chapter has three sections. The first section involves the background of the study. The researcher reviews prior research on learners' anxiety when studying languages and establishes the conceptual foundation of the construct of FLA. Three components of FLA are examined: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Then, these components are discussed with factors linked to FLA while learning a target language. The second section includes a discussion of FLA studies among Saudi Arabian learners of English and the limitation of these studies. The third section is a review of FLA studies in contexts outside Saudi Arabia and the limitation of these studies. Finally, the chapter is concluded with a summary.

Theoretical Perspectives of Foreign Language Anxiety and Effects on Learning

This section outlines the early perspectives on anxiety and language learning, including the distinctions between categories of anxiety. These perspectives on anxiety, such as trait, state, situation-specific, social, facilitating, and debilitating anxiety, help establish a conceptual foundation of FLA and adopt a definition of FLA to address the research question. A substantial discussion of FLA is needed to understand the approach I will adopt in answering the research question. The following section contains some early perspectives on anxiety and language learning, including the distinctions between categories of anxiety, including Horwitz's (1987) conceptual framework that established FLA as a unique and distinct anxiety subtype.

Early Perspectives on Anxiety and Language Learning

Findings were inconsistent in the early research on anxiety among EFL students. For example, Chastain (1975) investigated anxiety among language learners by examining the relationship between affective variables, such as anxiety, and students' language achievement in three language programs (French, German, and Spanish class). University students in a university in the United States beginning foreign language classes in French, German, or Spanish completed three self-report questionnaires: an anxiety scale, a combination of items from Sarason's Test Anxiety Scale (Sarason, 1961), and Taylor's Manifest Anxiety Scale. The students' final grades in their language classes were used to measure their language achievement. Anxiety only affected one language but not the other. In other words, the results conflicted when examining anxiety and the three foreign languages. The statistical analysis yielded contradictory results for the relationships between anxiety and foreign language learning in the three languages. The correlation between anxiety levels and achievement in German and Spanish was positive, while the correlation between anxiety and achievement in French was negative

In another study, anxiety correlated with reading skills in French but not speaking skills. Tucker et al. (1976) investigated anxiety and foreign language learning among junior high school students in second language learning context using the French Class Anxiety Scale and the French reading score (a class grade to measure students' reading skill) to measure the final score. The results showed that anxiety was related to French reading skills but not speaking skills.

Another study showed that the least proficient students scored among the highest and lowest on an anxiety scale. Backman (1976) investigated anxiety among 21 Venezuelan university students studying English in second language learning context. The language skills were measured on placement tests and teacher ratings of oral skills, and listening comprehension tests. The study showed that the two least proficient students scored the highest and the lowest on the anxiety measures.

Researchers have contributed to the inconsistent results of the early studies in several ways. First, some used a measurement tool that was not explicitly linked to language learning contexts. For example, anxiety was commonly measured in three ways: a) behavioral tests to measure the actions of observed participants; b) self-reports in which the participant reports their feelings and reactions; c) physiological tests in which heart rate and blood pressure are evaluated, and these measures are assumed to be associated with anxiety (Daly, 1991). Although these various measures have validity as found in various psychological studies, MacIntyre (2017) questioned the use of these given they are not directly linked to language. Moreover, MacIntyre cited Horitz's suggestion that anxiety captured in these measures is defined broadly, implying that these general measures might not relay adequate information about successful language learning.

The second way that research have contributed to the inconsistent results of early studies is that researchers viewed anxiety in different ways. For example, they did not adequately or reliably define anxiety or sufficiently explain how anxiety related to language learning. For example, an approach taken in the early stage of research on

anxiety linked to language learning suggested that anxiety in this context is transferred from other forms of anxiety and hence this type of anxiety had no distinctions from anxiety experienced in other contexts. For example, according to Scovel (1987) test anxiety or mathematics anxiety can be transferred to anxiety in foreign language classrooms. In another definition of anxiety from the early research, some researchers distinguished transient anxiety from a chronic predisposition for anxiousness and suggested that these differences could account for some of the discrepancies between results from the earlier language learning anxiety studies. This idea led Spielberger et al. (1970) to develop a measure that distinguishes between state anxiety (SA) and trait anxiety (TA). Scovel (1987) pointed out the differences between trait and state anxiety. He noted that there is a distinction between someone who is experiencing anxiety relatively permanent (trait) and someone who is experiencing anxiety relatively temporary (state). However, the use of trait vs. state view did not fully clarify the conceptualization of FLA, and due to a failure to demonstrate the effect of anxiety on the language learning process, the results remained inconsistent. Another definition of anxiety used in early research, Leary (1982), described that social anxiety occurs when individuals expect that others appraise them interpersonally in real-time or anticipated social situations. In its most acute form, anxiety in this context is referred to as social anxiety disorder or phobia. Other defining terms include facilitating versus debilitating anxiety. So, researchers using inconsistent definition of anxiety lead to inconsistent research results (See table 1).

Table 1

Definition of Anxieties in Early Research

Anxiety Type	Definition
Facilitating Anxiety	Anxiety improves performance
Deliberating Anxiety	Anxiety impairs performance
State Anxiety	It refers to an unpleasant emotional condition or temporary state.
Social Anxiety	It refers to fear, tension, discomfort, or anxiety experienced by individuals in social situations. Eventually it leads to reduce social interactions and less participation in conversations.
Trait Anxiety	It refers to a stable propensity to be anxious. it is a permanent personality feature.

The third way researchers have contributed to inconsistent results on this topic was through the lack of a clear distinction between facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety. For example, Chastain (1975) questioned whether having some anxiety about tests might lead to good performance (facilitating anxiety), but having higher levels of anxiety about test taking might lead to poor performance (debilitating anxiety). Anxiety can be a motivational factor that stimulates learners or a debilitating factor that could hinder the learner from achieving the expected goals (Chastain, 1975; Scovel, 1978; Young, 1999). Scovel (1978) explained the difference between facilitating and debilitating anxiety by describing these relative to the well-known physiological and

psychological fight or flight response. Scovel stated that facilitating anxiety motivates a learner to take on a learning task or challenge (i.e., a fight). Moreover, facilitating anxiety motivates learners to handle their emotions regarding foreign language learning. In contrast, debilitating anxiety stimulates the learner to flee the learning task by avoiding it, thus hindering progress toward learning. Scovel stated that if the learner is at the early stage of learning a foreign language, if their anxiety increases, they are more likely to experience debilitating anxiety, which will hamper language learning. However, when anxiety increases at later stages of learning a foreign language, learners are most likely experiencing facilitating anxiety that lifts them to improve academic performance.

The Birth of FLA: Horwitz and Colleagues

In the late 80s, researchers reached a turning point on the topic of anxiety and foreign language learning. Horwitz et al.'s (1986) result, which stated that the results of earlier studies were inconsistent because researchers used different definitions of anxiety, aligned with Scovel's (1978) conclusion that problems existed with defining and measuring anxiety in a foreign language setting and that the lack of definitive meaning and methods led to inconsistent and conflicting results. In addition, Horwitz et al. stated that FLA is unique and distinct from other forms of anxiety. Since a unique FLA definition was created, research on this topic flourished.

Horwitz et al. (1986) proposed the situation-specific Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) in their study. In their study, the students took part in a support group for foreign language learning, where they discussed their concerns and the difficulties they faced in their foreign language learning. The information these students

shared in the support groups contributed to the development of the FLCAS. The FLCAS is a questionnaire with 33 items to answer with Likert-style responses used to measure test anxiety, communication apprehension, and fear of negative evaluation by professors and peers in the classroom specific to language learning.

Horwitz et al. (1986) administrated FLCAS to students at the beginning of a university language course. They reported a significant negative correlation between FLA and foreign language achievement. That is, students studying a foreign language who experienced a higher level of FLA reported receiving lower grades than their less anxious classmates. The researchers also found that FLA stemmed mainly from listening and speaking, as students reported that they were most concerned about speaking in their language classrooms. They also reported that students feared they were perceived as less competent or judged more negatively by peers and their teachers.

FLCAS is a situation-specific anxiety construct. This view of FLA has some advantages. Firstly, according to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991), when requiring participants to identify various aspects of anxiety-provoking situations, (e.g., speaking in front of the class) taking a situation-specific anxiety perspective, offers a better understanding of the prompts and causes of anxiety. Therefore, when researchers seek situation-specific information from participants, they make fewer assumptions about the circumstances that provoke anxiety. For example, Horwitz et al. (1986) measured FLA among EFL students using the FLCAS, which contains items about potential anxiety-provoking situations such as exams in a language course, speaking in a language class, and their perceptions of peers' evaluations of them. For example, some items on FLCAS

were “I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class” and “I tremble when I know that I’m going to be called on in language class.” Using the FLCAS can also allow the participants to describe anxiety-provoking situations in their own words. For example, researchers who use the situation-specific approach might ask students to list any situations that make them anxious. For example, Horwitz et al. and Cope (1986) collected written descriptions and interviewed by phone from anxious language learners and their teachers in the study of FLCAS. In this study, students wrote of their anxious feelings, difficulties, and physical reactions in language classes, and teachers described how they tried to help these students.

The second advantage is that the studies that used the FLCAS situation specific anxiety yielded consistent results. For example, Horwitz et al. (1986) demonstrated that the FLCAS had adequate reliability and validity and reported a significant negative correlation between FLA and foreign language grades. They found that students with FLA, which significantly deters their language learning acquisition, could be identified and that these students share several traits. For example, less anxious students received better grades than their counterparts with high anxiety. Furthermore, students who scored high test anxiety on FLCAS also reported that they feel anxious to speak in a foreign language. Moreover, the study found that students with high levels of FLA also felt highly self-conscious when asked to speak their foreign language in front of others (e.g., other students), perhaps because of fear of negative evaluation or worrying about appearing less competent. Horwitz et al. advocated using the situation-specific perspective; they

stated, “when anxiety is limited to the language learning situation, it falls under the category of specific anxiety reactions” (p. 125).

FLCAS is an instrument that measures situation-specific anxiety using three related FLA constructs. The first construct of FLA is communication apprehension in the foreign language context and is defined by

a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people. Difficulty in speaking in dyads or groups (oral communication anxiety) or in public (“stage fright”), or in listening to or learning a spoken message (receiver anxiety) are all manifestation[s] of communication apprehension. (Horwitz et al., 1987, p. 127)

For example, when a student communicates in a foreign language in a classroom, the student might experience anxiety due to being shy in public speaking situations, which is communication apprehension.

Lucas (1984) defined the problem of communication apprehension and its effects on teaching ESL. The author focused on the problems of Japanese ESL students and communication apprehension. The results showed that Japanese students were hesitant to speak with native speakers of English due to fear of making mistakes and did not want to be perceived as intellectually inferior. Lucas suggested that cultural background exacerbates anxiety for many Japanese students due to instructor-centered versus student-centered teaching methods. For example, communication apprehension in Japanese ESL learners is linked to the Japanese curriculum and teaching methods that are structured, formal, and teacher-centered. Because Japanese students are not usually encouraged to

speaking in educational settings, they might experience a high level of anxiety when asked to speak aloud in ESL classes in the United States.

The second FLA construct is test taking anxiety, a “type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure” (Horwitz et al., 1987, p. 127). For example, test anxiety appears in specific situations or contexts where performance is evaluated in social situations where the students could have concerns about how their performance is judged by others (Putwain, 2008). Aydin et al. (2020) studied the sources of test taking anxiety among 57 EFL students at a preparatory school in a state university in Turkey. The data were collected using focus groups, essays, and interviews. The results showed that EFL learners experienced test anxiety in five primary circumstances. The most potent of these cases was an internal fear of failure on examinations, followed by fear of parental expectations. Another source of anxiety voiced by students was negative experiences in the past; for example, a student who has repeated a course due to failure described terror about repeating the same class next year. Finally, others in this study expressed typical fears of negative evaluation by teachers and peers and a lack of self-confidence.

Lastly, the third construct under the banner of FLA is fear of negative evaluation, defined as “apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, p. 42). For example, in a classroom, learners who speak in front of their classes are in a situation where their peers and instructors evaluate their language abilities. This situation may increase the presenting student’s anxiety level and thus negatively influence the linguistic abilities he or she may publicly demonstrate. Heng et

al. (2012) investigated FLA and negative evaluation among 700 Malaysian graduate students. The data were obtained using a survey. The results revealed that the students had moderate levels of FLA concerning speaking, and the source of this anxiety was the fear of negative evaluation.

Horwitz et al. (1986) provided a distinct focus on anxiety that is specific to the foreign language acquisition process. Their work was original; before they investigated this topic, there was no universally recognized concept of FLA. To validate and examine Horwitz et al.'s theoretical model of FLA, Aida (1994) conducted an exploratory study to discover the underlying structure of the FLA construct and examine whether or not the structure reflects the three types of anxiety presented: communication apprehension, test taking, and fear of negative evaluation. The study group comprised second-year university students of Japanese language classes in the United States. The group comprised 56 men and 40 women, all 96 of whom completed the FLCAS. The results of the study showed that communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation are essential components of FLA.

Summary of the section

This section summarizes the anxiety related to language learning, emphasizing the early research from the 1970s (see table 2). Most of the studies during this era did not explicitly focus on anxiety and its influence on language learning but on the overall effects while experiencing language learning. Chastain (1975) was one of the first to suggest that while low anxiety levels could motivate or facilitate performance, higher anxiety levels could lead to lower performance. Following Chastain, Scovel (1978) took

Chastain’s notion of facilitating and debilitating anxiety and more formally defined these in a foreign language learning context. Finally, in the 1980s, the research findings on anxiety and foreign language learning resulted in defining FLA and creating a divergent area of inquiry related to affective state and language learning

The studies reviewed in this section point to FLA as a phenomenon apart from generalized anxiety, thus, defining FLA in the current study. Notably, individuals with FLA experience specific feelings and behaviors while learning a foreign language, including those that facilitate or motivate learning and those with adverse effects on learning that can debilitate the process and detract from achieving goals.

Table 2

The Contradictory Results of the Early Research on the Effects of Anxiety on Language Learning

Studies	Context	Measurement tools	Compared anxiety level with these indicators	Results
Chastain, 1975	University students that are studying French, German, or Spanish.	Test anxiety scale and Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale	Final grade	Conflicted results while examining anxiety and three foreign languages.
Tucker et al., 1976	Junior high school students	French class anxiety	French reading scores	Negative correlation between reading and anxiety, positive correlation between anxiety and speaking

Backman, 1976	21 Venezuelan university students learning English in the US	Anxiety scale	Placement tests, teacher evaluation of speaking skills	The least proficient students scored the highest and lowest on the anxiety tests
------------------	---	---------------	--	---

FLA studies Involving Saudi Arabian Learners

The previous section is a review of FLA literature and aims to provide a well-rounded perspective on FLA as a distinct form of anxiety. This section will review FLA studies involving Saudi Arabian learners. It will review the research design that have been used among this population, and the limitations of these studies.

Numerous studies have investigated FLA among Saudi Arabian learners of English. However, these studies have similarities. First, they have been done in segregated classrooms except one study that was done by Tanveer, 2007, which removes the role of gender and how it affects FLA. Second, all but two of these studies had all female participants. Third, all but one of these studies were done in EFL classes where English is not the primary language outside the classroom.

One of the earliest studies investigating FLA in a Saudi context is by Abu-Ghararah (1999). This study is one of the two studies that included both sexes, thus allowing for comparison between sexes. Although Abu-Ghararah's study included men and women, the setting was segregated classrooms. Thus, the discussion includes the social dynamics in single- gender classroom. The study focused on the relationship between FLA and gender among college-level and high school students in Saudi Arabia in segregated classrooms. The data were collected by surveying 60 male and 50 female

high school students and 70 male and 60 female university-level students studying English as a foreign language. The results showed that high school and college-level male students studying English experienced a higher level of FLA than women in the same settings. Abu-Ghararah asserted difference in FLA levels between men and women stemmed from gender roles. Men in Saudi Arabia are socialized to define personal worth as their level of success in personal endeavors, whereas women are expected to spend their time inside the home and refrain from engaging in competitive environments. As a result, women tend to spend more time studying than men. In other words, Saudi men who are students spend little of their free time studying, making them feel guilty and provoking their anxiety.

Alrabai (2014) also conducted a study that included men and women. To determine the sources and levels of FLA with a far larger sample than Abu-Ghararah (1999), Alrabai amassed data from over 1300 Saudi students participating in EFL classes in three different school years in high school. The study investigated the students' anxiety levels in English language classes and their understanding of the sources of anxiety. First, the participants' anxiety levels were measured using the FLCAS. Then, these data were analyzed using an exploratory factor analysis to determine the sources that aroused anxiety in classroom-based language learning. The findings showed that speaking was the primary source of FLA because these students feared adverse outcomes from teacher and peer evaluations of their speaking abilities. Thus, learners with FLA tend to evade activities that include speaking in class. Overall, the results showed students' FLA to be of moderate to high levels.

Javid (2014) also focused on FLA among men and women in a Saudi context. The study was conducted using a quantitative design with a FLACS as the data collection instrument. Javid investigated the level, and sources of FLA among 216 randomly selected male and female preparatory students enrolled in an EFL program at Taif University. The data revealed that the students experienced a medium level of FLA, and the most reported anxiety-provoking situation was related to speaking activities. The participants also had high anxiety regarding the fear of other students laughing at their lack of English language proficiency.

Dewaele and Al-Saraj (2015) focused on gender differences with FLA; however, the population differed from other studies by including men and women from Saudi Arabia. Moreover, they used a quantitative approach with variables that differed from other studies and focused on how these variables affected FLA levels. These distinctive variables had linguistic, circumstantial, and psychological elements, such as personality traits and sociobiographical. These researchers emphasized the dynamics of FLA levels, which are constantly changing and can be related to psychological variables and contextual factors such as the specific language under study. Dewaele and Al-Saraj addressed EFL students' experiences while speaking in class. The participants were students who spoke Arabic as a native language and were studying or had studied English as a foreign language in Arabic institutions. A sample of 348 participants (250 women, 98 men) responded to an online questionnaire. The participants were EFL students at universities in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and other Arabic countries; however, nearly 80% of the participants were originally from Saudi Arabia.

One part of the survey included the Arabic Foreign Language Anxiety Questionnaire (AFLAQ) created by Al-Saraj in 2011. The results revealed that FLA associated with speaking was significantly and negatively correlated with particular personality traits. Emotionally stable and extroverted participants scored lower on FLA. Older participants also scored lower on FLA. Degree of multilingualism, sex, and education level had no association with FLA.

Most studies investigating FLA among Saudi students used only female participants, precluding the perspectives of male students on FLA. For example, Al-Saraj (2014a) investigated FLA among Saudi female students in a private college who are studying English as a foreign language program at a Saudi Arabian university. This study comprised two phases: a pilot followed by a case study phase. The pilot phase included 48 female participants attending a women's college English program (in a private college EFL program). Al-Saraj created the new questionnaire, called the Arabic Foreign Language Anxiety Questionnaire (AFLAQ) specifically for the context of assessing FLA in female Saudi Arabian English language learners. Al-Saraj included items from Horwitz et al.'s (1987) FLCAS and added items targeted to Saudi culture to tailor the instrument for the population under study.

In the second phase, the researcher conducted a case study using individual and group interviews and classroom observations. The participants were 10 female students in a women's college English program (in a private college EFL program). The researcher selected the highly anxious students using their AFLAQ scores. Consistent with other studies, the participants felt anxious about how they appeared before their peers and

teacher and their class grade. In addition, the results showed various characteristics of the classroom environment and the teacher that prompted anxiety and influenced FLA.

Similarly, Al-Saraj (2014b) developed a deeper understanding of FLA for Saudi female learners. She conducted an exploratory study on FLA in Saudi Arabia, which established a comprehensive understanding of students' perspectives on anxiety-provoking situations they experienced in their EFL classroom. The researcher incorporated quantitative and qualitative methodology and collected data via the AFLAQ to address the research questions. The study concerned a Saudi EFL learning context based on the pre-existing FLCAS analysis. The study also included group and individual interviews with 10 participants - five from beginner level (level 1) and five from a more advanced level (level 3) in a women's college English program (in a private college EFL program). The findings revealed that some factors, such as teacher-student interactions and teacher behavior affected the students' FLA. For example, teachers' favoritism of some students over others can cause FLA in students. The results also showed that students' comparing their social status to others could accentuate FLA if the social status is unequal or if social distance exists between the participants and their classmates. For example, students who were "the out-group members" who dressed modestly (i.e., preferred traditional Saudi attire and behaviors according to Saudi norms) mentioned that they compared their social status to other students who were "the in-group members" with social status. These in-group members come from a high social class, are fluent in English, and are westernized, wearing high designer brand clothing. Because the out-

group compared themselves to the in-group, they tended to experience anxiety in the presence of those who spoke English fluently and showed signs of higher social class.

Rafada and Madini (2017) conducted a mixed method study concerning the sources for FLA, specifically the triggers for speaking anxiety among female Saudi EFL students. The participants were taking EFL classes at King Abdulaziz University. The first phase comprised semi-structured interviews with 10 students about their FLA experience in the classroom to understand the cause of speaking anxiety. In the second phase, a Likert scale questionnaire was administered to 116 students to identify the most common causes of speaking anxiety. The questionnaire was adapted from FLCAS and the Arabic Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (AFLCAS). The quantitative data revealed that nearly half of the participants (46.6%) felt anxious when speaking English in class. The students attributed their speaking anxiety to three circumstances. First, the students suggested that their speaking anxiety was linked to the weak educational system they experienced. For example, they were not accustomed or encouraged to practice the target language in the classroom. Second, the students expressed concerns about failing a speaking test. For example, they became very anxious, especially during speaking assessments, because they feared failing. The third underlying reason for FLA in regards to speaking discussed in the study concerns peer anxiety. For example, the students were not only concerned about their teachers' negative evaluations but also those of their classmates. They worried their peers would mock or laugh at them if they made mistakes.

Balla (2017) investigated FLA among Saudi learners, concentrating on female participants. The researcher recruited a group of 3rd-year female students majoring in

English at a university in Saudi Arabia to fill in the FLCAS questionnaire. The results showed that students' high anxiety levels due to communication apprehension was followed by test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Balla claimed that speaking causes FLA among these students, which minimizes their contact with their teachers and classmates. Students were also shown to develop FLA out of fear that their teachers and peers would negatively evaluate them when taking a test. The researcher attributed the fear of failing before peers, family, and consequently society with a particular focus on the nature of society in which the concept of "saving/ losing face" is very ingrained in this area, which is very conservative. The researcher also found that students scored low on items dealing with communication apprehension specifically when they speak to native speakers. The researcher attributed this low apprehension to native speakers being strangers to the participants; therefore, communicating with these unknown individuals was more like a game or play that could be pleasurable. Those strangers do not belong the same society as the participants, so they do not experience any anxiety, such as fear of negative evaluation.

One of the recent studies investigating speaking FLA among Saudi women in a Saudi EFL context is that by Alnahidh and Altalhab (2020). They investigated the level and sources of FLA in regards to speaking among female Saudi EFL students at King Saud University. Their study utilized a mixed-method approach that included a questionnaire to measure this type of FLA, followed by interviews. A total of 85 participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire, and six of the most anxious students were interviewed. The results revealed that these female Saudi EFL university students

experienced a moderate level of FLA. Furthermore, the findings revealed that there were several sources of this anxiety. First, the students feared making mistakes in front of their peers. Second, students feared being forced to participate in the classroom. Third, the students attributed their FLA to their limited knowledge of vocabulary. Fourth, they also attributed their FLA to a lack of practice.

In contrast to the studies discussed above that focused on Saudi and Middle Eastern cultural contexts, Tanveer (2007) investigated FLA among participants in a university in the United Kingdom, a significant fraction of whom were from diverse cultural and national backgrounds with few from Saudi Arabia. In addition, the study differs from those described above because these participants were ESL rather than EFL students. The study was a qualitative design using semi-structured one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews. In describing their experiences, these students described the teacher's critical role in shaping their attitudes, perceptions, and personal experiences of learning a language. Participants from Saudi Arabia discussed that the conventional and formal classroom setting significantly contributed to anxiety. These students further explained that a substantial obstacle to learning was their sparse exposure and practice with English in Saudi Arabian. Thus, they developed anxiety when attempting to build verbal communication skills. The program in the United Kingdom emphasized interactive verbal communication, and this approach to language teaching places demands on the students who lack classroom experience with communicating in English and have not yet become comfortable and less stressed. Furthermore, these students' early education occurred in gender-segregated classrooms, and they felt stress and anxiety speaking

English in integrated learning environments. The results from the study appeared to conflict depending on whether students had experienced only gender-segregated classrooms before their experience in the United Kingdom. The Saudi Arabian participants who come from sex-segregated education environments mentioned feeling anxious and uncomfortable when speaking to the opposite sex; their descriptions of feelings were distinct from those participants (non Saudi participants) without experience in gender-segregated classrooms. However, Saudi students also reported that these feelings were transient and tended to diminish as they spent more time in the co-educational environment. Those students from co-educational backgrounds did not report anxiety based on interactions with the opposite gender, suggesting that the gender-segregated classrooms and cultural customs significantly contribute to FLA.

Looking at these reviewed studies collectively, the findings are relevant to the present study's research question in three main ways. First, they involved Saudi Arabian students who are studying English as their participants. Second, some of these studies used a qualitative approach, which is similar to the current study. Third, these studies revealed some factors that influence foreign language anxiety among Saudi Arabian students who are studying English as a foreign language. Some of the most cited factors that influence FLA among Saudi Arabia students are individuals became self-conscious of how they appeared to their peers and teachers increases their FLA, teachers' play a role in affecting students' FLA, the most reported anxiety provoking situation was related to speaking activities.

However, these studies have important limitations. The first limitation is that all but one studies involved sex-segregated classes rather than unsegregated classes, which has prevented a clear understanding of how the mix of a desegregated learning environment and the foreign language acquisition process might provoke anxiety. Furthermore, because the students were still learning within Saudi Arabia and within the norms that govern segregated classes, the result of these studies are not easily generalized to co-educational classrooms found in other countries where Saudi Arabian students commonly study, such as the United States. According to Al-Saraj (2011, 2014), the social dynamics in mixed-gender classrooms likely differ from single-gender classrooms. Further research is needed to determine if Saudi ESL students in mixed-gender classrooms experience different factors that provoke anxiety than Saudi EFL students in segregated classrooms. However, only one study that looked at FLA among Saudi participants in a mixed gender class, which is the study by Tanveer (2007). The focus was not on Saudi Arabian' FLA as the participants belonged to a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds with varied language learning and teaching experiences. The Saudi Arabian participants in Tanveers' study was fairly small in size.

The second limitation is that most of these studies with Saudi learners were conducted in an all-female EFL classroom. If a study focuses on participants from only one gender, that study does not allow for comparisons between genders, and therefore identifying similarities or differences between them was not possible. Saudi international students in the US are not all female, but include males too.

The third limitation is that these studies involved EFL rather than ESL classes. EFL and ESL courses differ in that they occur in dissimilar social environments (as discussed in Chapter 1), and thus, students studying in EFL contexts can have a different experience than those studying in ESL contexts. EFL students do not receive as much exposure to the target language as ESL students. For example, students in EFL classrooms may use the target in the classroom but may not need to use it outside the classroom as the community does not speak the target language as a first language. However, students studying in ESL contexts will be forced to use the target language outside the classroom to get by in their daily life because the community speaks the target language as their first language. In foreign language learning contexts, the target language is not the primary language of communication outside the classroom. Therefore, the possibility exists that classroom communication could be less anxiety-provoking than many communicative events faced in everyday life by students living in a second language environment (Woodrow, 2006).

The fourth limitation is that most of these studies are primarily quantitative studies. They investigated FLA by implementing questionnaires which may not allow looking at this issue in depth. For example, Vandergrift (2005) pointed out, “[q]uestionnaires, although quick and easy to administer, are limited in their ability to probe the ‘why’ of participant responses” (pp. 82–83). According to Yan and Horwitz (2008), although the findings of previous studies point to several potential sources and consequences of anxiety in the context of learning a language, their reliance on questionnaires do not allow for an examination of how anxiety interacts with other

learner or situational factors to influence language learning. Studies that encourage learner reflection by using qualitative data tools, such as interviews, could provide a deeper understanding of learners' perceptions on the relationship between anxiety and language learning.

Refer to table 3 for the studies that investigated FLA that involved Saudi Arabian learners of English that were discussed in this section.

Table 3

The Studies that Investigated FLA that Involved Saudi Arabian Learners of English that were Discussed in this section

Study	Focus and Context	Design	Main findings	Limitation(s)
Abu Ghararah, 1991	The relationship between FLA and gender among students in Saudi Arabia.	FLCAS	Male students studying English experienced a higher level of FLA than females	Conducted in sex segregated classes Data were only quantitative
Al Saraj, 2014 a	FLA among Saudi female learners using in an all-female college	AFLAQ Interviews	Individuals became self-conscious of how they appeared to their peers and teachers which increases their FLA	Conducted in an all-female EFL classroom
Al Saraj, 2014 b	FLA among Saudi female learners using in an all-female	AFLAQ Interviews	Factors such as teacher-student interactions and teacher behavior	Conducted in an all-female EFL classroom

	college.		affected the students' FLA	
Javid, 2014	The level and sources of FLA male and female preparatory students enrolled in an EFL program	FLCAS	The most reported anxiety-provoking situation was related to speaking activities.	Conducted in sex segregated classes. Data were only quantitative
Al Rabai, 2014	FLA causes and levels by evaluating Saudi EFL students in EFL classes	FLCAS	communication was the major source of FLA, the results showed student's FLA to be of moderate to high levels.	Conducted in sex segregated classes Data were only quantitative
Dewale and Al Saraj, 2015	FLA among EFL Arabic speakers using different variables using an online questionnaire	AFLAQ	speaking FLA was significantly and negatively correlated with specific personality traits.	Only female participants Data were only quantitative
Rafadah and Madini, 2017	The cause of speaking FLA among female Saudi learners using interviews a questionnaire.	Interviews An online based Likert-scale questionnaire (a foreign language speaking anxiety questionnaire was designed specifically to this study)	46.6% of students felt anxious when speaking English in class due to teacher's role, the lack of vocabulary, the fear of failing a speaking test	Conducted in an all-female EFL classroom. Data were only quantitative

Balla, 2017	The level of FLA in a group of third-year female students majoring in English.	FLCAS	Students' high anxiety level due to communication apprehension followed by test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Speaking causes FLA among these students, which minimizes their contact with others.	Conducted in an all-female EFL classroom. Data were only quantitative
Alnahidh and Altalhab (2020)	FLA among eighty-five female Saudi EFL university students.	FLCAS Interviews	The students were afraid of making mistakes in front of their peers and being forced to participate in the classroom caused anxiety about speaking. Students attributed their FLA to their limited knowledge of vocabulary and lack of practice.	Conducted in an all-female EFL classroom.
Tanveer (2007)	FLA among ESL participants in a university in the United Kingdom	Interviews	Saudi participants discussed that the conventional and formal classroom setting	The Saudi Arabian participants were fairly small in size which makes it hard to

FLA studies not involving non Saudi Arabian learners of English

A review of FLA research from various cultures worldwide could provide a more rounded view of how FLA might function in different contexts. One of the most cited cause of FLA among foreign language learners is worrying about other people's judgments (Horwitz et al., 1987; Ohata, 2005; Price, 1991) For example, Price (1991) conducted a study of factors underlying FLA among students taking a French language course at a university in Texas. The students who self-identified as anxious students were invited for an interview. Ten students were interviewed. They all responded that speaking in front of their peers was highly anxiety-provoking. In addition, they all spoke of their fears of being laughed at by others and feeling foolish in public. These results align with findings from Gregersen and Horwitz (2002), who interviewed eight students and measured their anxiety levels. These students were enrolled in second-year English language classes at the Universidad de Atacama in Chile. This sample consisted of the four students with the highest anxiety levels measured and the four with the lowest anxiety according to their scores on the FLCAS. These students were videotaped in one-on-one interviews designed to elicit a sample of their English conversational ability. The participants then watched videos of the others interacting with the interviewer and were asked to comment on their performances. The results showed that the participants with high level of anxiety tended to worry about evaluation of others and worried about the possibility of appearing foolish. The anxious students viewed their performance as being

constantly evaluated by teachers and peers, whereas the non-anxious relied on self-evaluation and generally evaluated themselves positively.

Across studies, the results suggest that language teachers can exacerbate FLA for some students (Horwitz et al., 1986; Price, 1991; Young, 1991). Students experience FLA and adverse consequences regarding their learning abilities, particularly when teachers react negatively to their learners' mistakes in class by embarrassing them in front of peers. For example, in an Indonesian context, Subekti (2018) investigated the factors attributed to FLA from EFL students' point of view. The study involved six Indonesian university students from non-English majors taking a general English class and six of their teachers. The anxious students were identified using FLCAS and invited for the interview. In addition, two separate focus groups of English students were conducted with the teachers. Several themes emerged from the data. Some teachers' characteristics contributed to FLA; strict and serious teachers tended to make students feel more anxious than those who were more relaxed. The students commented that teachers who are funny and make jokes in the classroom usually make the learners feel less anxious. Also, teachers' excessive error correction was a source of FLA. Effiong (2016) also reported similar findings. In his study, 24 students in EFL at different universities in Japan and four English teachers were interviewed. He also used classroom observations. The findings showed that when learners consider their teachers unfriendly or strict, they experience higher levels of FLA. In contrast, the participants reported feeling less anxious when taught by friendly teachers. The results suggested that teachers' characteristics play a role in students' FLA.

Another important factor related to FLA is culture. For example, Woodrow (2006) investigated the relationship between anxiety and speaking English as a second language among 414 ESL students (275 men, 139 women) from Confucian heritage culture and European heritage culture: Confucian heritage culture (the majority, i.e., 83% came from Korea, Japan, China, and Vietnamese) and European heritage culture. The author did not indicate specific European countries. The ESL students were in their final months of studying English at an intensive language center in Australia. Quantitative data were collected using the Second Language Anxiety Speaking Scale, an IELTS-type oral assessment, and qualitative data from interviews. The results showed that Chinese, Korean and Japanese students exhibited a higher level of FLA while speaking in a second language than the European students. According to the author, this indicates some evidence for a distinction between Confucian heritage cultures and other cultures. Confucian heritage students reported more anxiety than European or Vietnamese students, suggesting anxiety is influenced by ethnicity. This cultural influence aligns with Lucas's (1984) article concerning communication apprehension, which showed that communication apprehension was much more common in some cultural settings than in others. His article stated that Zimbardo (as cited in Lucas, 1984) suggested the type of society that would most likely lead to communication apprehension. He added that communication apprehension tends to occur more in societies where failure is considered a source of personal shame. These students are not taught to deal with failure, and cultural expectations revolve around unbounded aspirations and open-ended opportunities for success. The culture suppresses emotional expression or sharing of feelings or

anxieties and represses close relationships, especially if they are of an intimate or sexual nature. Zimbardo (1977) stated that shame is a possible cause of apprehension toward communication and adds that shame is a significant consideration in Confucian culture. He added in Japan for instance, people are manipulated by the use or threat of shame to conform to the dictates of society. The abiding consideration imbued upon them from birth is that no individual should disgrace the family. To them, shame can derive from any activity or aspiration they do not perform well, for example, in games or education. Ironically, success is attributed to the parents, teachers or coaches, or even to Buddha, whereas the individual is held responsible for his failures. In a discussion of these social norms, Zimbardo observed that FLA associated with speaking could be great in such a culture. Zimbardo emphasized the relationship between Japanese society, the model, and that previous studies showed that communication apprehension is common in Japan. This suggests that these ideas could not only be applied to Japan but also to other culture stemming from Confucian heritage too. This shows how culture can influence FLA among language learners.

Unpreparedness on the topic of the class or classroom activity is another significant source of FLA among learners. For example, Ohata (2005) explored the nature of FLA from the perspectives of five Japanese ESL students. Using in-depth qualitative interviews, the participants revealed potential sources of FLA. The results showed that participants felt anxious when they perceived their English proficiency to be low. When their lack of English proficiency combined with a lack of knowledge or unpreparedness on the topic under study, these students expressed fear of being in the classroom. These

results echoed Mak's findings (2011) which found that lack of preparations was a crucial factor in FLA. Although Mak studied FLA with a different population than Ohata, the central question was consistent between the two studies: the factors contributing to anxiety when speaking in class. The subjects were 313 Chinese ESL 1st-year university students in Hong Kong. The research was carried out in three phases: a pilot, a quantitative phase using questionnaires, and the qualitative phase comprised semi-structured interviews, discussions, and participant observations. Mak showed that speaking in front of the class, particularly without preparation, was essential to FLA in this context.

Apart from the reasons mentioned above, competitiveness is another vital factor related to FLA. As an illustration, Bailey (1983) explained personal experiences as a doctoral student enrolled in a French class, and the challenges faced. While in the class, Bailey kept a diary of observations regarding classmates' behaviors, the instructor's methods, and her reactions to the class and activities. At the end of the experience, Bailey realized that she tended to define her level of competency by comparing personal development to those of classmates, which increased her FLA. Bailey was surprised by the competitive nature that the diary entries revealed and reported the result as a conclusion; i.e., competitiveness among L2 students can create levels of anxiety that frustrate their efforts to improve their pace.

Research found that negative L2 self-concept can induce FLA. For example, MacIntyre et al. (1997) conducted a study to examine perceived competence in L2 and the effects of FLA. The study recruited Thirty-seven Anglophone students with varied

French competence at a bilingual university in Canada. Twenty-two students had taken a French immersion program in elementary school, and 14 of them studied French at the university at the time of the study. They completed a survey to measure anxiety while learning a language, i.e., a scale of self-rated L2 competency. They also completed a series of French proficiency tests as an objective measure of proficiency. The results showed that anxiety probably results when a student feels incompetent or expects to fail. Highly anxious students did not perceive their competence as high as the more objective tests revealed. If the learners believed their level of L2 competence to be deficient, the belief was linked to FLA. The results align with Gregerson and Horwitz's (2002) findings that students who reported a tendency to be critical toward themselves experienced higher anxiety levels. In their study they examined the relationship between FLA and perfectionism among 8 students enrolled in English classes at a university in Chile. The participants were divided into two groups (non-anxious and anxious groups) according to their FLCAS score. They were audiotaped while they were watching their performance in a videotaped oral interview. Their reactions to their performance were analyzed against their actual performance. The data suggests that anxious learners were more concerned over their errors than non-anxious learners. They have higher standards for their performance than their non-anxious peers.

Another important factor related to FLA is the students' experience of novelty in teaching methods. For example, Yan and Horwitz (2008) investigated FLA among 532 Chinese students in their 1st- through 4th-year business majors studying English at a university in Shanghai who completed the FLCAS to reveal their anxiety levels. Then

these researchers also conducted semi-structured interviews with 21 participants. One of the main themes outstanding in the interviews was the impact that teaching methods have on their FLA levels. Participants in Yan and Horwitz's study expressed their shock over the unfamiliar teaching methods used by teachers from other countries. The authors found that the Chinese students expected a formal relationship between students and teachers in the classroom, and they experienced anxiety when such a relationship did not exist. In a similar study that investigated the novelty of the teaching methods for the students and how it influenced FLA. Kim (1998) aimed to study whether Korean college students' studying language anxiety differed across two learning contexts in English classes: a communicative classroom and a reading and grammar-based, traditional environment. The sample consisted of 109 college students taking summer English courses at a women's university in a large city in Korea. Kim used a questionnaire, FLCAS, to measure FLA. The questionnaires were administered 3 times: one pretest and two posttests for each context. Classes were also observed to establish criteria for distinguishing one context from the other, and then interviews with instructors and students were conducted to address which aspects of each learning environment were related to students' affective experiences. The questionnaire results showed that students were statistically significantly less anxious in a traditional reading class than in a conversation class. Kim indicates that Korean second language learners often avoid confrontations in conversation because nonverbal factors are important in Korean culture. According to Kim, some American teaching methods using a communicative approach are ineffective with Korean students because their previous learning experience is not

similar to the communicative class environment. The communicative teaching approach can result in anxiety and frustration for Korean students.

Sex is another important factor related to FLA. For example, Park and French (2013) measured FLA using the FLCAS with 948 university students learning English in Korea. The results showed that female students reported higher anxiety levels than male students. They attribute these increased levels of FLA for the female learner population to the sociocultural characteristics of the male-dominant society in Korea. The researchers suggested that in Korea, the culture encourages women to engage in a more submissive role, making them ill-prepared to share their personal opinions in group settings.

Similarly, Sadeghi et al. (2013) investigated gender and FLA experienced by male and female students in gender-segregated classes in Iran. This study used mixed methods; in the quantitative portion, the FLCAS was used to measure FLA, followed by a qualitative portion which used interviews with the most highly anxious students. FLCAS showed that female students had a statistically significant higher level of FLA than their male counterparts. The interviews showed that female students have a higher level of FLA resulting from cultural expectations of women, which challenges their status.

Looking at these reviewed studies collectively, the findings are relevant to the present study's research question in two main ways. First, these studies revealed some factors that influence FLA among language learners. They produced some findings on the possible factors associated with FLA research outside Saudi Arabia context. These factors included; Speaking in front of their peers, being constantly evaluated by teachers and peers. Competition and facing unfamiliar teaching methods were also contributed to

students' FLA Second. Some of these studies used qualitative approach, which is similar to the current study. However, regarding the current study's research question, the studies that were reviewed in this section have an important limitation. The limitation was that most of the research on FLA that involved collectivist cultures had been done with East Asian students such as Chinese, Japanese, or Korean learners. Despite the superficial similarities among collectivist cultures, various students from Arab nations displayed in research studies different forms of collectivistic characteristics. These differences result from several factors. In the case of Saudi Arabia, and to a lesser extent, some of the other Gulf States, these differences result in part from the higher importance given to Islam in Arab cultures, which permeates all aspects of the society and culture, ranging from national/government entities, other institutions, primarily the educational infrastructure, and within the private sector, as depicted within families (Hammad & Shah, 2018). Shame is avoided in most collectivist societies and is related to family and clan, i.e., the larger family or social group (Hofstede, 1991). However, in Saudi Arabia, shame has a religious aspect that is reinforced not only by family or group but also by religious and political leaders. (See table 4)

Table 4

Summary of FLA studies that produced some findings on the possible factors associated with FLA in research outside Saudi Arabian context.

Studies	Focus and Context	Research Design	Main Findings	Limitation (s)
Price, 1991	FLA among students taking a French	Interviews	Speaking in front of their peers was a very anxiety-	The participants were students

	language course in the US		provoking situation for EFL learners	from individualistic culture
Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002	FLA among students enrolled in a second- year English language classes in Chile	Interviews	The anxious students viewed their performance as being constantly evaluated by teachers and peers whereas the non-anxious not only relied on self-evaluation but generally evaluated themselves positively.	The participants were students from individualistic culture
Subekti, 2018	FLA among university students and their teachers from whom they are taking a general English class in Indonesia.	FLCAS Interviews	Some teachers' characteristics were contributing to FLA such as being strict . Some teachers' characteristics reduced FLA such as being funny and friendly. Students' lack of English proficiency emerged as a factor associated with FLA, as students who believed that their English was not good enough felt anxious.	Participants were from only some type of collectivist culture (i.e., East Asians)
Effiong, 2016	FLA among students in EFL at different	Interviews Observation	Teachers' characteristics play a role in	Participants were from only some

	universities in Japan and English teachers		students' FLA.	type of collectivist culture (i.e., East Asians).
Woodrow, 2006	The relationship between anxiety and speaking English as a second language among ESL students in Australia.	The Second Language Anxiety Speaking Scale IELTS-type oral assessment Interviews	Chinese, Korean and Japanese students exhibited a higher level of FLA while speaking in a second language than the European students.	Participants were from only some type of collectivist culture (i.e., East Asians)
Ohata, 2005	FLA among Japanese learners of English in the US	Interviews	Negative consequences of Receiving a bad grade causes FLA	Participants were from only some type of collectivist culture (i.e., East Asians)
Mak, 2011	The factors contributed to speaking in-class anxiety among Chinese ESL first year university students in Hong Kong.	Questionnaires Semi-structured interviews Discussion Observation	Speaking in front of the class without preparation is an important factors leading to speaking-in-class anxiety.	Participants were from only some type of collectivist culture (i.e., East Asians)
Bailey, 1983	Explaining her own experiences as a doctoral student enrolled in a French class in the US and the challenges she	Diaries	Competitiveness among L2 students can actually create levels of anxiety that frustrate their efforts to improve at a desired pace.	The participant was s student from individualistic culture

faced

Maclintyre and Collegues, 1997	Competence in L2 and how it affects FLA among Anglophone students with widely varied competence in French at a bilingual university in Canada.		Highly anxious students do not perceive their competence to be as high as a more objective analysis reveals it to be. If the learners believe their level of L2 competence to be very low, it causes FLA.	The participants were students from individualistic culture
Yan and Horwitz (2008)	FLA among participants in Mandarin speakers learning English in China.	FLCAS Semi-structured interviews	The impact that teaching methods have on their FLA levels such as unfamiliar teaching methods used by Western teachers.	Participants were from only some type of collectivist culture (i.e., East Asians).
Kim, 1998	FLA among college students taking summer English course at womens' university in a large city in Korea.	FLCAS	The students were statistically significant less anxious in a traditional reading class than in the conversation class.	Participants were from only some type of collectivist culture (i.e., East Asians).
Park and French, 2013	FLA among university students learning English in Korea.	FLCAS The final Academic grade.	Females reported higher anxiety levels than males.	Participants were from only some type of collectivist culture (i.e., East Asians).

Sadeghi, Mohammadi, & Sedaghatgfta (2013)	Gender and FLA experienced by male and female students in gender segregated classes in Iran.	FLCAS Interviews	Female students suffer from considerably higher level of FLA more than their male counterparts	The classes were conducted in sex-segregated classes
---	--	------------------	--	--

Summary of the chapter

The chapter contains three main sections. The first is a review of the early research on anxiety and foreign language learning. The studies show that the results were inconsistent for three reasons. The first reason was distinct definitions were used for anxiety in foreign language learning contexts. The second reason was various instruments were used to measure anxiety. The third reason was no clear distinctions were made between the types of anxiety studied. After Horwitz et al. (1986) proposed a situation-specific FLA framework, research in this area began to flourish. The theoretical contentions linked to FLA proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986) are linked to three performance-related anxiety types: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. These three types have been further expanded to highlight some related anxiety exacerbating factors. The selected studies were reviewed chronologically to illustrate the development of research on anxiety and the methodology used in studies that advanced the field of FLA research. Next, I explored the different types of anxiety — state, trait, and situation-specific anxiety — and the role of each with a specific focus on the categorization of FLA as situation-specific anxiety.

The second section reviewed FLA research that involved Saudi Arabian learners.

These FLA studies conducted in the Saudi EFL context have identified various sources of FLA among Saudi English language learners. These sources were the characteristics of the classroom environment and the teachers, concerns over others' judgments, both peers and teachers, worry over making mistakes and appearing foolish in front of their peers, fear of failing the class, and the way they perceive their English ability, especially in terms of vocabulary.

In this section, the limitations of these studies were discussed. The first limitation is that these studies involved gender-segregated classes versus mixed-gender classes, which prevented a clear understanding of how differences in a mixed-gender learning environment for foreign language learning might provoke anxiety. The second limitation is that most of these studies with Saudi learners were conducted in all-female EFL classrooms, which again does not allow for any comparisons across genders. The third limitation is that these studies involved EFL rather than ESL classes. EFL and ESL courses differ because they take place in two different social environments. The fifth limitation is that most of these studies used quantitative approach.

The third section reviewed FLA research providing a more comprehensive view of factors associated with FLA in different contexts, reviewing FLA research that involved non-Saudi learners of English. The research has produced some findings on the possible factors associated with FLA. Among these factors are concerns over other people's judgments, teachers' characteristics, culture, the role of gender, unpreparedness for the classroom activity, previous language learning experience, competitiveness, and self-perception.

The main limitation of these studies is that most research on FLA in individualistic culture and the other involved collectivist cultures that was only set with East Asian students such as Chinese, Japanese, or Korean learners. Although these cultures are collectivist, Arab nations like Saudi Arabia display collectivism in distinct forms due to religious differences. FLA within various groups and social contexts specifically with students from Arab nation should be explored, including the gender factors influencing FLA across cultures.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter introduces the general approach of the research and research methodology. The first section is about participants, which involves the recruitment procedure and their demographic information (i.e., gender, age, major, and length of stay in the United States). The second section concerns the instrument for data collection using interviews, how it was developed and piloted, and the checking of the validity of the interview questions. The third section is about the data collection procedure, which involves how interviews were conducted. The fourth section contains the data analysis procedures, which are thematic analysis, described step by step, including checking the reliability of the data analysis. Finally, ethical considerations are reported regarding recruitment, data collection, and data analysis.

The General Approach of the Research

The study was conducted as a qualitative research design involving semi-structured interviews with 30 Saudi ESL students in the United States. This qualitative approach was chosen for several reasons. First, qualitative research provides rich data, which allows an in-depth analysis that is impossible using quantitative methods. As Vandergrift (2005) pointed out, “[q]uestionnaires, although quick and easy to administer, are limited in their ability to probe the ‘why’ of participant responses” (pp. 82–83). Rubin and Rubin (2021) stated that qualitative researchers “focus on depth rather than breadth; they care less about finding averages and more about understanding specific situations, individuals, groups, or moments in time that are important or revealing” (p. 2). They

added that the qualitative approach is focused on how people perceive their worlds and how they interpret their experiences. They explained that qualitative research using interviews entails talking to participants who have directly experienced the phenomenon. The participants are encouraged to talk about the issue in detail from their perspective. These researchers argued that people construct their realities based on their experiences and interpretations. So, the emic perspective gained from interviewing participants was essential for understanding how FLA arises in the context of Saudi students studying in the United States.

Interviews were appropriate for the current study because the topic concerns FLA is a subjective experience of tension and nervousness. Horwitz et al. (1986) stressed that the experience of learning a second language is intensively subjective but varies among learners depending on their context. Moreover, Cohen et al. (2000) suggested that qualitative designs appropriately characterize the diversity of experiences because the approach focuses on individuals to understand their lived experiences. Thus, in this study, the focus was on how Saudi learners experience language anxiety and their perceptions of the causes of anxiety.

The second reason this approach was suitable was that the qualitative approach could complement the quantitative approach that has been common in FLA research. As discussed in Chapter 2, researchers rarely use qualitative methods to investigate FLA (Price, 1991). Across the historical groundwork of correlational studies, researchers have been unable to draw a clear picture of the relationship between FLA and overall language acquisition, performance, and proficiency (see Horwitz, 1986; Ellis, 1994; Horwitz, 2001;

Scovel, 1991; Tittle, 1997). Indeed, until Yan and Horwitz's (2008) seminal work, others had not strongly argued a need to explore the students' voices as a source of information about FLA. Yan and Horwitz followed Kvale's (1996) suggestion about asking individuals about their experiences to develop an understanding of the phenomenon of interest, and in their case, the phenomenon was FLA understood from the students' experiences and perspectives of their own culture. Thus, qualitative research, as used in the current study, allowed the researcher to add to the literature using descriptive information not easily assessed through correlational research and, as described by Price (1991), provided a way to view phenomena from the point of view of the subject. I used this method to help better understand anxiety concerning teaching and learning English in an ESL context, specifically focusing on Saudi learners.

Participants

This study's sample comprised 30 Saudi ESL learners in the United States. At the time of this study, recruiting participants was challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Visiting ESL schools to recruit Saudi participants who are studying in ESL classrooms was not possible. Schools were completely online during this time.

The goal was to find participants who met the study criteria. The criteria for selection was that the participants had to be college students studying in the United States who had been enrolled in English language classes for no more than three years so they could recall their full experience (e.g., what it was like when they began studying in the US) easily. In addition, I wanted to select students who had been in the United States for at least 6 months to familiarize them with ESL classes and teaching methodology.

I contacted the participants in two ways to invite them to participate in this study. First, I emailed a student-led club for students from Saudi Arabia at a large research university in the US and to request to send an invitation email to members to participate in the study (Appendix A). The student-led club is considered a resource for newcomer Saudi students by offering social involvement on campus and community service opportunities. Twenty-one potential participants responded by email with interest in participating. All but one of these volunteers were eligible to participate in the study. This potential participant was ineligible because she didn't take ESL classes in the US.

The second method for finding participants was through snowballing sampling. I asked the first group of participants to refer others to the study, particularly those who met the inclusion criteria. I contacted these referrals who are from different universities around the US to ask them to participate in my study. I contacted 11 students via email. Of these 11 potential participants, I excluded one because this individual had returned to Saudi Arabia due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and scheduling the interview was difficult.

As a result of this process, the final sample size was 30 participants, all of whom were Saudi Arabian ESL students who were or had been studying ESL in the United States. This number of participants allowed for attaining saturation of the data. Saturation is the point at which additional data adds no new information and insights to the data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, an inadequate sample size can leave incomplete answers or unanswered questions (i.e., some potential participant viewpoints remain under or unexpressed) whereas a larger sample of data may result in the collection

of redundant information. For this study, the data from 30 participants were sufficient to reach saturation.

The participants were 14 (46.67%) females and 16 (53.33%) males. The participants' ages ranged from 19 to 35 years old, with a mean of 26.43 ($SD = 4.58$). Their length of stay in the United States varied from 6 months to 3 years, with a mean length of staying of 1.18 years ($SD = .90$). Among these students, 11 (36.66%) students were studying in ESL classes (intensive English program), 7 (23.33%) students were doing their bachelor's degree in various fields, 6 (20%) were pursuing a master's degree, 2 (6.67%) were studying for doctoral degrees (Applied Linguistics and Computer science), 3 (10%) were in AlKhebrat program. AlKhebrat program is a part of the Saudi government's 2030 Vision plan, which calls for transforming teaching and learning, creating an education system that meets the needs of a sustainable economy that does not rely on profits from petroleum production. Saudi teachers and administrators for the program began their stay in the US with English language classes. The students from the Alkhebrat program are studying English language classes. 13 (43.33%) had studied ESL previously between 6 months and 1 year before the interview was conducted, and 3 (10%) had studied ESL two years before conducting the study.

To keep the participant's identities anonymous, numbers were assigned to the completed demographic questionnaires, and only the principal investigator had access to the participant names. The students were notified that data collection would be confidential and that no results or data would be used for any purpose other than this study. They were informed that participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw

anytime.

Table 5

Backgrounds of the Participants

ID No.	Age	Gender	Length of Study	Timeframe ESL Study	Education level
1	23	Female	1 year	7 months ago	Bachelor's in political science
2	27	Male	1 year	8 months ago	MA in law
3	30	Male	6 months	Current	Khebarat program
4	22	Male	9 months	Current	ESL
5	19	Male	6 months	Current	ESL
6	30	Male	8 months	Current	ESL
7	26	Male	7 months	Current	ESL
8	21	Female	1 year	8 months ago	Bachelor's in design
9	24	Male	1 year	6 months ago	Bachelor's in business
10	33	Female	5 years	2 years ago	Ph.D. in linguistics
11	27	Female	2 years	1 year ago	Masters in physiology
12	35	Male	6 months	Current	Khebrat program
13	27	Female	2 years	1 year ago	Masters in physiology
14	20	Male	6 months	Current	ESL
15	24	Female	7 months	6 months ago	BA in business and marketing
16	20	Female	18 months	Current	ESL
17	30	Male	5 years	2 years ago	Ph.D. in computer science
18	25	Male	2 years	1 year ago	Bachelors
19	34	Female	2 years	1 year ago	Bachelors
20	21	Male	8 months	Current	ESL
21	29	Female	1 year	Current	ESL
22	29	Male	10 months	Khebrat program	Khebrat program
23	28	Female	14 months	6 months ago	Masters in physiology
24	30	Female	6 months	Current	ESL
25	26	Female	1 year	6 months ago	MA in TESOL
26	30	Female	2 years	1 year ago	MA in interior design
27	28	Male	1 year	6 months ago	Bachelors
28	19	Male	1 year	2 semesters online	ESL (2 semesters online)

ID No.	Age	Gender	Length of Study	Timeframe ESL Study	Education level
29	23	Male	9 months	Current	ESL/college preparation
30	33	Female	2 years	1 year ago	Master's in design

Note. ID No. = participant identification number, Length of Study = duration as an ESL learner in the United States, Timeframe of ESL Study = status as a current learner or the approximate time at which study ended, Education Level = degree attained,

Data Collection Tools

I used two instruments to collect the data. The first instrument is consist of a background questionnaire interrogating the participants about their age, sex, length of study in the United States, duration as an ESL learner in the United States, their major if they are not currently studying in ESL classrooms (Appendix b). It also included status as a current learner or the approximate time at which study ended.

The second instrument is consist of semi-structured interviews were designed to investigate the Saudi ESL students' experiences with sources of FLA and these learners' perspectives regarding learning English and specifically with speaking English. In addition, the interviews explored other related issues, such as personal differences and individuals' diversity, variations in classroom settings, the backdrop of Saudi culture and norms, and Islamic traditions. I wanted to learn about the students' opinions and anxiety-related experiences in their own words and their voices, asking the students to discuss their experiences. So, when I created these questions I wanted to cover the main points in my introduction: gender and different educational backgrounds and how these relate to FLA, as well as the participants' perspectives in general about FLA.

The interview questions were piloted weeks before the study to ensure that the questions were straightforward and understandable for the students and that the interview could be performed in the time allotted. The interview questions were piloted with three Saudi ESL students. They were asked to say if there were any ambiguous questions. All of the students described the questions as easy to answer and had no confusion concerning the questions. I kept the same questions I originally developed and stated the questions in the same way to each participant. The 10 interview questions are:

1. Can you tell me something about how you have felt when you have been in ESL classes in US? For example, when you have been in class, have you usually felt good or not so good?
2. Do you ever feel anxious in your ESL classes? If 'yes', when? If 'not', why not?
3. If you have felt anxious, what made you anxious the most?
4. Do you have any ideas as to how ESL classes in the US might make students less anxious?
5. In your experience, how have the ESL classes in the US compared to EFL classes in Saudi Arabia? Have they been similar or different? if they have been similar, how? If they have been different, how?
6. How do you feel when you are in ESL classes in the US compared to when you were in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia? Is the feeling the same or different? If the feeling is the same, why? If the feeling is different, why?
7. Do you feel more anxious in the language classroom in the US or in Saudi Arabia? Why?
8. In ESL classes in the US, has your teacher's gender played any role in how you feel? If yes, why? If no, why not?
9. In ESL classes in the US, has your classmates' gender played any role in how you feel? If yes, why? If no, why not?
10. Do you think your gender has had any impact on how you have felt in ESL classes in the US? If so, what? If not, why not?

The first two questions were aimed to get a sense of how students feel in general in the classroom and if they ever felt anxious. Question 3 was created to prompt the students to list and describe anxiety-related situations they had encountered in their foreign language classes. As for question 4, the aim was to elicit the students' opinions about what makes the English classroom more relaxing. The responses could supply some implications for teaching practice, teacher support, and language policy. As for questions 5,6, and 7, I expected that the students who took part in this research had previous experiences in English classes; otherwise, they would not have been able to study abroad in an English-speaking country. This prior experience for the students presented the opportunity to ask about their experiences in English EFL classes in Saudi Arabia and their ESL classes in the United States. This opportunity to discuss and contrast both settings broadened the potential perspectives beyond that of ESL courses. I prompted the participants to discuss their previous experiences in EFL and ESL classes, their ongoing experiences at university in the United States, and their day-to-day lives. As for questions 8, 9, and 10, it was important to address gender segregation and its influence on FLA among Saudi learners. Sex-mixed classes are one of the major differences between classrooms in Saudi Arabia and classrooms in the United States. I sought to learn about the students' perspectives in terms of their experiences in being in sex-mixed classes.

I asked some follow-up questions to allow the participants to express their thoughts on anxiety and other issues. I asked them follow-up questions when needed to clarify what they meant. For example, for participant 9, when I asked Q4, “ do you have

any ideas as to how ESL classes in the United States might make a student less anxious,” the participant stated, “ I think its important to make students feel confident enough to face an audience and to talk in front of a lot of people.” However, it was unclear how this could be achieved based on the answer, so I asked a follow-up question, “ how do you do that?” The participant elaborated on his answer by saying: “It comes from practice. I think it is the teacher’s responsibility to encourage the students to talk and to participate in the classroom”

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection took place during the Fall semester of 2021. After the initial contact with the potential participants, I scheduled an interview date with the 30 potential participants at their convenience.

After agreeing to participate, I emailed each person an informed consent form (Appendix c) to read before the interview. We agreed on the time of the interview according to their availability. The interview was held via Facetime. At the beginning of the interview, I described the research in more detail. Then I asked them about their college major, length of stay in the United States, and age. After collecting this information from them and breaking the ice, I started the interview. The interview was recorded on an iPhone with permission from each participant.

The meeting was through FaceTime. I could not meet face to face with the participants due to concerns for safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews were one-on-one, except for one interview with two participants. These two participants were sisters studying ESL and asked if they could be interviewed together. Interviews

were held on a day and at a time agreed upon by the researcher and the student. Each participant was interviewed only one time. All interviews were recorded through separate application that is included as part of Apple's mobile device operating system iOS. In the consent form, participants were informed about recording procedure. Then, with the app's assistance, all recorded audio from interviews was immediately downloaded from the phone onto the same secure laptop on which the study's analysis was conducted. After this, all recordings were deleted from the phone.

I made verbatim transcriptions of the audio recordings of the interviews to support the accuracy of the results. The written language that presented the data was the same language the students spoke which was "Saudi dialect" "Arabic language". I labeled speakers as "interviewer" and "interviewee". I transcribe the data I didn't use any software to transcribe the data. As a first step to analyze the data, I listened to each interview several times to enhance understanding of the participants' responses; the process took about 3 hours for each of one-hour interviews. Gaining familiarity with the data and exploring the detailed wording reduces researcher bias and facilitates emergence of meaning.(data collection book)

The interview questions were posed in Arabic as the interviewees were native Arabic speakers. The use of Arabic allowed students to respond freely and discuss their issues, worries, concerns, and anxieties. The interviews ranged from 23 to 45 minutes, with an average of 30 minutes.

Data analysis procedure

After preparing the data, they were analyzed following the thematic analysis

(Braun & Clarke, 2006). Their method is used to identify patterns of meaning across responses related to a research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It is suitable to analyze verbatim quotes from the participants to better capture FLA phenomena from their perspectives.

The most common way to conduct thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013) was to follow a 6-step process: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up. The steps I followed to analyze the data using the thematic analysis approach were:

1. Familiarization. The first step is to become familiar with the data. I transcribed the data, read through it, and took initial notes. Next, I reread the data to familiarize further. Thus, I read and reread the data so I got to know the data.
2. Coding. The second step involves coding the data. This step includes highlighting units of the data, which are usually phrases or sentences. The code is a shorthand label, referred to as a “code,” describing the highlighted unit. The code describes the idea or the feeling expressed in the highlighted unit. I underline the phrases the participants mentioned which are triggers or situations or activities and link it to FLA. I decided something that the participants mentioned is relevant to FLA in two main ways. The first way is when the participant was responding directly to a research questions. (e.g., Researchers: if you felt anxious, what made you anxious the most? The participant: I was comparing myself with other students and all of them spoke better English than me) is when the participants link it to FLA by using phrases or similar phrases such as “make me anxious” “make me nervous”

“ I become nervous when” “.. that makes me anxious” , “ I feel tense when ...”, “ that makes me feel uncomfortable...” “ I was worried”. (See table 6)

Table 6

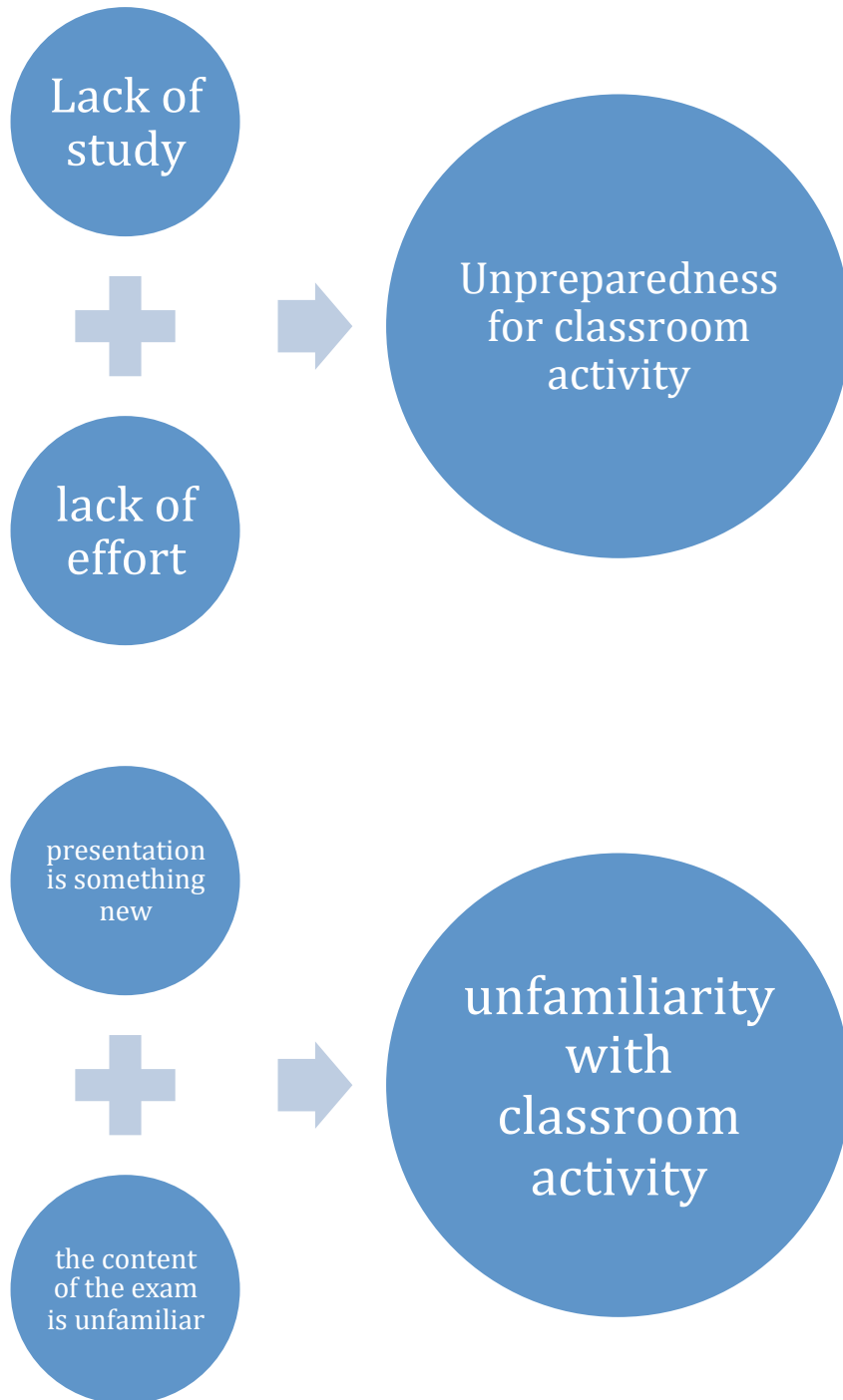
Examples of units and codes

Interview extract	Codes
I felt anxious and lost. <u>When I have English exams, it was like a day off for me because I didn't know how to study English.</u>	Lack of study skills
When I have presentations. <u>I don't usually prepare for my presentation and that makes me anxious when I have to give presentations.</u>	Lack of effort
<u>I don't remember in my whole life I had to give presentation in schools in SA. In ESL it was my first time I have to present, and it was in English. I was so worried.</u>	Presentation is something new

3. Generating themes. Next, I looked over the codes to identify patterns among them and came up with a theme. Themes are generally broader than codes. I started combing codes into themes (Table X). For example, the codes “lack of study skills” and “lack of effort” were combined under the theme “ unpreparedness for classroom activity”. Being unprepared for classroom activity is a result of a) lack of study skills and b) lack of effort. And “presentation is something new” and “the content of the exam is unfamiliar” were combined under the theme “ unfamiliar with classroom activities”. (see Figure 1)

Figure 1

Generating Themes



4. Review themes: I returned to the data and reviewed the themes for their usefulness

as accurate representations of the data. If I encountered problems with themes, I might split them up, combine them, discard them, or create a new one. I reviewed the themes for their usefulness as accurate representations of the data. For example, the theme “unpreparedness for classroom activity” is an accurate representation of the codes “lack of study skills” and “lack of effort”. The data showed that being unprepared for classroom activity is a result of a) lack of study skills, and b) lack of effort. I initially had the theme “presentations” to include the codes “lack of study skills” and “lack of effort”. Later I decided that the theme “presentations” is not an accurate representation of this code because presentation refers something new. The participants mentioned the phrases “unfamiliar” and “new” when talking about presentations which caused FLA among participants. So I decided to use the theme “unfamiliarity with classroom activity” which also includes other activities such as tests and speaking in front of the class, which students also mentioned.

5. Defining and naming themes. As the themes are finalized, I identified each theme. When I identified each theme I formulated precisely what I meant. For example, I presented each theme as a factor and there are some subfactors and I give a definition for these factors and subfactors. I gave a description of the theme according to what the data represented, and my definition reflected the data.

To check the reliability of the coding scheme, I used intercoder reliability, a common way to validate qualitative data analysis. The evaluation of intercoder reliability should be part of developing coding schemes for qualitative data to satisfy (Hruschka et al., 2004; Krippendorff, 2004; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Weber, 1990). Intercoder reliability

requires two or more equally capable coders operating in isolation to select the same code for the same unit of text (Krippendorff, 2004; Popping, 2010). Campbell et al. (2013) advised that coding in-depth semi-structured interviews should involve developing a coding scheme with as high a level of intercoder reliability as possible based on a sample of transcripts. Again, two coders are required to do so.

To begin validating these analysis procedures, I contacted another doctoral candidate in her final year in applied linguistics in England to check the codes after I had created them. I trained her by explaining a detailed description of the project and the purpose of coding. The Intercoder Reliability: involve four stage process:

The first stage: I read and coded 20% of the full transcript (17 single spaced page long) chosen randomly.

The second stage, I gave the rater a list of units that I have already identified so the rater doesn't need to identify the units first and I asked the rator to code the units.

The third stage: we compared the other rater’s decision with the coding decision I made with the same data. Initially we followed the recommendation of considering dropping or merging unreliable codes in order to reduce the number of codes (Hodson, 1999; Hruschka et al. 2004). For example, discussing about whether when student used phrases that means comparing oneself to other in classroom such as “ I compare myself to other students and when their language is better than mine ... I get very anxious” is considered a competition or self perception. We reached an agreement to consider “comparing one’s own language ability to others English ability” as a code.

The fourth stage: after we had this discussion about our coding, I did an inter-coder reliability test (based on a formula suggested by Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 64) intercoder reliability level has achieved of 98%.

Fourth stage: it involves developing that coding scheme on the full set of transcripts (85 single space pages) once acceptable level of intercoder reliability/or agreement have been achieved. (see table 8)

Table 8

The Steps of Data Collection and Analysis

Step number	Actions
1.	Creating the interview question and validating the interview questions in two ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The interview questions were audited by the dissertation chair and a doctoral student. - Piloting the interview question with three students
2.	Recruiting students who met the criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Saudi students who had been enrolled in English language classes. no more than three years

-
3. Interviewing the students remotely (semi-structured interview).
 4. Transcribing the interview
 5. Analyzing the data using thematic analysis
 6. Checking reliability of the coding scheme
-

Ethical Issues

The study was reviewed and approved by Arizona State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the research was conducted. During the initial contact with the potential participants, I asked participants for consent. Any information obtained in connection with this study that could be used to identify the students remained confidential. All audio-recordings, notes, and questionnaires are hidden in a locked drawer in a secured office in the principal investigator's apartment to prevent access by unauthorized personnel. After three years, personal data will be erased. The participants had no physical, psychological, social, or legal risks.

Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, I presented the general approach in this qualitative study using interviews with 30 participants of Saudi ESL learners studying in the United States to understand their experiences of FLA. Next, I described the participants and the recruitment procedure. Then, I discussed the methods employed for gathering data for the current research (interviews). After that, I detailed the data analysis procedures, and finally, the reliability tests and ethical issues were discussed.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings from the semi-structured interviews. The analysis led to the emergence of ten themes that answered the research question: the most mentioned theme is *being judged negatively by others*, followed by *having a perception that English language is important*, then *having a negative perception of own English ability*, *interacting with other gender from same culture*, *feeling unfamiliar with classroom activity*, *encountering unfamiliar culture*, *feeling unprepared for classroom activity*, *having teachers who behave in a negative way*, *having teachers with negative characteristics*, and the least mentioned theme is *having unsuccessful attempts of communication*. I used representative excerpts from the interviews to support these themes. I have presented the themes according to the most mentioned themes. The description for each theme is given. I assigned the participants numerical identification numbers to maintain their confidentiality.

Reporting the Findings

1. Being judged negatively by others

The first theme that appears to have caused participants' FLA is being judged negatively by others. With this theme, FLA appeared to be promoted by being judged by teachers and classmates. The learners could experience these judgments directly or indirectly. For example, direct judgment occurred when teachers overtly criticized the students in the classroom. In contrast, indirect judgments occurred when students were judged by others who are onlookers, such as when classmates laugh at their mistakes or

when they go against Saudi social norms, especially for women. Participants expressed that they experienced higher levels of FLA when they were judged.

This theme includes two subthemes. First, negative judgments on their English abilities while speaking in front of the classroom, including grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation mistakes. Second, negative judgment on their appearance, actions, and their interactions in the classroom, especially Saudi women who do not go with Saudi social norms (e.g., not wearing a hijab or covering their hair).

The first subtheme concerns the participants making mistakes while speaking in class, giving presentations, and pronouncing challenging or complex words in classroom discussions. From the participants' mentions of being judged negatively by their teachers and peers, I coded data in this subtheme when participants described some kind of judgments (e.g., "I am afraid of other *judgments*", "when teachers *judge me*", "my classmates *mock me*", "when they *laugh at me*") for making mistakes in English, and they linked the judgment to FLA. To illustrate this subtheme, this participant expressed concern about making mistakes and that the class would laugh and get very nervous if someone laughed. He stated:

If *I make mistakes* in the classroom and *they would laugh at me*. I don't like people to laugh at me. That's just my personality. I get very nervous when I make mistakes and someone laughs at me. (emphasis added) (interview with participant 7)

The second subtheme regards participants' mentions that being judged as a Saudi woman makes them anxious. I coded the data in this subtheme when students mentioned

“being a woman,” “being judged as a Saudi woman,” “they judge me more because I am a Saudi woman,” “they talk about you and judge you,” and “as a girl” “ Saudi male students judge us more” and linked it to FLA. For example, in the following excerpt, a female participant stated that she felt anxious because there were certain expectations of how Saudi women should act and what they should wear, primarily if she did not act by following expectations of her. She stated,

I came to the state by myself and *I am a girl and girls are not suppose to live by themselves in our culture*. So there is a lot of pressure on me for being a Saudi girl who is studying by herself in the us. *so I was very anxious at the beginning because of that* till I get used to it. (emphasis added) (interview with participant 30

2. Having a Perception that English Language is Important

The second theme that appears to be related to participants’ FLA is the perception that English language is important. Fourteen participants mentioned perceptions of English as necessary. First, some comments were about a high level of importance of English, which was linked to participant’s high level of FLA. The participants commented that they perceive English to be important when English is crucial to pursue education in the United States and English is vital for everyday living in the United States. With this theme, the degree of FLA was linked to participants’ comments about their perception of the importance of using the English language.

First, some comments about perceiving a high level of English language importance were linked to high levels of FLA. I coded data if participants mentioned phrase or related phrases such as “more seriously” , “a matter of survival” when referring to speaking English or English classes and link it to FLA. For example, in the following

excerpt, a participant stated that their FLA increased when beginning English classes in the United States. He stated:

I became more stressed in ESL classes in the United States because *I started to take it more seriously*. I needed to learn English so that I would be able to continue my education in the States.” (emphasis added) (interview with Participant 6)

Second, some comments were about a low level of importance of English, which was linked to participants with low levels of FLA; this is further evidence that FLA could be affected by perceptions that English ability is important. Participants commented that their FLA was low when they did not perceive the English language as important or necessary. I coded data as this theme if participants used phrases such as “there was no emphasis on the importance of English in Saudi Arabia,” “I didn’t see the importance of English in Saudi Arabia,” and “I didn’t care about learning English in Saudi Arabia,” “I was in my comfort zone,” “I just want to pass the test” it wasn’t an important subject.” All these responses suggest that the participants did not consider speaking English seriously, and these responses were linked to not experiencing FLA. To illustrate, one participant said he didn’t need to learn English because he lived in a country where he could speak his first language, and his FLA was low. This Participant expressed:

And in high school in *Saudi Arabia I didn’t really care about learning English*. It was not an important subject. *So I had no anxiety* because I was living in a country that speaks Arabic, and *I didn’t need to use English*. (emphasis added) (interview with participant 7).

3. Participants' Negative Perception of own English Abilities

The third theme that participants associated with FLA is negative perceptions of their English ability. With this theme, the degree of FLA was linked to participants' comments about their English ability in general, their speaking ability, their pronunciation, and their accent. For example, pronunciation was an issue when they encountered long, complicated words, and they stated that they worried they might mispronounce some words in class discussions or when giving class presentations. Some stated that they had anxiety about their accent, i.e. when participants perceived their accents were not native-like, especially when talking to native speakers of English outside the classroom. Twelve participants made these kinds of remarks about their English ability. Issues about English ability included two subthemes. The first one, for some participants, involved referring to their ability. The second involved comparing their abilities to others' abilities.

The first subtheme concerning English ability emerges when participants perceive their English to be weak, especially their speaking ability, including their pronunciation, accent, or English language ability. When participants perceive their own ability to be weak, their FLA increases. I coded data in this subtheme if the participants referred to their English ability by using the phrases “not good enough,” “weak,” and “not good at all.” and linked it to FLA. For example, in the following transcript excerpt, a participant mentioned that when he perceives his English ability, in general, to be weak, his FLA increases. He stated:

My English language is not good enough, and that makes me anxious. (emphasis added) (interview with participant 28)

In the second subtheme, data also showed that participants' FLA was lower when they perceived their language ability to be good; this is further evidence that perceptions of weak abilities in English can elevate FLA. It was evident in participants' comments that perceiving their language ability to be good appears to reduce FLA. I coded the data in this category when participants mentioned related words or phrases such as "my English is good," "I speak good English," and "I think my English level is good." And linked this to low FLA. To illustrate this category, a participant explained that he came to the United States, his English was good, so he felt good in general. This participant said:

When I came to the United States my English was really good. They put me in the level 6 which was one level before the last level. I felt good in general. I didn't feel lost in the classroom. Before I went to the states, I already knew English, my subjects were in English when I was in college in Saudi Arabia. (interview with participant 17)

The second subtheme regards participants perceiving their language ability to be weaker than others. I coded the data in this subtheme if participants mentioned related words or phrases such as "I compare myself to other students," "... who spoke better English than me," or "their language was better than mine." and they linked it to FLA. To illustrate this, in the following transcript excerpt, a participant stated that when he compared himself to other students and their language abilities were better than his, that accentuated FLA. The participant said:

I was comparing myself with the other students, and all of them spoke better English than mine, which made me so anxious.” (interview with participant 9)

In addition, data also showed that participants’ FLA was lower when students perceived their English ability to be better than others. This is further evidence that FLA can be caused by perceiving their language ability to be weaker than others. I coded data in this category when students mentioned related phrases such as “... my language was better than them” or “I spoke better English than them.” and linked it to low FLA. This category is illustrated by a participant’s statement that she did not experience FLA when she compared herself to her classmates in Saudi Arabia because her language abilities were comparatively better than classmates. She said:

In Saudi Arabia, *my level compared to my classmates was very good, so I didn’t really have to worry.*” (Interview with participant 10)

4. Interacting with the Opposite sex From Same Culture.

The fourth theme that appears to have caused participants’ FLA is interacting with the opposite sex from the same culture. Some participants mentioned that they found it anxiety-provoking to interact (e.g., informal conversation, instructional activities) the opposite gender from their culture because they were unfamiliar with this situation in classrooms. This theme was mentioned by 11 participants, I coded data in this theme if the participants mentioned being around Saudi individuals of the opposite sex (e.g., “around male Saudi students”, “Saudi guys”, “Saudi female”, “girls from my country”) and linked it to FLA.

To illustrate this theme, in the following response, a participant mentioned that she feels more anxious with Saudi men than men from other nationalities and that causes anxiety. For example, the participant said:

I get even more anxious around Saudi guys than those of other nationalities.

Saudi men make me anxious.” (emphasis added) (interview with participant 15)

In addition, data also showed that participants’ FLA was not affected when they interacted with the opposite gender from countries other than Saudi Arabia. The data showed that FLA can be caused by interacting with the opposite gender from the same culture. I coded data in this theme if the participants mentioned being around individuals of the opposite sex from different countries (e.g., if the men were foreigners,” “if they were foreigner male students,” “a male from different nationalities” “foreigner men students”, “dealing with foreigner girls” and linked it to low FLA. To illustrate this, one student was in a class with male students, including several Saudis. She said she was the only female student in the classroom, and she felt anxious around Saudi male students in the classroom. She said she felt more comfortable interacting with foreigner male students than with Saudi male students. When given a choice of joining with the Saudi men or with male students from other countries, her anxiety level was reduced when she sat with the non-Saudis. For example, she said:

I remember in one class all the students were male except for me so I was very anxious and I wouldn’t speak in that class. Even the teacher felt I was very nervous in this class and she went to speak to the school administrative to change my class but they refused. So the whole semester I didn’t like that class and I feel

anxious in that class and I don't talk and the teacher didn't ask me to speak...

There were almost 3 foreigners and the other 11 were Saudi students. So I was sitting in a table by myself and the foreigners students asked me to join them so I joined them. *It was more comfortable for me to sit with foreigners than with Arabs.* (emphasis added) (Interview with participant 23)

5. Feeling Unfamiliar with Classroom Activity

The fifth theme that appears to have caused participants' FLA is feeling unfamiliar with classroom activity. In this theme, the degree of FLA was linked to participants' comments about feeling unfamiliar with classroom activity such as tests and presentations. This theme was brought up by 10 participants. I coded these data if participants mentioned related words such as "new" or "unfamiliar" and linked them to particular classroom activities such as "giving a presentation." And "tests" "exams" "discussion in the class" and linked it to FLA.

First, some comments were about how unfamiliar the students felt with various classroom activities like tests and presentations. To illustrate, in the following response, a participant discussed feeling anxious when presenting in the classroom because he had never presented in Saudi Arabia. The participant said:

I don't remember in my whole life I had to give presentation in schools in SA. In ESL it was my first time. I have to present and it was in English. I was so worried. (emphasis added) (interview with participant 3).

Second, some participants mentioned that their FLA was lower when they felt familiar with classroom activities. This is further evidence that FLA can be caused by

feeling unfamiliar with classroom activities. I coded the data for this theme when students mentioned related phrases “ I got used to it” “it became something ordinary” when they referred to classroom activity. To illustrate this category, one participant explained that their anxiety had reduced after being in the United States for a while and after getting used to classroom activities. He mentioned:

I used to get very anxious when I had to present, even when I got to university I was feeling anxious about giving presentations. But with time I got used to it.

(emphasis added) (interview with participant 5)

6. Encountering Unfamiliar Cultures

The sixth theme that appeared to have caused participants’ FLA is encountering unfamiliar cultures. Participants stated that their anxiety resulted from worries about possibly offending someone from different culture due to their unfamiliarity of that culture. With this theme, participants experience FLA when they are working and dealing with classmates from other cultures unfamiliar to them. Alternatively, being unfamiliar with the target language culture, American culture, when the participants watch a movie in the classroom or read a textbook that represents this unfamiliar American culture or when interacting and dealing with Americans outside the classroom and they do not understand the American culture, all this increases their FLA. This outcome includes two subthemes: unfamiliar with the target language culture and unfamiliar with classmates’ diverse cultures. These issues were mentioned by 10 participants.

The first subtheme is when participants comment that being unfamiliar with the target language culture, i.e., American culture, increased their FLA. I coded these data if

participants used phrases that refer to being unfamiliar with the target culture, such as “I don’t understand the American culture” or “I never watched American TV before.” For example, in the following transcript excerpt, a participant talked about being unfamiliar with the American culture increased his FLA. The participant said:

I felt bad, and I still feel bad about my English learning. I feel I *am lost and anxious. I don’t understand the American culture.*” (emphasis added) (interview with participant 13)

The second subtheme concerns participants’ comments about when they have to interact with classmates of different cultures with which they are unfamiliar and experience FLA. I coded the data if participants used phrases that refer to being unfamiliar with other cultures, such as “I was not exposed to other cultures” or “never left Saudi Arabia before.” These phrases suggested that limited exposure to other cultures and not knowing them increased their FLA. For example, in the following transcript excerpt, a participant talked about being unfamiliar with other classmates’ cultures increased his FLA. The participant said:

But sometimes like when you *deal with people from different backgrounds than yours, and you don’t understand their culture or they don’t understand yours* which makes certain things confusing and this would make me anxious. In the classroom we have students from different cultures and backgrounds. we have international students from Asia and Europe and so on. In one place, you have different cultures, and awkward situations happen because I don’t know how to

deal with people who come from different cultures than ours. (emphasis added)
(interview with participant 17)

7. Feeling Unprepared for Classroom Activities

The seventh theme that appeared to cause participants' FLA is feeling unprepared for classroom activities. In this theme, participants stated that when they feel unprepared for classroom activities, their FLA increased. This topic was mentioned by nine participants. This theme has three subthemes linked to feeling unprepared for classroom activities due to lack of study skills, lack of effort, or lack of time.

The first subtheme the feeling of being unprepared, resulted from a lack of ability. This subtheme includes a lack of ability to prepare, such as when a student lacks study skills. I coded the data in this subtheme when students mentioned related phrases, such as "I didn't know how to study English," "I felt lost," or phrases that indicated not knowing how to prepare for classroom activities properly. For example, in the following response, a participant stated that she takes "the day off" before the exam instead of preparing because she does not know how to study English. This participant mentioned:

I felt completely lost. When I have English exams it was like an off day for me because I didn't know how to study English. (emphasis added) (Interview with participant 13)

In addition, data also showed that participants' FLA was lower when students knew how to prepare for classroom activities. This is further evidence that a lack of preparation ability can cause FLA. Participants' statements about having good skills in preparing for classroom activities and knowing how to prepare for presentations

suggested they could reduce FLA via preparation. I coded this if students mentioned related phrases, such as “when I changed the way I prepare.” “when I took presentation class” and linked this to low level of FLA. For example, in the following transcript excerpt, a participant mentioned that when he changed the way he prepared for a presentation, instead of memorizing word by word, he tried to understand his presentation and only memorized the headings, which helped him reduce his FLA. He said:

And I used to memorize the presentation word by word and I would go in front of the class and recite whatever I had memorized. So if I forgot one word, I would stress out and forget the rest. I have seen progress *when I changed the way I prepare for presentations*. Instead of memorizing word by word now I just try to remember the headings of my presentation, which are the major points of the presentations. *So my anxiety level has reduced.* (emphasis added) (interview with participant 5)

For the second sub-theme, some participants stated that the feeling of being unprepared resulted from lack of effort. In this case, the participants might know how to prepare but did not and not preparing makes them anxious. I coded the data in this sub-theme when students mentioned related phrases, “I don’t prepare for presentation,” “I didn’t prepare for the exams,” when they referred to classroom activity preparation. For example, in the following transcript, a participant mentioned that he does not prepare for presentations or tests, which makes him anxious. He said:

when I have presentations. I don't usually prepare for my presentations and that makes me very anxious when I have to give the presentation. (interview with participant 7)

This sub-theme also indicates data that showed that participants' FLA was lower when making an effort to prepare. This is further evidence that FLA can be caused by not making an effort to prepare. It is evident in participants' statements that having good preparation skills in preparing for the classroom activities and knowing how to prepare for the classroom activities help reduce FLA while performing classroom activities. I coded data as this factor if participants mentioned related phrases "I took class called oral presentation" to help prepare for presentations and "I used to practice a lot" when they referred to the classroom activities preparation. For example, in the following excerpt, a participant mentioned that she prepares for presentations by recording herself on the phone, which helped her with her FLA. This participant said:

One of the things I did that helped me reduce my anxiety is recording myself on the phone while I am practicing giving a presentation and I used to practice a lot. I feel preparing helps with reducing the anxiety. (emphasis added) (interview with participant 10)

For the third sub-theme, some participants stated that the feeling of being unprepared resulted from not having time to prepare. I coded the data in this category when students mentioned related phrases "we didn't have time to study," "in a specific time," "period of time," and "limited time" when they refer to the classroom activities preparation. For example, in the following transcript, one participant mentioned that they

have many presentations and do not have enough time to prepare for them, making him anxious. This participant said:

We had to do *a lot of presentations and projects, which was a nerve racking. We didn't have time to prepare for presentations.* (emphasis added) (interview with participant 14)

In addition to this sub-theme, data also showed that participants' FLA was lower when having time to prepare. This result further suggests that FLA can be caused by not having time to prepare. I coded the data in this category when students mentioned related phrases "I had two extra days to prepare." "having time to study" and link it to reduce FLA. For example, in the following transcript, one participant mentioned that he had much time to prepare for his presentation, which reduced his FLA. He said:

I was so nervous and stressed. So on the presentation day, I was called last and I only had 4 minutes before the class ends I told the teacher I need more time. so she said I will have the present next class and that was on Friday. *I had two extra days to prepare more. i printed the presentation on papers. I am an old fashion guy .I like papers. So I practiced the presentations 3 to 4 times before I go to sleep.I presented very well that day and I was really comfortable.* (emphasis added) (interview with participant 5)

8. Having Teachers who Behavior in a Negative Way

The eighth factor that appears to have caused participants' FLA is having a teachers who behavior in a negative way during class. Behavior are the actions that the teacher preforms. With this factor, increased FLA was linked to participants' statements

about having teachers with specific behaviors they perceive as unfavorable. The specific behavior the students mentioned were: overly correcting, making a stereotype of Saudi females in the classroom, and embarrassing the students. Nine students mentioned that teachers' behavior affects their FLA. I coded these data if participants included references to teachers' behavior in the classroom and used these related phrases such as “when a teacher embarrassed me,” “when the teacher corrects me all the time,” and “they depict certain stereotype and images of Saudi women.”

To illustrate this outcome, in the following excerpt, a student said that some teachers have some stereotypes about Saudi women and when the teacher says racist things about Saudi women, that makes her anxious. For example, this student said:

Some teachers have strong opinions about Saudi women, and some of them are racists. They say racist things about Saudi women. And when this usually happens I get very anxious and I cant concentrate on my classes at all. (interview with participant 21)

In addition to this theme, data also showed that participants' FLA was lower when teachers behaved a certain way. I coded the data if students referenced teachers' behaviors in the classroom, such as “behave certain way such as breaking the ice and making jokes in the classroom, does not care about the grades.” For example, in the following transcript excerpt, the student said that his FLA decreases when the teachers reach out by bringing donuts daily in the classroom. This student said:

I remember one of our teachers in ESL brings dounts with him everyday so we get up from our seats to grab a donut and chat with other classmates in English in a

friendly way. *Breaking the ice like that made classroom more comfortable.*

(emphasis added) (interview with participant 7)

9. Having Teachers with negative attributes

The ninth theme that appears to have caused participants' FLA is having a teacher who behave in a negative characteristics during class. Attributes are the characteristics that the teachers' possess. It is the traits the teachers have that make them who they are. With this factor, the degree of FLA was linked to participants' comments about perceiving teachers' attributes as unfavorable. This was mentioned by six participants. First, the data showed that participants' FLA appeared to have been caused by particular teachers' characteristics. The participants describe that having teachers with specific attributes can cause their FLA. I coded these data if participants described teachers as being "strict," "too formal," or "unfriendly." For example, in the following excerpt, I asked the participant to tell me about particularly stressful situations, and the participant responded by explaining that having an unfriendly teacher increases his FLA. This participant said:

when the teacher is so strict and not friendly, then, of course, I become anxious.

(emphasis added) (interview with participant 9)

Second, data also showed that participants' FLA was lower when they perceived teachers' positive characteristics. The participants mentioned eight characteristics: cool, relaxed, friendly, compassionate, understanding, humble, cooperative, and flexible. When students mentioned these exact words to describe their teachers' characteristics, I coded the data in this category and linked them to lower FLA. This result is further evidence that FLA can be caused by having teachers with negative characteristics. To illustrate this

category, one respondent talked about feeling less anxious when she had friendly, cool, and relaxed teachers in the classroom:

If he is cool and relaxed then it is easier to communicate and ask questions, and the anxiety level doesn't go up. (emphasis added) (interview with participant 15)

10. Having Unsuccessful Attempts at Communication

Within this factor, increased FLA was linked to participants' statements about the inability to make themselves understood by their teachers and their classmates or their inability to understand their teachers and classmates. This was mentioned by five participants. I coded these data when participants mentioned related words such as "there is a lack of communication between me and the class," "when they will not understand what I am trying to say," "I won't be able to express myself or my ideas in English" "I will not be able to deliver the information.", which increased their FLA. The following excerpt illustrate this factor; I asked the participant if she felt anxious in the classroom, and she mentioned she becomes nervous when unable to express herself or when saying something her teachers and classmates do not understand. The participant stated:

Many times, especially when I want to say something but I am not sure how to say it or when I say something and they don't understand what I mean (emphasis added) (interview with participant 26)

Summary of the chapter

The data revealed 10 factors (see Table 9) that likely promote FLA among Saudi learners who have studied ESL in the United States. Again, a range of frequencies exists. The most frequent factor was being judged by others, followed by perceiving that the

English language is important. The least frequent factor was having unsuccessful attempts at communication.

Table 9

The Frequency of Factors Mentioned by the Study Participants

Factors	Frequency
1. Being judged negatively by others	15
2. Having a perception that English language is important	14
3. Having a negative perception of own English ability	12
4. Interacting with opposite sex from same culture	11
5. Feeling unfamiliar with classroom activity	10
6. Encountering unfamiliar culture	10
7. Feeling unprepared for classroom activities	9
8. Having teachers who behave in a negative way	9
9. having teachers with negative attributes	6
10. Having unsuccessful attempts at communication.	5

Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I will include a summary of findings, a description of how the findings related to existing empirical research and a description of how the findings contributed to existing theory. Also, I will include a description of the findings' implications for teaching practice, a description of limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research to build on this study.

Discussion

The results of this study, based on the perspectives of the participants regarding anxiety provoking situations in second language classroom, will be compared with the conclusions offered by the existing research on FLA. ESL Saudi learners' foreign language anxiety is influenced by ten themes in the current study. This section will discuss the correspondence and discrepancies of the previous research compared to each theme. We present the themes in order of their most frequent mentions.

Being Judged Negatively by Others

15 participants reported that being judged negatively by others is the most provoking anxiety factor. Such negative judgments include peers mocking those who make mistakes while speaking the target language in the classroom and teachers embarrassing them in front of classmates when they make grammatical and pronunciation mistakes while speaking.

The evidence from past research supports that FLA is rooted in fear of making mistakes and attracting classmates' derision. For example, Jones (2014) explained that

the students in his study fear making mistakes because of the “fear of appearing awkward, foolish, and incompetent in the eyes of learners’ peers or others” (p. 31). This finding is consistent with another research on FLA. For example, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) reported that highly anxious participants tended to fear the evaluation of their peers and they worry to look foolish in front of others. The worries the participants discussed in the current study about making mistakes in ESL classrooms in the United States are consistent with the worries the participants reported in Al Saraj’s studies (2013, 2014). According to Al Saraj, mistakes made in a public setting in a Saudi context are not viewed causally in Saudi Arabian culture, and onlookers often purposefully embarrass and shame those making mistakes. In Saudi Arabia, saving face in public situations by avoiding situations that can be threatening (e.g., avoiding speaking in class) prevents embarrassment and shame, and thus, people can maintain honor and respect. The loss of face due to speaking a new language incorrectly may have prolonged and broader repercussions. Saving face is equated with honor in Saudi culture, and honor must be constantly upheld. Thus, individuals might feel that speaking in class is a substantial risk; for example, in Saudi classrooms, if a question is answered incorrectly, words are mispronounced, or students lack fluent speech in a new language, public humiliation can ensue. These situations can lead students to avoid the risk of classmates’ mockery and teachers’ scorn.

Having a Perception That English Language is Important

14 participants in the current study reported that there is a link between FLA and their perception of the importance of English. they reported that perceiving that the

English language as important increased their FLA. The current study also reported that this category was the second most often mentioned in influencing FLA. The participants stated that they came to the US, they started to take English classes seriously, which increased their FLA. In contrast, participants mentioned that their FLA was not affected when they perceive English as less important, especially when they were in Saudi Arabia.

The participants in this study reported that in Saudi Arabia, they did not consider English classes to be significant, which is similar to what has been expressed by students in a study by Abu-Gharara (1999). Abu-Gharara showed that Saudi boys and girls in high schools experience low levels of FLA while enrolled in English classes in a Saudi context. Abu-Gharara's study reported that these students did not think the English language was necessary which lowered their FLA. Abu-Gharara attributed the result to the lack of emphasis on English in Saudi schools and the limited use of English in daily life. Therefore, since students didn't think the English language was necessary, they did not experience FLA which is similar to the current study's finding.

Having a negative perception of own English ability

The current study's findings showed that self-perception of own English ability influences FLA, which 12 participants mentioned. For this factor, two main findings emerged. The first main finding is that they are referring to their ability alone. The data showed that participants tend to be more anxious when having negative thoughts about their English ability.

Research has examined many personal and situational variables related to FLA. Students with a high level of anxiety share several characteristics. For example, highly

anxious students underestimate their English language abilities and perceive them as low. The highly anxious learners can have negative thoughts and perceptions about themselves, their abilities, and English language skills (Tobias, 1986: cited in MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; MacIntyre et al., 1997). The participants in the current study reported that they perceive their English ability to be low and this increases their FLA.

The second main finding of the current study linked to this theme is comparing their ability to other people's abilities. The data showed that when participants perceive their English ability to be lower than those of their classmates, that makes them anxious. This finding is consistent with previous research on FLA. For example, Bailey (1983) ascribed this ruminating or compulsive negative thinking as originating from the students' competitive feelings. Bailey perceived her anxiety as originating from defining personal competency by comparing her progress to that of her peers. Bailey attributed anxiety to competitiveness, especially when perceiving her ability to be lower than her peers.

Interacting with Opposite Sex From Same Culture

In the current study, 11 participants described a socialization process to mixed-gender interaction. However, their experiences were variable in terms of beginning and ending points. Some female participants stated that they were more open to other gender from the same culture from the beginning, whereas others felt that interacting with the other gender caused their FLA, which did not change over time. However, they felt more comfortable interacting with male students from different cultures. Some of the female participants in the current study reported that interacting with Saudi men affected their

FLA due to a fear of being judged. They reported that they feel more anxious with male Saudi students than other male international students because they come from a conservative society and Saudi men have specific expectations of Saudi women's behavior. For example, the female participants in the present study said that Saudi men judge Saudi women if they do not dress appropriately by wearing the hijab.

These results can be attributed in part to sociocultural views on FLA. For example, in studies by Sadeghi et al. (2013) and Park and French (2013), the female language students in Iran and Korea demonstrated statistically significantly higher anxiety levels than their male counterparts. The authors attributed this outcome to sociocultural factors related to the gender hierarchies in the participants' home cultures. The researchers added that in Iran and Korea, women are brought up and educated in a male-dominated society where their voices and participation are not encouraged, and their interaction with males is often prohibited. This corresponds to the finding of the current study that suggested that female Saudi students felt anxious when interacting with men, especially men from their culture, because they have grown up in a society that didn't encourage any informal interaction between men and women.

Song (2019) examined Saudi women's socialization when studying abroad and interacting with other genders. The researcher considered shyness as a correlate of perceived social choices rather than personality traits and found that fear of judgment was correlated with their perceptions of appropriate feminine behavior. She explained that those Saudi female students described themselves as actively participating in women-only classrooms, thus, indicating that shyness in mixed-gender settings was a choice of

socially appropriation performance. In the current study, the participants' responses resembled those found by Song (2019); the women in the current study described themselves as shy but only displayed shyness toward Saudi men.

Some participants described a socialization process as mixed-sex interaction. For example, some female participants stated that they were more open to men from their culture from the beginning, whereas others felt that interacting with Saudi men increased their FLA, and this expectation did not change over time. However, they felt more comfortable interacting with male students from other cultures. Variation of their responses were justified according to cultural tradition. This result suggests that Saudi women might adhere to Saudi norms even in American classrooms. For example, female participants discussed strategies for working around gender norms. As explained by two participants, they found themselves in classrooms full of male students, and they chose to sit and talk with male students from other countries but not Saudi male students. These female participants stated that they kept their interactions with Saudi men minimal. These female participants rationalized their choice of sitting and talking with international students rather than Saudi men due to the cultural norms of Saudi Arabia, particularly the norm of limiting interaction between sexes. Thus, they followed the typical cultural limitations on interactions between the sexes in their home country.

The result of the current study is consistent with an explanation from Algahtani (2011). Algahtani discussed that in Saudi Arabia, women are expected to avoid making contact with men other than relatives. Therefore, the cultural norms of Saudi Arabia underlie the stress female students experience if they must talk with male students about

their views. Algahtani (2011) found that during observation of Saudi women in classrooms in the UK, they tended to sit on the opposite side of the room from Saudi men. The result showed that these women practiced their home culture in foreign classrooms. According to Algahtani, pressure to follow cultural norms does not mean that Saudi women are unwilling to participate in class, but that they are conscious of their culture and customs, which uphold that they do not talk with men except when necessary, e.g., assessment. This finding suggests that Saudi female students act accordingly to the will and expectations of other men of the same culture rather than men of different cultures who might not be so critical of them because they do not abide by the traditions of their country.

Most female participants in the present study reported that their FLA had decreased over time, and their hesitancy and reticence dissipated, so they became more comfortable interacting with men. The women's responses about how they initially felt and whether they reached the stage of interacting with men depended on each woman's background and belief system.

As for male participants, in the current study, there was a slightly different reaction from some of the male participants' responses regarding having Saudi female students in the same classroom. Male participants in the present study acknowledged that it was more challenging to speak with Saudi women than with women from other cultures. They attributed this difference to cultural factors within the females, such as shyness or inability to engage in conversation with them because they were men.

Feeling Unfamiliar with Classroom Activity

Participants in the current research reported that the novelty of the situation of classroom activity amplified their FLA. Classroom activities indicated: speaking in the classroom and giving presentations. This was mentioned by ten participants. They indicated that the typical Saudi Arabian teaching methods focus on listening, memorizing, and replicating information to recapitulate exam content. Participants in the current study reported that teaching practices such as students speaking out in class and giving presentations are atypical in Saudi public education. As a result, most Saudi Arabian high school graduates rarely engage in presentations or verbal discussions. For these students, speaking in a classroom and giving presentations is a novel experience, a different learning method for them in which public speaking performance could increase their FLA. Based on the current study's findings, the students in this study are in a distinctive situation due to their cultural and educational background, which could heighten their anxiety about public speaking and presentation more than students from other cultural background.

This finding is consistent with previous research on FLA. Participants in previous studies have reported that they tend to feel anxious when facing unfamiliar teaching methods different from those in their previous learning experience. For example, the Chinese participants in Yan and Horwitz's (2008) study expressed their shock over the unfamiliar teaching methods used by Western teachers. In addition, the authors found that Chinese students expected a formal relationship between students and teachers in the classroom, and they experienced anxiety when such a relationship did not exist.

Encountering Unfamiliar Cultures

The current study's findings showed that encountering unfamiliar cultures can induce FLA. Ten participants mentioned this theme. For this theme, two main findings emerged. The first main finding is that participants' lack of familiarity with the target language culture, American culture, increased anxiety. Saudi students, especially if they have never been exposed to American culture from movies or visiting the United States, may have a high level of FLA when they go to study in the US. The second main theme is that the number of cultures represented by the group of students in the ESL class influenced FLA. The participants in the current study stated that having multiple cultures unfamiliar to them represented in the classroom increased their anxiety. They stated that they worried they might socially offend students of various cultural backgrounds studying in ESL classrooms in the United States.

Scholarly work has suggested that the gap between the cultures of the language learners and the culture associated with the target language is critical to creating the international students' FLA. For example, Thompson's (2000) theory suggests that the gap between the cultures of the language learners and the culture associated with the target language can create a high level of misunderstanding even though the learners understand the words being spoken. The current study suggests that, based on Thompson's theory, the large gap that exists between cultures, for example the difference between the participants' culture and the classmates' culture, can create a high level of misunderstanding which will ultimately create a high level of FLA. The finding of the current study is in alignment with Aida's study (1994), which found that for students studying Japanese in the United States who had visited Japan prior to studying Japanese,

their FLA score was lower than the students who were studying Japanese in the United States but never been to Japan. So, Aida's and current study suggest that exposure to the target language's culture before learning the language helps reduce FLA.

Feeling Unprepared for Classroom Activity

The current study showed that unpreparedness for classroom activities increases FLA among nine students. For this factor, three main findings emerged. First, students felt unprepared because of lack of ability, increasing their FLA. The second one is that participants felt unprepared because of lack of effort, which increased their FLA. Finally, the last one is that participants felt unprepared because of lack of time, which increases their FLA.

This finding is consistent with previous research on FLA. Scholarly work has suggested that high-anxious students had low studying behaviors and less effective preparation. For example, Ohata's (2005) study revealed that when students are unprepared for the topic in question, they feel frightened in the classroom. The current study findings also align with Mak's study (2011) that speaking in front of the class without preparation is an essential factor leading to speaking-in-class anxiety.

Having Teachers who Behave in a Negative way

The current study showed that when students perceive their teachers' behavior as negative, it increases their FLA. This was brought up by nine students. For example, students in this study reported that when their teachers in the classroom overly correct their mistakes, making a generalized stereotype of Saudi women in the classroom,

embarrassing the students when they make mistakes, the participants perceive these behaviors as unfavorable, which increases their FLA.

In contrast, data showed that when participants perceive teachers' behavior as positive, it lowers their FLA. For example, students in the current study reported that when their teachers break the ice by either telling a joke, or ask the students to stand up and socialize at the beginning of the classroom, or by bringing dounts to the class, this would help students relax when they socialize in the classroom, which lowers students' FLA.

These findings are consistent with the trends in scholarly work suggesting that the instructor's actions played a pivotal role in increasing or decreasing students' FLA. For example, students in Alsaraj (2014) reported that teachers had a major role in contributing to their FLA. The participants in the current study describe actions that contributed to their FLA, such as overcorrecting when students speak. They added that they need teachers who are not overly correcting and critical of students' mistakes. This same situation and anxiety-producing outcome also hold for Saudi students in Tanveer's (2007) study. Participants in Tanveer's study reported that teachers' reactions to learners' errors and how they create a stressful environment in the class foment their FLA.

Having Teachers with Negative attributes

The current study showed that the role of teachers' characteristics as perceived by the participants affected their FLA. The higher participants' evaluation of their teachers as being strict, formal and unfriendly, the higher the participants' FLA. This was brought up by six participants. In contrast, participants reported that the higher participants'

evaluation of their teacher as supportive, encouraging, and understanding, the lower the participants' FLA.

This is consistent with the trend of scholarly works that suggest instructors' characteristics played a pivotal role in increasing or decreasing students' FLA. For example, Subetki (2018) found that some teachers' attributes influenced FLA. The participant in Subetki's study stated that unfriendly and strict teachers are associated with learners' FLA. However, the participants in the current study also reported that in comparison, teachers who are friendly and understanding tend to make students feel more relaxed and less anxious.

Participants in the current study offered suggestions for foreign language teachers, including showing compassion and understanding toward students to help reduce FLA. Subetki's (2018) findings led to recommendations similar to those from participants in the present study, who suggested that foreign language teachers should demonstrate friendliness by smiling, using humor during class, and offering flexible due dates for assignments. Moreover, by finding ways to scaffold content, using media sources of different kinds, and showing lenience and tolerance with students' mistakes. All these actions may help reduce students' FLA.

Having Unsuccessful Attempts at Communication

The current finding was that when participants cannot make themselves understood, it increases their FLA. Five participants mentioned that inability to express themselves in English in a way teachers and students understand what they are saying

makes them anxious. Alternatively, when they do not understand the message teachers or students are giving in the classroom, that also makes them anxious.

Consistent with previous research regarding failure in communication can affect FLA negatively. This result corresponds to Al-Saraj's findings (2014), who found that students reported their highest level of public speaking anxiety related to the inability to express their thoughts in a foreign language. This finding is also consistent with Horwitz (2001), who concluded that students have anxiety when presenting information in a second language because they think they might project a less competent, articulate, and accurate portrayal of themselves when speaking English. Thus, it appears Horwitz et al.'s (1986) suggestion that learners' frustrations with an inability to communicate their message is in align with what my participants expressed. Horwitz's assertion and the empirical evidence are consistent with why anxious learners might have FLA associated with classroom participation.

Contribution to FLA Theory

The current study supports that FLA is a situation specific anxiety, a construct proposed by Horwitz et al (1986). Situation specific anxiety refers to the likelihood of becoming nervous in a certain type of situation. According to Horwitz et al, this anxiety stems from the inherent inauthenticity associated with immature second language communicative abilities:

Adults typically perceive themselves as reasonably intelligent, socially-adept individuals, sensitive to different socio-cultural mores. These assumptions are rarely challenged when communicating in a native language as it is not usually

difficult to understand others or to make oneself understood. However, the situation when learning a foreign language stands in marked contrast. As an individual's communication attempts will be evaluated according to uncertain or even unknown linguistic and socio-cultural standards, second language communication entails risk-taking and is necessarily problematic. Because complex and nonspontaneous mental operations are required in order to communicate at all, any performance in the L2 is likely to challenge an individual's self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic (p. 128).

The most well-known and established theory in FLA is the situation specific which has three components: communication apprehension, fear of negative judgment, and test. According to Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) communication apprehension is related to learner's fear or anxiety when speaking in or listening to a foreign language. Fear of negative evaluation is the learners' perception of themselves specifically their language ability or their perception of how others (for example, their teachers and their peers) judge their language ability. Lastly, test anxiety is related to fear of not being able to perform well in an evaluative situations.

The first component of FLA, communication apprehension, is connected to the following factors that participants mentioned: *feeling unfamiliar with classroom activity*, *feeling unprepared for classroom activity*, and *having unsuccessful attempts at communication*. Communication apprehension can occur in any speaking and listening situation in foreign language. The participants in the current study disclosed that public

speaking, speaking in the classroom, giving presentation cause anxiety. The participants stated that they come from an educational background that might lead to their experiencing an even more highlighted level of anxiety in responded to public speaking and presentation. Presentation and speaking in class are atypical teaching practices in public education in Saudi Arabia. As a result students graduating from Saudi Arabian high school and coming to study in ESL classes in the US are hardly ever exposed to or require giving in-class presentations. For them as the participants disclosed in the current study it's a new experience, a new method of teaching, and its unfamiliar activity. The participants in the current study mention that giving unrehearsed speech and being unprepared for presentation is anxiety provoking. Therefore, The themes *feeling unfamiliar with classroom activity* and *feeling unprepared for classroom activity* involve speaking in class without preparation or having speaking activity that is new and unfamiliar is connected to communication apprehension. Finally, the factor of *having unsuccessful attempts at communication* is also connected to communication apprehension because participants mentioned that they feel FLA when they feel that they don't understand the speech of others or they feel FLA when others don't understand them when they speak in a foreign language which involves speaking and listening situations.

The second component of FLA, fear of negative judgments, is connected to the following themes that participants mentioned: *being judged negatively by others* and *having a negative perception of one's own language ability*. Fear of negative judgment, is defined as being afraid of being judged by others including students and teachers.

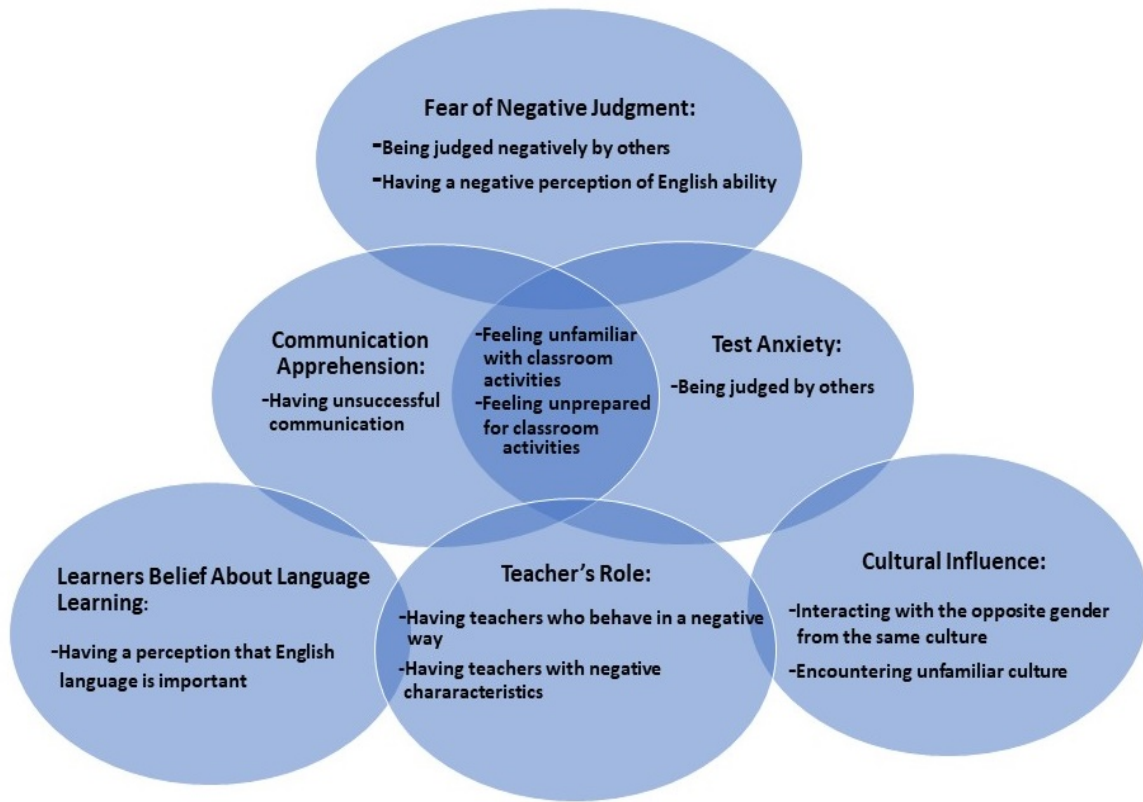
Participants in the current study stated that they are concerned about making mistakes in speaking foreign language in terms of grammar, pronunciation because they are afraid of being judged by their teachers and students. They stated that errors might lead to being laughed at by classmates or looked down upon by teachers. Students in the current study disclosed that that were concerned about being embarrassed in front of their teachers and their peers when they spoke English. Also some female participants mention their fear of negative judgment on their appearance, actions, and their interactions in the classroom, especially those who do not go with Saud social norms (e.g., not wearing a hijab or covering their hair). This component also concern when students judge their own English ability negatively which increase their FLA. The participants in the current study stated that they tend to be more anxious when having negative judgements about their English ability.

The third component of FLA, test anxiety, is connected to the following factors: *feeling unfamiliar with classroom activities* and *feeling unprepared for classroom activities*. Test anxiety is defined as being anxious in any evaluative situations in a foreign language class. The participants in this study expressed their FLA when the content of the test is unfamiliar and different than what they learn in the class. Also they mentioned that being unprepared for tests make them anxious. Therefore, The themes *feeling unfamiliar with classroom activity* and *feeling unprepared for classroom activity* involve taking tests without preparation or the content of the test is new and unfamiliar is connected to test anxiety.

However, my findings also include some themes that do not fit neatly into the three-part model of FLA. The themes that emerged are: *having a perception that English language is important, interacting with other sex from the same culture, encountering unfamiliar cultures, having teachers who behave in a negative way, and having teachers with negative attributes*. The findings of the current study suggests that the three component view of FLA might be insufficient for understanding FLA among Saudi Arabian ESL learners. So, I proposed three additional categories. The first category is teachers' role that contains two themes: having teachers who behave in a negative way and having teachers with negative characteristics. The second category is cultural influence that contains two factors interacting with the opposite gender from the same culture and encountering unfamiliar culture. The third category is learners belief about language learning which has the factor having a perception that English language is important (see figure 2).

Figure 2

The proposal model of factors that influence FLA among Saudi learners in the current study.



Implications

The current research findings imply that the anxiety associated with learning English as a second language among Saudi Students is multidimensional. For this reason, this study provides a range of implications and recommendations for the varied elements of the ESL teaching and learning process in the United States: teachers, learners, and policymakers. The current study suggested 10 factors contributing to FLA among ESL Saudi Arabian learners in the United States. The current findings include implications from the results and potential anxiety reduction strategies to address each factor.

The first theme discussed, and that which was most often mentioned as contributing to FLA among participants in the current study, is being judged negatively by others. This factor concerns the perceptions of the participant regarding how other students view them and also the participants' perceptions of how instructors view them. To address this, teachers could consider how students receive their classroom communications and are aware of the words they choose and how they express judgments. Research suggests that Teachers should be aware that when feedback is given in class to a specific student, and other students hear it, the student targeted for feedback could feel embarrassed and suffer FLA about their English abilities (Horwitz et al,1987; Aida, 1994) . Rahimi (2014) provided a recommendation which is that the negative feedback should be given judiciously and with proactive guidance to help students improve. In addition, teachers must maintain positive regard when students commit errors, and while correcting them, they should emphasize that making mistakes indicates progress in language learning, not failure.

The second factor noted from student interviews is the perception that the English language is important. As students' perceptions of the importance of using English increase, the more likely that studying and learning English can increase students' FLA. They mentioned that when they did not view the English language as essential or necessary, the belief reduced FLA and diminished their effort and motivation to learn English. However, in some cases, after they recognized the importance of learning English and their experience of FLA also increased, they could compensate for the anxiety if their motivation to learn English increased. To support students in overcoming

FLA in this situation, teachers could find ways to make use of English relevant in low-pressure situations. For example, they could include practical situations the students might encounter outside the classroom. If students begin learning practical skills, it could motivate and encourage them to learn how to prepare in the real world outside the classroom. For example, classroom activities might include grocery shopping, ordering in restaurants and coffee shops, going on field trips to interact with native speakers, visiting public places such as courts or museums, and encouraging them to take notes and discuss what they learned in class. Putting students in authentic situations can help them understand the reasons for importance of English, especially when they can transfer what they learned in the classroom to the outside and vice versa—for example, having them ask native speakers' opinions about specific topics can help students understand the importance of speaking English.

The third factor concerns how students' self-perceptions and perceptions others have about them can affect their experiences of FLA. One way to help anxious students who perceive their English ability as low is by practicing cooperative learning in language classes. Through cooperative learning, students have the chance to practice in the learning process and have the opportunities to use the language, which could eventually help their English ability increase and make them more confident about their English abilities, reducing their FLA. Use of group activities that include students of differing abilities can lead to opportunities for groups to learn from each other during their shared experiences of a new language. Group work is a valuable strategy to demonstrate that students have issues in common with other students. Having the

opportunity to work with others who experience similar difficulties can help normalize the experience and allow the individual to feel less alone. Realizing they are not the only ones with challenges can help students reduce their nervousness and abate FLA (Horwitz, 1999).

The fourth factor mentioned by students that affected their FLA was interacting with students of the other gender but from the same culture. The participants' perspectives in the current study regarding mixed gender groups are notable for ESL teachers; the finding implicates the teachers' need to understand the cultural context of interpersonal behaviors in the classroom and how these impact learning. A suggestion to alleviate this issue is that ESL teachers should foster mixed-gender group work by encouraging students to develop rapport within a group. If this rapport is developed at the start of a new class, students have a better chance to build confidence when interacting with the opposite gender (Effiong, 2016). For example, a specific strategy is to use icebreakers at the beginning of a course. The participants experienced FLA when interacting with the opposite gender from their culture but not with the opposite gender from other cultures and countries; thus, teachers' understanding of the cultural norms students bring from home could help the teachers support these students to avoid FLA. Teachers must balance their local culture with that of international students to create a productive climate for learning.

The fifth factor mentioned by participants in the current study is unfamiliarity with a classroom activity, and the lack of familiarity can induce FLA. Thus, instructors' awareness of their Saudi students' lack of unfamiliarity with a specific types of classroom

activities can help the teachers make more hospitable environments for students. For example, before studying in the United States, participants commented that they had not been expected to give spontaneous answers or participate in open discussions of their opinions and feelings in a language classroom. Unexpected opportunities to speak aloud, give their opinions and feelings on a topic, have an open discussion, a group discussion, or a presentation, this type of activity is unfamiliar to them, which causes their FLA. Once instructors become aware of this disconnect, they can address the issue by giving examples of how to do these activities. For example, asking for volunteers who feel more confident doing a particular exercise to model the behavior in front of the students before calling on students who have had less experience doing the particular exercise. Teachers could provide examples and models for the tasks they want the students to perform.

In regards to the sixth theme, encountering unfamiliar cultural factors, suggesting that culture should be integrated into the class. The teacher should ensure opportunities to bring awareness about cultural differences while communicating in the target language. As discussed in the research findings, Saudi students with no prior experience in the United States educational system may have difficulty coping with learning English in a cross-cultural setting. Thus, Algahtani (2011) recommended that some support could come from the institutional level concerning the specific issues for Saudi students. In particular, learning institutions could address the cultural challenges for these students as they acculturate to a western academic context (Algahtani, 2011). Institutions should consider the wide differences in instructional methods and classroom norms in Saudi and American early learning environments. For example, institutions should encourage their

ESL programs to offer orientation to help them prepare for classrooms and counseling materials to introduce students to the American style of education. However, these orientation materials could cover far more information that could help students assimilate and become at ease in their new environment by hosting cross-cultural sessions that inform students and give them practice with interactions within American culture. For example, orientation for international students and Saudis, notably, could include introductions to their classmates. The orientation should include specific information for all students about how the system works within the school but should be more detailed than orientations for American students. Details about available resources, social opportunities, and how to find appropriate school staff to help them solve problems are essential for these students. During initial orientation, students should be assisted in selecting and enrolling in courses if needed. The orientation sessions should be the starting point for these students to develop social networks, including meeting faculty and staff and understanding academic requirements.

As for the seventh factor, the participants mentioned that feeling unprepared makes them anxious. They stated three reasons they might have these feelings: lack of skills, lack of effort, and lack of time. Teachers can address these students' beliefs that they lack skills, by encouraging their students to take preparatory courses for the IELTS tests or a course to prepare them for presentations. The latter example is supported by comments made by students in the current study; they remarked that once they took a presentation skill course and gained the skills for giving presentations, they found their FLA reduced. Even as a part of an ESL course, teachers can instruct the students on

preparing an outline for organizing a presentation or how to study for a test. To help address students' lack of time, teachers can solicit students' estimates of a reasonable time needed to prepare for class and assignments or activities. The teacher can also ask for input from students concerning the scope of the work. Having some sense of control via their input can help alleviate students' anxiety. However, concerning students' lack of effort in a course, students must concede their responsibility to make sufficient effort to complete projects and activities. Offering students an opportunity to set the volume of work and deadlines can promote a sense of efficacy that may affect the level of effort they put forth.

As for the eighth and ninth factors, evidence from the literature consistent with this study implies that teachers' personalities and behaviors can predict FLA depending on how students perceive them. Thus, given the impacts teacher can have on students' FLA, the findings imply that the instructor has a leading role in alleviating FLA among learners. In addition, Tanveer (2007) indicated that FLA considerations by language teachers are critical in assisting ESL students in achieving the intended performance goals in the target language. Thus, most of the recommendations presented by the current study are for language teachers in ESL contexts. These teachers should primarily acknowledge FLA's existence as legitimate, and they should find effective strategies to help learners cope with its destructive feelings.

The participants in this study mentioned that their FLA increased when teachers behaved in authoritarian, stringent, unfriendly, and formal ways. In contrast, when they perceived them as cooperative, compassionate, friendly, and approachable, they

experienced lower levels of FLA. This finding implies that ESL teachers should be aware of their presence in the classroom, i.e., how the students perceive them. FLA is positively associated with instructors having these negative characteristics described above. These teacher behaviors could lead to tension in the n teacher-student relationships, increasing the potential for FLA

Participants suggested that there the level of anxiety was notably lessened when their instructors exhibited positive behaviors such as friendliness, compassion, and understanding. Therefore, ESL/EFL teacher education and preparation should stress the dynamics created by an unfriendly atmosphere within classroom settings. Students need to feel supported by their instructors, which includes positive reinforcement, constructive criticism, and a supportive and safe environment. For example, if a student is experiencing a challenging time, their instructor should present as approachable so the student does not experience additional stress brought about by a lack of understanding of the instructor. For example, for students completing assignments, the teachers could reach out to help determine why this has happened. The approach should include a problem-solving perspective that shows sympathy and possibly offers a deadline extension. Again, as mentioned above, asking students to respond orally on demand in the target language was a stressor among the current study participants, and a solution is to ask for volunteers to speak in class. Evidence from the literature consistent with this study implies that teachers' personalities and behaviors can predict FLA depending on how students perceive them. Thus, given the impacts teacher can have on students' FLA, the findings imply that the instructor has a leading role in alleviating FLA among learners

(Price, 1991; ohata; 2005).Tanveer (2007) asserted that language teachers' consideration of FLA is critical in assisting ESL students in achieving the intended performance goals in the target language. Thus, most of the recommendations presented by the current study are for language teachers in ESL contexts.

Lastly, the participants in the current study also reported that they were sometimes frustrated by unsuccessful communication attempts. For example, they worry that they could not be understood by others because of inaccurate expressions in discussions or conversations. Therefore, it is recommended for ESL/ EFL teachers to make efforts to understand language difficulties and to make an effort to acknowledge the ideas of the students while ignoring grammatical errors or inaccurate pronunciation. Instructors can do that by balancing their observations of quality of ideas with correct and accurate use of language. For example, a conversation exercise is often designed for students to practice fluency; therefore, teachers might be counterproductive if they do not interrupt students to correct mistakes. Teachers should be clear with students about whether activities are designed to build accuracy or fluency, and they should proceed to work on these targets using a consistent plan of giving feedback (Rahimi, 2014; Ellis, 2009). For example, if fluency is the goal in a lesson, then refrain from stopping students while they are speaking if they make a mistake. Wherever possible, try to ensure that lessons incorporate opportunities for students to develop accuracy and fluency distinctly. Creating exercises replicating real-world situations is an effective way to achieve these goals regardless of the language delivered.

Limitation

Like any other study, this research has limitations. The first limitation that stems from this study is related to the nature of data collection (i.e., interviews involve self-reported data) and with self-reported data it is impossible to be sure of the accuracy. It is also impossible to prove whether the participants who were included in the study were downplaying or embellishing their experiences. To support the interview data, it was always intended that the research process would involve observation of students in their academic classrooms. Observation would have assisted the interview data to observe the non-language behavior in more detailed. It will give the researcher a more detailed understanding of how Saudi students interact with each other, with their peers, and their teachers. Since it was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, almost all classes for foreign languages were required to be conducted online, and they had been occurring online for a few months by the time the study was conducted. Based on this, observations were impossible to take a place. It would be more advisable for a future study to observe ESL/EFL class.

The second limitation of the study is that the data suggested there might be sex-related differences. For example, the female participants under the factor fear of negative judgment they stated that they were worried about being viewed negatively by Saudi men because they are Saudi women and didn't obey to the social norms for example, wearing a hijab. Worrying about the fear of negative judgment for being a male was not mentioned by the male students. This issue was beyond the scope of this study, but it should be explored in a future study. This can be done by investigating if these factors influence males and females differently.

The third limitation is generalisability. Since this study focused on just small sample compared to the number of Saudi students studying in the US, which might not be representative, the findings of this study cannot conclusively draw accurate parallels between these Saudi students studying/ studied ESL classes in the US and other Saudi students who are studying/studied ESL classes in the US. It was also evident that different Saudi students have diverse perceptions of their FLA. For example, the current findings included reports of FLA when communicating with students of the opposite gender from their culture. Moreover, the experiences of men and women tended to differ when communicating with the opposite gender. Men reported their anxiety tended to decrease over time with most anxiety occurring in the early experiences with co-education and lessening with time. Gender-related communication apprehension could be further investigated. Similar research is encouraged in order to expand better understanding about Saudi students' FLA in the US.

The fourth limitation is that the present study focused on only students' perspectives on FLA. Since the students identified the teacher's role as one of the primary causes of FLA. To expand our understanding of the student- teacher dynamics and their impact on FLA, future research should also incorporate teachers. An investigation into the perspectives of teachers' perspectives might be taken into account and compared to students' perspectives. These comparisons could be done by interviewing the teachers and include them in group or individual interviews to obtain their perspective on students' FLA. For example, some have shown that when teacher perceive student struggles with FLA, their teaching strategies might shift to help reduce FLA (Darwish, 2012; Trang et

al. 2013). Thus, there may be benefits to teacher awareness of FLA and the affects of anxiety on student learning; however, more information is needed on strategies to reduce FLA and how teacher training and developing awareness potentially lower FLA (Kress, 2015).

The fifth limitation involves the accuracy of the students' memories. Due to Covid-19 a lot of Saudi students were evacuated to go back home which made it harder for me to find Saudi students who are studying ESL in the US. So I had to make the pool of selection wider so I looked for students who are attending and previously attended ESL classes in the US and still studying in the US. Some of the participants in the current study studied in ESL classes three years ago, which might make it harder for them to recall their experience in detail. Further study might include selecting students who currently are studying ESL to talk about their recent experience in FLA who might give more accurate opinions based on their first impressions.

The sixth limitation of the current study is that Saudi Arabia is only presented as an Arabic country. It would be useful to investigate students from other Arabic backgrounds who are studying in the US by interviewing larger samples of students from Arab countries with known cultural differences in order to identify similarities and differences across Arab countries. As this would allow for extrapolation of FLA focused on each specific national group rather than simply grouping all Arabic nationalities as the same in terms of culture and learning background.

The seventh and last limitation of the current study is that it looked at FLA in general. Since, the data suggests that participants might have found speaking particularly

stressful. It is possible to instead look at FLA for specific skills. Future research might examine FLA as it related to different skills.

REFERENCES

- Abu-Ghararah, A. H. (1999). Learning anxiety and English language achievement of male and female students of university and secondary stages in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah (a comparative research study). *Journal of King Abdulaziz University*, 12, 3–29. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4197/Edu.12-1.2>
- Aida, Y. (1994). Examination of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's construct of foreign language anxiety: The case of students of Japanese. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(2), 155–168.
- Al-Ghamdi, A. (2005). Who is to blame in English fluency: Curriculum or method. *Okaz Newspaper*, 14289, 25.
- Alharbi, H. W. (2015). Improving students' English speaking proficiency in Saudi public schools. *International Journal of Instruction*, 8(1), 105–116
- Almunajjed, M. (1997). *Women in Saudi Arabia Today*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Alnahidh, F., & Altalhab, S. (2020). The level and sources of foreign language speaking anxiety among Saudi EFL university students. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 11(1), 55–64.
- Alrabai, F. (2014). A model of foreign language anxiety in the Saudi EFL context. *English Language Teaching*, 7(7), 82–101.
- Al-Rasheed, M. (2013). *A most masculine state: Gender, politics and religion in Saudi Arabia*. Cambridge University Press.
- Al-Saraj, T. M. (2011). Exploring foreign language anxiety in Saudi Arabia : a study of female English as foreign language college students. Doctoral thesis, Institute of Education, University of London.
- Al-Saraj, T. M. (2014 a). Revisiting the foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS): The anxiety of female English language learners in Saudi Arabia. *L2 Journal*, 6(1), 50–75.
- Al-Saraj, T. M. (2014 b). Foreign language anxiety in female Arabs learning English: Case studies. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 8(3), 257–278. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2013.837911>
- Asif, F. (2017). The anxiety factors among Saudi EFL learners: A study from English language teachers' perspective. *English Language Teaching*, 10(6), 160–173.

- Altuwaijri, L. (2018) Dispute over the King Abdullah Scholarship Program. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, *6*, 107-118. doi: [10.4236/jss.2018.66011](https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2018.66011).
- Aydin, S., Denkci Akkaş, F., Türnük, T., Baştürk Beydilli, A., & Saydam, İ. (2020). Test anxiety among foreign language learners: A qualitative study. *The Qualitative Report*, *25*(12), 4289–4309. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4686>
- Backman, N. (1976). Two measures of affective factors as they relate to progress in adult second-language learning. *Working Papers in Bilingualism*, *10*, 100–122.
- Badry, F., & Willoughby, J. (2015). *Higher Education Revolutions in the Gulf: Globalization and institutional viability* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203796139>
- Bailey, J., (2008). First steps in qualitative data analysis: transcribing. *Family Practice* (1) *25*. 127-131
- Bailey, K. M. (1983). Competitiveness and anxiety in adult second language learning: Looking at and through the Diary Studies. In H. W. Seliger & M. H. Long (Eds.), *Classroom-oriented research in second language acquisition* (pp. 67–102). Newbury House Publishers.
- Baki, R. (2004). Gender-segregated education in Saudi Arabia: Its impact on social norms and the Saudi labor market. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *12*(28), 1–12.
- Balla, A. A. S. (2017). Foreign language anxiety in Saudi Classroom: A case study of Saudi tertiary female students in Prince Sattam University. *English Language Teaching*, *10*(5), 28–36.
- Calloway, L. J., & Knapp, C. A. (1995) Using grounded theory to interpret interviews. <http://csis.pace.edu/~knapp/AIS95.htm>
- Campbell, J. L., Quincy, C., Osserman, J., & Pedersen, O. K. (2013). Coding in-depth semistructured interviews: Problems of unitization and intercoder reliability and agreement. *Sociological Methods & Research*, *42*(3), 294–320. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124113500475>
- Cassady, J. C., & Johnson, R. E. (2002). Cognitive test anxiety and academic performance. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *27*(2), 270–295. <https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.2001.1094>
- Chastain, K. (1975). Affective and ability factors in second language acquisition. *Language Learning*, *25*, 153–161.

- Chiang, I. C. A., Jhangiani, R. S., & Price, P. C. (2015). Reliability and validity of measurement. In *Research methods in psychology*.
<https://opentextbc.ca/researchmethods/chapter/reliability-and-validity>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Crowne, D. P. & Marlowe, D. 1946. The Approval Motive. New York: Wiley.
 Feldhusen, J. F. et al. 1965. Anxiety, divergent thinking, and achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 56.40-45.
- Culler, R. E., & Holahan, C. J. (1980). Test anxiety and academic performance: The effects of study-related behaviors. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 72(1), 16–20. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.72.1.16>
- Daly, J. A. (1991). Understanding communication apprehension: An introduction for language educators. In E. K. Horwitz & D. J. Young (Eds.), *Language anxiety: From theory and research to classroom implications* (pp. 3–13). Prentice Hall.
- Darwish, S. A. (2012). EFL teachers' background knowledge is the key to learners' needs. *International Education Studies*, 5(6), 251-262.
- Dewaele, J.-M., & Al-Saraj, T. M. (2015). Foreign language classroom anxiety of Arab learners of English: The effect of personality, linguistic and sociobiographical variables. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 5(2), 205–228.
- Effiong, O. (2016). Getting them speaking: Classroom social factors and foreign language anxiety. *TESOL Journal*, 7(1), 132–161.
- Elkhafaifi, H. (2005). Listening comprehension and anxiety in the Arabic language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89(2), 206–220.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2009). Corrective feedback and teacher development. *L2 Journal*, 1,3–18
- Ennis, M. J. (2015). Toward an integrated approach to language, culture, and communication in the foreign language classroom. In E. Nash, N. C. Brown, & L. Bracci (Eds.), *Intercultural horizons: Vol. III. Intercultural competence: Key to the new multicultural societies of the globalized world* (pp. 3–33). Cambridge Scholars.
- Feldhusen, J. F., Denny, T., & Condon, C. F. (1965). Anxiety, divergent thinking, and achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 56(1), 40–45. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0021952>

- Gardner, R. C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (1993). On the measurement of affective variables in second language learning. *Language Learning*, 43(2), 157–194.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Aldine Publishing Company.
- Gregersen, T., & Horwitz, E. K. (2002). Language learning and perfectionism: Anxious and non-anxious learners' reactions to their own oral performance. *The Modern Language Journal*, 86(7), 562–570. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1540-4781.00161>
- Gregersen, T., MacIntyre, P. D., & Meza, M. D. (2014). The motion of emotion: Idiodynamic case studies of learners' foreign language anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 98(2), 574–588.
- Hamdan, A. (2005). Women and education in Saudi Arabia: Challenges and achievements. *International Education Journal*, 6(1), 42–64.
- Hammad, W., & Shah, S. (2018). Dissonance between the “international” and the conservative “national”: Challenges facing school leaders in international schools in Saudi Arabia. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 54(5), 747–780. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X18785864>
- Hembree, R. (1988). Correlates, causes, effects, and treatment of test anxiety. *Review of Educational Research*, 58(1), 47–77. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543058001047>
- Heng, C. S., Abdullah, A. N., & Yusof, N. (2012). Investigating the construct of anxiety in relation to speaking skills among ESL tertiary learners. *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature*, 18(3), 155-166.
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014>
- Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (1991). *Cultures and organizations*. McGraw-Hill.
- Horwitz, E. K. (2001). Language anxiety and achievement. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21, 112–126.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132.
- Hruschka, D., Schwartz, D., St. John, D. C., Picone-Decaro, E., Jenkins, R., & Carey, J. (2004). Reliability in coding open-ended data: Lessons learned from HIV behavioral research. *Field Methods*, 16(3), 307–331.

- Jamjoom, M. I. (2010). Female Islamic studies teachers in Saudi Arabia: A phenomenological study. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies*, 26(3), 547-558.
- Javid, C. Z. (2014). Measuring language anxiety in an EFL context. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(25), 180–193.
- Jones, J. F. (2004). A cultural context for language anxiety. *English Australia Journal*, 21(2), 30–39.
- Kim, S. Y. (1998). Effective experiences of Korean college students in different instructional contexts: Anxiety and motivation in Reading and Conversation Courses. Doctoral Dissertation. The University of Texas at Austin.
- Kleinmann, H. H. (1977). Avoidance behavior in adult second language acquisition. *Language Learning*, 27(1), 93–107.
- Kress, T. (2015). Reasing Anxiety among Arabic speaking students. A master's thesis. State University of New York at Fredonia.
- Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. SAGE Publications.
- Laine, E. J. (1987). *Affective factors in foreign language learning and teaching: A study of the "filter."* (NO.15). yvaskyla Univ. (Finland). Dept. of English.
- Lucas, J. (1984). Communication apprehension in the ESL classroom: Getting our students to talk. *Foreign Language Annals*, 17(6), 593-598.
- MacIntyre, P. (2017). An overview of language anxiety research and trends in its development. In C. Gkonou, M. Daubney, & J. Dewaele (Eds.), *New insights into language anxiety: Theory, research and educational implications* (pp. 11–30). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783097722-003>
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991a). Language anxiety: Its relationship to other anxieties and to processing in native and second languages. *Language Learning*, 41(4), 513–534.
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991b). Method and results in the study of anxiety and language learning: A review of the literature. *Language Learning*, 41(1), 85–

- 117.
- MacIntyre, P.D., Noels, K.A., & Clément, R. (1997), Biases in self-ratings of second language proficiency: The role of language anxiety. *Language Learning*, 47(2), 265–287. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0023-8333.81997008>
- Mak, B. (2011). An exploration of speaking-in-class anxiety with Chinese ESL learners. *System*, 39(2), 202–214.
- McLachlan, D. A., & Justice, J. (2009). A grounded theory of international student well-being. *Journal of Theory Construction & Testing*, 13(1), 27–32.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. SAGE Publications.
- Ministry of Education. (2001). Terms and conditions for granting a license to open a foreign school.
- Morrow, S. L. (2007). Qualitative research in counseling psychology: Conceptual foundations. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 35(2), 209–235. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000006286990>
- Nahavandi, N., & Mukundan, J. (2013). Foreign language learning anxiety among Iranian EFL learners along gender and different proficiency levels. *Language in India*, 13(1), 133- 161.
- Ohata, K. (2005). Potential sources of anxiety for Japanese learners of English: Preliminary case interviews with five Japanese College students in the U.S. *TESL-EJ*, 9(3). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1065859.pdf>
- Onwuegbuzie, A., Bailey, P., & Daley, C. (1999). Factors associated with foreign language anxiety. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 20(2), 217–239. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716499002039>
- Open door, 2020 retrived from https://opendoorsdata.org/data/international_students/all-places-of-origin/
- Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding second language acquisition*. Hodder Education.
- Ponterotto, J. (2005). Qualitative research in counseling psychology: A primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 126–136.
- Rahimi, M., & Zhang, L. J. (2014). EFL learners' anxiety level and their beliefs about corrective feedback in oral communication classes. *System*, (1)42, 429-439.

- Price, M. L. (1991). The subjective experience of foreign language anxiety: Interviews with highly anxious students. In E. K. Horwitz & D. J. Young (Eds.), *Language anxiety: From theory and research to classroom implications*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Rafada, S., & Madini, A. (2017). Major causes of Saudi learners' speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms. *International Journal of English Language Education*, 5(1), 54–71.
- Rasor, L. T., & Rasor, R. A. (1998). *Test anxiety and study behavior of community college students in relation to ethnicity, gender, and age*.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED415942.pdf>
- Rubin, H. J. & Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing (2nd ed.): The art of hearing data*. Sage Publications, Inc
- Sadeghi, K., Mohammadi, F., & Sedaghatghofar, N. (2013). From EFL classroom into the mainstream: A socio-cultural investigation of speaking anxiety among female EFL learners. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 1(2), 117–132.
- Shams, A. (2006). The use of computerized pronunciation practice in the reduction of foreign language classroom anxiety. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Florida State University, USA.
- Sarason, I. G. (1961). Test anxiety and the intellectual performance of college students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 52(4), 201–206. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0049095>
- Sax, L. J. (2008). *The gender gap in college: Maximizing the developmental potential of women and men*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Scovel, T. (1978). The effect of affect on foreign language learning: A review of anxiety research. *Language Learning*, 28, 129–142.
- Spielmann, G., & Radnofsky, M. L. (2001). Learning language under tension: New directions from a qualitative study. *The Modern Language Journal*, 85(2), 259–278.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedure and techniques*. SAGE Publishing.
- Subekti, A. S. (2018a). An exploration of learners' foreign language anxiety in the Indonesian university context: Learners' and teachers' voices. *TEFLIN Journal*,

- 29(2), 219–244. http://dx.doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v29i2/219_244
- Subekti, A. S. (2018b). Investigating the relationship between foreign language anxiety and oral performance of non-English major university students in Indonesia. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 18(1), 15–36. <https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v18i1.880>
- Tanveer, M. (2007). *Investigation of the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL/EFL learners in learning speaking skills and the influence it casts on communication in the target language* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Glasgow.
- The Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia , 2020 retrived from <https://www.moe.gov.sa/en/pages/default.aspx>
- Thompson, G. L. (2000). The real deal on bilingual education: Former language-minority students discuss effective and ineffective instructional practices. *Educational Horizons*, 78(2), 80-92.
- Trang, T. T. T., Baldauf, R. B. & Moni, K. (2013). Foreign language anxiety: Understanding its status and insiders' awareness and attitudes. *TESOL Quarterly*, 47(2), 216-243.
- Tucker, R., Hamayan, E., & Genesee, F. H. (1976). Affective, cognitive, and social factors in second language acquisition. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 32(3), 214–226.
- U. S. Department of Education (2005). Single-sex versus coeducational schooling: A systematic review. Washington, D.C.: Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development.
- Vandergrift, L. (2005). Relationships among motivation orientations, metacognitive awareness and proficiency in L2 listening. *Applied Linguistics*, 26(1), 70–89.
- Wittmaier, B. C. (1972). Test anxiety and study habits. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 65(8), 352–354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.1972.10884344>
- Woodrow, L. (2006). Anxiety and Speaking English as a Second Language. *RELC Journal*, 37(3), 308–328. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688206071315>
- Yan, J. X., & Horwitz, E. K. (2008). 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. *Language Learning*, 58(1), 151–183. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2007.00437.x>
- Young, D. J. (1986). The relationship between anxiety and foreign language oral proficiency ratings. *Foreign Language Annals*, 19(5), 439–445.

- Young, D. J. (1991). Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment: What does the language anxiety research suggest? *The Modern Language Journal*, 75(4), 426–437. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1991.tb05378.x>
- Zeidner, M. (2007). Test anxiety in educational contexts: Concepts, findings, and future directions. In P. A. Schutz & R. Pekrun (Eds.), *Emotion in education* (pp. 165–184). Academic Press.

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO A SAUDI CLUB AT XX

Dear Saudi Club at xx,

I am a PhD student in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at Arizona State University. The focus of my PhD is on foreign language anxiety and how anxiety influences Saudi Arabian students' foreign language learning in U.S.-based ESL classrooms. I have come to a stage in my research in which I need you to connect me with the Saudi students who are taking ESL at XX. The dates and times for the interviews will vary according to the students' schedules, and all of the interviews with the students will be carried out in the strictest confidentiality. In addition, all of the students' names will be changed in the final publication of the PhD dissertation to protect their anonymity.

I strongly believe that this research will benefit Saudi ESL learners in the United States, thus making it a very worthwhile endeavor. I thank you for your time, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely

APPENDIX B
BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What's your first and last name?
2. How old are you?
3. How long have you been in the States?
4. Are you currently taking ESL class? if yes, how long have you been taking ESL classes? If no, when was the last time you took ESL classes?
5. What is your major? What are you planning to study after ESL classes?

APPENDIX C
CONSENT FORM

My name is Haifa Almotiary. I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Mark James in the Linguistics and Applied Linguistics PhD program at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to investigate the potential causes of foreign language anxiety among Saudi students in the US.

You are invited to participate in this research study. This form will describe the purpose and nature of the study and your rights as a participant in the study. The decision to participate or not is yours. If you decide to participate, please sign and date the last line of this form and email it back to me.

Explanation of the study

In particular, I am interested in learning how the new educational system, and the students' transition from a conservative society to a more liberal one might connect to foreign language anxiety.

Your participation

Current or former ESL students who studied in ESL program in US are welcome to participate in this study. You must be 18 or older to participate in the study. I will carry out one interview to have an in-depth look at anxiety in the foreign language classroom dynamic and its effect on students. The interview will be schedule according to your availability. The interview will be conducted remotely or in person depends on your preference. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Your participation in this study is voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts.

Confidentiality

We are also asking your permission to record the interview. Only the research team will have access to the recordings. The recordings will be deleted immediately after being transcribed and any published quotes will be anonymous. To protect your identity, please refrain from using names or other identifying information during the interview. Let me know, at any time, you do not want to be recorded and I will stop. The results of this study maybe used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact me (Halmotia@asu.edu) or Dr. Mark James (Mark.A.James@asu.edu) If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Your verbal agreement indicates your consent to participate.

APPENDIX D
IRB APPROVAL LETTER



Mark James CLAS-H: English 480/965-2731

Mark.A.James@asu.edu

Dear [Mark James](#): On 8/10/2020 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	The potential causes of FLA among Saudi students in the US
Investigator:	Mark James
IRB ID:	STUDY00011928
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• consent form, Category: Consent Form;• Interview questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);• IRB-Dissertation-Haifa-edited .docx, Category: IRB Protocol;• letter to potential participants.pdf, Category: Recruitment

	Materials; • Recruitment material, Category: Recruitment Materials;
--	---

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 on 8/10/2020.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: haifa almotiary