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**Enhancing Foreign Language Students' Speaking  
Performance through Overcoming Anxiety**  
**A Case Study of Third year LMD Students of  
English at Biskra University**

**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for  
Master degree in Science of the Language**

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## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to

My beloved family

My parents, brother, grandparents, aunts, uncles

I am very grateful for your love, support, and help

## **Acknowledgments**

First, all thanks to Allah the most merciful for giving me the strength and capacity  
to complete this work

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## **Abstract**

Foreign language anxiety is considered as a significant issue that most foreign language learners suffer from. This study inspects the issue of foreign language speaking anxiety, and it aims to realize two main objectives. First, it aims to explore the causes that lead to students' foreign language speech anxiety, and the negative effects that hinder their speaking performance. Second, it aims to search for efficient strategies that teachers and learners can use in order to overcome anxiety and enhance student's foreign language speaking performance. The study depends on a main data gathering tool: two questionnaire. The first questionnaire is administered to forty students of third year LMD of English at Mohamed Khider Biskra University. The second questionnaire is administered to eight teachers from the department of English at Mohamed Khider Biskra University. The outcomes of the study illustrate that most foreign language learners experience anxiety in speaking situation more than the other situations. There are different sources of foreign language speaking anxiety that hinder the learning and the speaking performance of learners. The findings also show plenty strategies that learners and teachers can depend on to reduce foreign language speaking anxiety. The outcomes prove the hypothesis which states that anxiety is related to the speaking skill more than the other skills.

## **Definitions of Terms and Some Abbreviations Used**

**Anxiety:** fear, nervousness, and apprehension

**Language anxiety:** foreign language anxiety is the psychological tension, apprehension, and worry experienced by non-native speakers when learning or using a foreign language (Young,1991).

**Speaking anxiety (speech anxiety):** a stress that results from having to speak in front of a group (kanar, 2011.292).

**Affective factors:** refer to personality characteristics, attitudes, and emotional responses to the language process (edge 20).

**Procedures:** ways, strategies

**LMD:** License Master Doctorate

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## **Introduction**

The ability to use a foreign language is the most important issue in learning it. In other terms, students who learn the second language should speak it. However, speaking the second language is a difficult task for most second language learners.

This difficulty in speaking can result from several factors that prevent the learning process. Thus, establishing an effective teaching and learning environment requires the awareness of the factors influencing students' learning. Anxiety is one of the these factors which have a great role on students' foreign language learning.

Many foreign language students experience anxiety. Consequently, we find it necessary to explore the relationship between anxiety and the speaking skill because of its importance in second language learning.

### **1. Statement of the problem**

The four skills have an important role in learning the second language. Thus, second language learners should develop the ability to listen, to speak, to read, and to write. However, second language learners may find it difficult to develop this ability by facing numerous troubles. One of these troubles is anxiety. Although anxiety influences the four skills, the majority of second language learners experience more anxiety and apprehension when acquiring the speaking skill.

### **2. Research questions**

This study relies on the following questions:

- To what extent is anxiety related to the speaking skill in comparison to the other skills ?
- what are the strategies that can be used to reduce anxiety ?

### **III. Hypothesis**

We hypothesize that if anxiety is reduced, students' speaking performance will be enhanced.

### **IV. Aims of the study**

We have two main objectives from this study. The first aim, is to explore the causes of students' foreign language speaking anxiety, and the negative effects that prevent their speaking performance. The second aim, is to look for effective strategies for both teachers and learners to use them in order to reduce anxiety and enhance students' foreign language speaking performance.

### **V. Significance of study**

Most researchers consider anxiety as the most important factor that affects second language learning. According to H.D. Brown (2007.161), "the construct of anxiety plays a major affective role in second language acquisition". Due to the importance as well as the difficulty of speaking the second language, we can say that the negative effect of anxiety on students' performance is related more to the speaking skill. Being aware of the causes of students' speech anxiety may help in discovering ways to reduce it, and its reduction may help in enhancing students' speaking performance. Through this study, we expose some appropriate teaching methods and some ways to decrease students' speaking anxiety. Therefore, their speaking performance will be enhanced.

### **VI. Research method design**

#### **1. Research method**

Due to the nature of our subject, we choose the Descriptive Method in the study of our research.

#### **2. Population**

##### **❖ Learners**



we choose the students of third year LMD. Those students are selected from the division of English at the University of Biskra. The sample of the study consists of forty participants chosen from the whole population which is 365.

#### ❖ Teachers

We give the questionnaire to eight teachers from the division of English at the University of Biskra. We choose some teachers teaching oral expression and module.

### **3. Data gathering tools**

In this study, we choose the questionnaire as data gathering tools. The reason behind choosing this tools is that they save time and effort. The first questionnaire is administrated to forty students of third year LMD of the division of English at the University of Biskra. The second questionnaire is distributed to some teachers of oral expression.

### **VII. The structure of the study**

The dissertation is divided into two sections. The first section is devoted to the Literature Review, and it contains two chapters. The first chapter is entitled "Foreign Language Learning Anxiety". The second chapter is entitled "Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety". The second section is devoted to the Field Work. It contains chapter three which is entitled "Analysis of Data Collected". In this section, we aim to explore the causes that lead to students' foreign language speaking anxiety and the strategies that teachers and learners can depend on to reduce it.

**Section One**

**Literature Review**

## **Chapter one**

### **Foreign language learning anxiety**

## **Introduction**

In recent years, great interest has arisen in the study of the role of affective factors in the language classroom such as attitude, motivation, anxiety, and so on. Foreign language anxiety is considered by many researchers, teachers, and learners as the most important affective factor that influence foreign language learning. For example, Oxford states that “anxiety is quite possibly the affective factor that most perversely obstructs the learning process”. Instructors, therefore, should develop the causes of anxiety in the classroom and practical ways to reduce it.

In this chapter, we try give a clear view of foreign language anxiety, the studies on its investigation and instrument used in studying it. Then we move to its causes, and types. After that we show the characteristics of anxious learners of foreign language. Finally, we try to display the relationship between anxiety and the speaking skill.

### **I. Foreign Language Learning Anxiety**

#### **1. Definition of Anxiety**

Anxiety is an emotion, a feeling of fear, and worry. According to the Collin Cobuild dictionary it is “*feeling of nervousness or worry about something*”. While the Oxford Advanced Learner’s dictionary defines it as “*the state of feeling nervous or worried that something bad is going to happen*”. Second or foreign language anxiety has been given many definitions. Language anxiety is defined as a “*response to a condition in which the external element is or is perceived as presenting a demand that threatens to exceeds the students capabilities and resources of meeting it*” (Williams, 1991.25). In addition, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) identified language anxiety as “*distinct complex of Self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process*” (p.128) in a foreign language learning context.

#### **2. Studies on foreign language anxiety**

Due to the importance of anxiety in the process of second language learning, crucial researches have been arisen about this issue. The relationship between language anxiety and second language proficiency have been investigated in many studies. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) state that research on language anxiety adopted three main perspective. The first perspective studies anxiety as being a trait anxiety which is a feature of individual's personality. The second perspective studies anxiety as being a state anxiety that means the apprehension on experiences at a particular moment in time. The third perspective studies anxiety as being a situation-specific anxiety that person may have over time within a given situation (Subaşı, 2010:31). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) state that the better results were achieved by the latter group which is situation-specific approach (Tianjian 96). Based on situation-specific perspective, researchers emphasize on anxiety that is related to specific language situations (Chan and Wu, 2004:292 ).

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (in Horwitz and Young, 1991 ) were the first researchers to treat foreign language anxiety as separate and distinct phenomenon particular to the language learning context. Their theory involved from clinical data and anecdotal evidence obtained from student's focus groups and led to the development of the foreign language classroom anxiety scale ( FLCAS ) which is a self-report instrument designed to measure language anxiety levels in classroom, a questionnaire, consists of thirty-three questions item. These are some question item of the FLCAS :

- *I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language classroom.*
- *I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.*
- *I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in language class.*

The FLCAS was used by many researchers to study the relationship between

anxiety and language learning (Goshi ).

### **3. Instrument used in studying foreign language anxiety**

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) state that in investigating the issue of foreign language anxiety, researchers use various instruments including diaries, questionnaire, and interviews which are oriented to both learners and teachers(Young 427 ). In addition, Bailey (1983b ) believed that diary studies can contribute to our knowledge of second language learning. These instruments can help researchers investigate any aspect of foreign language learning.

## **II. Types of anxiety**

Anxiety manifests in a number of different ways depending on the individual and the specific situation causing the anxiety reaction. Many researchers distinguish between different types of anxiety. The majority indicate three types of anxiety : trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety.

### **1. Trait anxiety**

According to Spielberger's (1983,p.1 ), trait anxiety refers to "relatively stable individual differences in anxiety-proneness", that it is, to differences between people in the tendency to perceive stressful situation as dangerous or threatening and to respond to such situations with elevations in the intensity of their state anxiety reactions". As trait anxiety is relatively stable personality characteristic, a person with high trait anxiety would probably become anxious in many different kind of situations.

### **2. State anxiety**

According to Spielberger, state anxiety reflects a "*transitory emotional or condition of the human organism that is characterized by subjective consciously perceived feelings of tension and apprehension, and heightened autonomic nervous system activity*". It is a temporary anxiety that learners may experience at a transient moment of time as result of specific conditions or stimulus such as an important test.

### **3. Situation-specific anxiety**

The situation-specific anxiety view is based on the assumption that certain types of situations are more likely to produce anxiety than others. Situation-specific anxieties are seen as anxieties experienced in certain well-defined situations, such as taking a test or speaking in public. Adopting to Spielberger's (1983) conceptualization situation-specific anxiety could be defined as personal predisposition or tendency to become anxious in one type of situation, that is, a trait anxiety applied to a particular context (MacIntyre, 1991 ).

## **III. Sources of foreign language anxiety**

Foreign language anxiety has many sources. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) state three causes of foreign language anxiety which they are called components. In addition, Young (1991) indicates six main potential sources.

### **1. Classification of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope**

Horwitz , Horwitz and Cope describe three components of foreign language Anxiety.

#### **1.1. Communication apprehension**

Communication apprehension was originally defined as an *"individual level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with other person or persons"* (McCroskey,1977).Young (1986,23) note of Horwitz et al.'s observation that *"speaking in the target language seems to be the most threatening aspect of foreign language learning"*

Communication apprehension results when learners think that they will not understand or be understood. High communicatively apprehensive learners are characterized by lacking self-control, not being adventurous, being introverted, having low self-esteem, and being unassertive (Wrench et al ).

## **1.2. Test anxiety**

Test anxiety is a type of anxiety that concerns apprehension towards academic evaluation which stems from a fear of failure (Horwitz and Young 1991,30 ). Horwitz et al. (1986,127) state that *“anxious students may avoid studying and in some cases skip class entirely in an effort alleviate their anxiety”*.

## **1.3. Fear of negative evaluation**

Fear of negative evaluation refers to the feelings of apprehension about other's evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that other will evaluate one negatively (Horwitz and Young 1991,31). The students feel uncomfortable when they think that they are being watched by both teacher and other students because evaluation on each other is very common in second language class (Zhao Na, 2007 ).

## **2. Classification of Young:**

Young (1991,428) divided the sources of language anxiety into six potential ones:

### **2.1. Personal and interpersonal issues:**

Personal and interpersonal issues are about the individual's self-esteem and competitiveness. Krashen suggests that self-esteem is related to language anxiety and states that *“people with low self-esteem worry about what their peers think; they are concerned with pleasing others”* (qtd. in Young, 427). Bailey (in Young,1991,p.427) contends that competitiveness among students can lead to anxiety especially when they compare themselves to an idealized self-image. Learners give a great concern to how to satisfy their classmates in order to give them a good evaluation because they fear that their peers will evaluate them badly.

### **2.2. Learner beliefs about language learning**

A relationship between learner's beliefs and language anxiety is suggested by many studies (Oxford 65). Gynan reports a number of practices from learners which they



believe are important for successful language learning. For instance, among these practices, pronunciation is considered by some learners as the most important practice; however others think that vocabulary is the most important one. Likewise, in Horwitz's study, learners have different beliefs about language learning. For example, some of them give a great interest to the correctness of their utterances. Others, believes that they have to speak with an excellent accent, or to be fluent in the second language on two years. When learners find their beliefs unrealistic, they may feel anxious about language learning (Young,1991.428).

### **2.3. Instructor beliefs about language teaching**

Researchers connect language anxiety to teacher's beliefs about language teaching (Oxford 65). Brandl found that the majority of the instructors considered "*a little bit of intimidation a necessary and supportive motivator for promoting students' performance*" (qtd. in Young, 428). Accordingly, some teachers think that creating frightening atmosphere in the classroom can improve students' performance. Moreover, Young states that language learners' anxiety may arise in classroom when teachers are authoritarian, intimidating, directive and correcting learners' mistakes (428).

### **2.4. Instructor – learner interaction**

Many researchers like Horwitz et al. , Koch and Terrell, Price, and Young report that instructor-learner interactions lead to language anxiety (Young, 428).One of the most interactional areas in the language classroom is that of error correction itself, but because of the manner of the error correction. Learners apprehension is a result of responding incorrectly in front of their peers and seeming stupid (428).

### **2.5. Classroom procedures**

One of the classroom procedures that can lead to feelings of language anxiety in learners is when they are asked to speak the target language in front of their peers in the classroom. Koch and Terrell found that oral presentations, skits, and quizzes are the most anxiety producing activities (Young, 429).

## **2.6. Language testing**

According to Young(1991), anxiety can stems from aspects of language testing. Students experience anxiety when they spend hours studying the material emphasized by teacher in class only to find that their tests deal with different material. In addition, Daly asserts that students experience more apprehension when the situation is new, ambiguous, or highly evaluative (429). He means that anxiety results from unfamiliar or vague test tasks learners may face.

## **IV. Language anxiety and students' learning**

### **1. The effect of anxiety on students' learning**

Anxiety may influence second language learning like many other affective factors. The relationship between anxiety and learning has been investigated by many researchers. Horwitz (2001) states that "scholars have entertained the possibility that anxiety interferes with second language learning" (113).

Anxiety might have a negative effect on second language learning; However; it can also have a positive effect. Allright and Bailey (1991) claim that "despite the unpleasant associations we may have with it, it is not necessarily a bad thing in itself" (172). Researchers make a distinction between the positive and the negative effects of anxiety on second language learning by classifying it into one that gets in the students' way of learning a second language or one that helps them for better achievement.

Researchers give different names to this distinction. Albert, Hiber, and Scovel (1978) call it debilitating/facilitative, and Oxford used harmful/helpful (H.D. Brown, 162). Moreover, Ellis (1994) claims that that there are three different opinions that can be identified which reflect the relationship between anxiety and language learning. The first opinion states that anxiety facilitates language learning, the second one states that anxiety has a negative impact on language learning, and the third one states that language anxiety is the result of difficulties with learning rather than the cause (693-694).

### **1.1. The negative effect of anxiety on students' learning**

There are researchers in addition to Krashen, who investigated the effect of anxiety on second language learning. Some of these researchers found that anxiety has negative effects on second language learning and achievement such as on performance, grades, motivation, and so on.

#### **1.1.1. Performance**

- MacIntyre and Gardner(199) discovered that there is negative correlation between language anxiety and performance in the second language; however; they did not find such correlation between anxiety and the learners' first language (Ellis, 694).
- Trylong and Young found that anxiety has a negative effect on performance in speaking and in writing tasks (Oxford,1991.61).

#### **1.1.2. Grades**

- Many researchers like Aida(1994), Chang(1999), Horwitz et al. (1986) , and Lias found that course grades were negatively affected by anxiety (Chan and Wu,2004.296).

#### **1.1.3. Motivation**

- Ely (1986) suggested that motivation is negatively affected because highly anxious learners are less likely to take risks in class (Ellis,1994.694).

### **1.2. The positive effects of anxiety on students' learning**

While there are researchers who claim that anxiety has a negative impact on second language learning, there are also others who indicates the existence of the

positive effect. For example, positive effect was found on motivation, marks, competitiveness, achievement, and so on.

### **1.2.1. Motivation**

- Eysenck (1979) noted that there is a correlation between anxiety and motivation in which he stated that low levels of anxiety increase students' motivation by urging them to make more effort (Ellis, 1994: 694).

### **1.2.2. Competitiveness**

- Bailey (1983) discovers that competitiveness can lead to students' success, through a study on anxiety and competitiveness in second language (H.D. Brown, 1994: 162).

### **1.2.3. Achievement**

- Chastain and Kleinman point out that there is a relationship between anxiety and achievement, for example, students with higher levels of anxiety showed higher achievement scores (E.K. Horwitz, 1983).

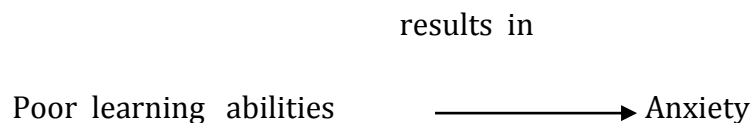
## **2. Language anxiety as a result or as a cause**

Many studies have been carried by various researchers to answer the question whether anxiety is the cause or the result of poor performance. However, those researchers do not agree about a constant answer. Some of them claim that anxiety is a cause while others indicate that anxiety is a result (H.D. Brown, 1983).

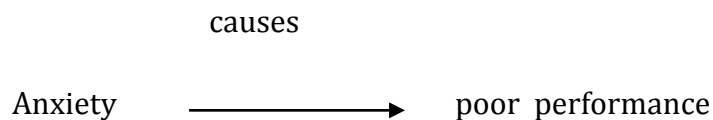
Sparks, Ganschow, and Javorsky (1996) claim that anxiety is the result, and they develop a hypothesis called "Linguistic Deficit Coding Hypothesis" which states that foreign language anxiety could be the result of the students' deficit in their first language. In contrast, other researchers like E.K. Horwitz do not agree with those who claim that anxiety is the result, she rejected the explanation which was provided by

the Linguistic Deficit Coding Hypothesis (H.D. Brown, 1963). Although Horwitz does not agree that anxiety is the cause, she argues that the difficulties are not always the cause of learners' anxiety since even advanced and experienced learners can experience anxiety (Ellis 1995). Researchers are still in debate about whether anxiety is the cause or the result. Our opinion is that anxiety can play the role of either a cause or a result or both of them. Our opinion is displayed as follows:

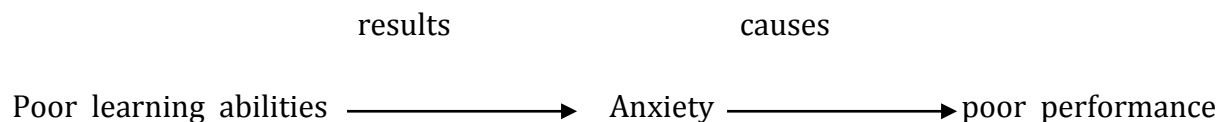
#### **anxiety as a result**



#### **Anxiety as a cause**



#### **Anxiety as results and as a cause**



**Figure 01: anxiety as a result or as a cause of learners' poor performance**

In brief, anxiety is considered to have negative effects on students' learning and performance regardless of that it can be facilitating or debilitating. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) state that *"Although anxiety could be facilitating or debilitating, it affects negatively in most cases performance in the second language"* (Chan and Wu, 2004: 295).

## **V. The characteristic of foreign language anxious learners**

It is very important for teachers to identify learners who suffer from anxiety in their foreign language classroom since anxiety has a deep impact on foreign language anxiety.

According to Oxford (1990,60), language anxiety can be easily observable through different signs.

### **1. Physical symptoms**

Anxious students may suffer from several physical symptoms such as rapid heartbeat, muscle tension, dry mouth, and excessive perspiration.

### **2. Psychological symptoms**

Psychological symptoms can include embarrassment, feeling of helplessness fear, going blank, inability to concentrate, as well as, poor memory recall and retention.

### **3. Behavioral symptoms**

Behavioral symptoms can include physical actions such as squirming fidgeting, Play with hair or clothing, nervously touching objects, stuttering or stammering, displaying jittery behavior, being unable to reproduce the sounds or intonation of the target language. Behavioral symptoms of anxiety can be manifested in negative avoidance behavior like inappropriate silence, monosyllabic or non committal responses, lack of eye contact, unwillingness to participate, coming late, arriving unprepared, showing indifference, cutting class, and withdrawal from the class.

### **4. Other signs of language anxiety**

In addition to the above signs, there are other signs that can reflect language Anxiety such as over studying, perfectionism, hostility, excessive competitiveness, as well as, excessive self-effacement and self-criticism like the expression "*I am so stupid*".

## **VI. The relationship between anxiety and the speaking skill**

Anxiety has been considered a very negative factor in learning a foreign language that affects foreign language learners' performance. The competence of the foreign language learners is represented by their production i.e their production shows their level of competence (Hwang,17). Because of this negative effect of anxiety on students performance, anxiety affect students' speaking skill. In other words, anxiety has a relationship with speaking skill.

It is widely accepted in the research literature that the acts of speaking in a foreign language or second language is the most provoking activity for the majority of students. As it is reported by Chang, Horwitz, and Schallert (1991) that "*speaking is the most provoking aspect in a second language learning situation*"(Tsiplakides, 2009.40). The reason that makes speaking as the most anxiety provoking is the nature of its activities. Hedge states that these activities of speaking need much effort from the students and the teachers since they tend to be so sentimental (292). In this case, learners feel anxious and insecure to speak the foreign language (Hung 78).

Bailey and All right (1991.113) claim that "*the more anxious learners are, the less likely they are to do well at speech skills*". From this, we deduce that anxiety is negatively correlated with speaking the foreign language. The relationship between anxiety and speaking skill is not difficult to identify. However, it is not clear whether it is the anxiety that gets in the way of developing good speaking skills or it is the poor speaking skills that create the anxiety (Allright and Bailey,1991.173).

## **Conclusion**

Foreign language anxiety has been studied by many researchers and from different aspects. These numerous studies show its importance in language learning. Researchers can use diaries, questionnaire, and interviews for collecting data for their studies on foreign language anxiety. Foreign language anxiety has many sources. Some of these sources result from learner, some from the teacher, and others from the activities provided in the classroom. Researchers have identified three types of anxiety: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and specific-situation anxiety. Foreign language

anxious learners can be identified by various characteristics. Some of these characteristics are manifested in physical symptoms, psychological symptoms, behavioral symptoms, and other signs. Many researchers

have been conducted to discuss the impact of anxiety on students' learning. Some of them proved that anxiety has negative effects on students' foreign language learning process, and others claimed that it can have positive effects.

In addition, other studies have been carried out to answer the question whether anxiety is a result or a cause of learners' poor performance. Studies investigating the effect of anxiety on foreign language learning proved that anxiety is negatively correlated with speaking the foreign language.



## **Chapter two**

### **Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety**

## Introduction

Speaking is considered as one of the most significant aspect in learning a foreign language. Irzeqat (2010, 6) states that “speaking is the core of learning language since speaking a language means knowing that language”. However, speaking is affected by anxiety because of its existence in foreign language learning. Subaşı (2010, 32) claims that “many learners are highly anxious because of participating in speaking activities”.

In this chapter, we try to give a clear insight about the issue of speaking Anxiety. We start with exposing different definitions of foreign language speaking anxiety, and some studies which have been conducted about this issue. Then we move to presenting the characteristics of learners suffering from speech anxiety. Moreover, we exhibit the causes of speaking anxiety. After that, we talk about the effect of speech anxiety on learners’ learning and speaking performance. Further, we explore the relationship between foreign language anxiety and the four skills. Finally, we display some tips that assist learners overcome their speaking anxiety and some procedures teachers can do to decrease foreign language anxiety in their classroom.

### I. Definition of speech anxiety

Chastain (1998) defines speaking anxiety as “*the process of combining background and linguistic knowledge in order to build an oral message to be conveyed to the intended audience*” (Irzeqat, 2010.6). In order to construct oral utterances and expressions to interact with other people, background and linguistic knowledge should be employed.

Speech anxiety has been given various definitions by many researchers. Kanar defines speaking anxiety as “a stress that results from having to speak in front of a group” (292). According to Basic (2010), speech anxiety is a fear of expressing oneself orally” (4). In addition, speech anxiety is described as “a broadly based anxiety related to oral communication” (McCroskey, 1970.279). Accordingly, speech anxiety is

the feeling of apprehension and stress experienced by individuals when they have to speak in front of an audience.

## **II. Studies on Foreign language Anxiety**

Due to the importance of speaking and the great effects of anxiety on it, many studies focused on students speaking anxiety. One of these studies is the study that has been designed by Cheng et al. which investigate the relationship between anxiety and foreign language speaking and writing achievement. Another study in which Aydin (2008) attempt to explore the sources of Turkish foreign language students in the productive skills, speaking and writing Besides, Kitano 2001 conducts another study in order to investigate anxiety sources of college learners of Japanese in oral practice. In addition, Liu (2007) examined anxiety in oral English classroom in a Chinese university. Moreover, Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) conducted a study to examine the of anxious students in order to reduce their speaking anxiety (Subaşı, 2010. 33-35). All these studies brought valuable insights into the area of foreign language anxiety showed that anxiety in oral production is a negative factor in language learning. The researchers of these studies claims that future researches should be done concerning foreign speaking anxiety (Subaşı 136).

According to these studies, we conclude that foreign language speaking anxiety is an important issue in foreign language learning that needs more researches to be conducted.

## **III. Causes of Speech Anxiety**

There are numerous factors that results students' speech anxiety. There are many studies conducted to explore these factors. Researchers like Xiuqin and Liu (2007) have investigate the causes that lead to students' speaking anxiety by making a study on Chinese English learners.

### **1. Lack of vocabulary**

Lack of vocabulary is one of the causes of students' speaking anxiety. Foreign language learners may feel anxious due to a limited vocabulary. In the study of Liu (2007) with Chinese English learners, they think that *"vocabulary is a big obstacle for their English learning"*. One of those learners states *"I am a little afraid of speaking English because my vocabulary is poor..."*. Another one states *"I can't speak on when suddenly come to a new word I never knew. How shy I will be!"* (128-129).

## **2. Lack of preparation**

Another cause of students' speaking anxiety which lack of preparation. Students feel anxious when they are unprepared when given a presentation. Liu, in his study, find that the majority of the Chinese English learners attributed their anxiety to their lack of preparation. They confessed that they would feel less anxious and more confident to speak when they are prepared. *"I am often nervous if asked to speak English without preparation, and it is much better if I am prepares"* acknowledges one of these learners (129). Consequently, when the students are well prepared, they are confident to speak.

## **3. Lack of practice**

Students' speech anxiety can results from the students' lack of practice to the foreign language they are studying. Liu reports that *"they didn't have much practice of oral English in class due to the limited class time and big class size, nor did they have many choices to speak the language in their daily life"*. As a result, many students feel anxious when speaking English in class. For example, one of these students says *"I am nervous may be because I didn't practice it and I am not used to it. Some are not anxious because they have experienced that many times before"* (129).

## **4. Fear of making mistakes**

Another cause that lead to learners' speaking anxiety is their fear of making mistakes. One of the learners in Liu's study says *"I like to speak English, but when I am in front of others, I will be nervous and can't say any words, because I am afraid others will laugh at me if make some mistake"* (130). Because of the fear of making

mistakes and being laughed at foreign language learners experience anxiety. However, learners should not be afraid of making mistakes because this way hinder them from speaking.

### **5. Inability to express ideas**

Foreign language learners sometimes face difficulties in expressing their ideas in the foreign language they are studying. One of the learners in Liu's study reports *"sometimes I am afraid of talking to others. For I have no idea [of] how to express my meanings by the words I've learned. I'll feel nervous when speaking in front of others because I'm afraid I would speak nothing in front of others and only stand there embarrassedly"* (131). Learners can experience anxiety when they cannot translate their ideas from their native language to English language. Another student states *"when I speak English in front of others, I'm nervous because I don't know what to say or even if I know what to say, I can't translate it into English or speak it smoothly"* (ibidem).

### **6. Fear of being focus of attention**

Fear of being focus of attention is considered as another cause of students' speech anxiety. According to the outcomes of Liu's study, many learners fear when they are singled out to speak English in class. One of these learners states *"I am often nervous when speaking English in front of others, because I think too many eyes were gazing at me. My God!"* (135).

### **7. Low English proficiency**

Low English proficiency can cause learners speech anxiety. Liu (2007)Indicates, in his study, that low English proficiency provoked anxiety among Chinese English learners. One of them reports *"I'm a little afraid of speaking English, because my speaking English is poor"* (129).

## **IV. Characteristics of Students Suffering from Speech Anxiety**

There are many characteristics that make students who suffer from speech anxiety different from other learners. Some of these characteristics manifests in physical symptoms; for instance, Morris states different signs experienced by anxious speakers such as : dry mouth, sweaty palms, shaking hands, pale skin, numbing body, shallow breathing, dizziness, quivering voice, etc (1).

There are other characteristics which manifests in mental symptoms among the anxious speakers. According to Kanar (2011), learners who experience anxiety in speaking are characterized by mental symptoms such as : disorganized thoughts, forgetting what they had plan to say, feeling of inadequacy, and negative self-talk (292).

In addition to these physical and mental symptoms, there other signs. For example, Basic (2010) claims that anxious students are often very calm, silent, passive, and can receive less attention from teachers. Moreover, these students give up very early and continue to be quiet throughout their years in school.

## **V. The effects of speech anxiety on students' learning and Speaking**

### **Performance**

*"Anxiety has been considered a very negative factor in learning a foreign language, especially in learning to speak the language"* (Xiuqin, 37). In addition, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope state "anxiety is a major obstacle to be overcome in learning to speak another language" (qtd. In Xiuqin, 37). Consequently, we infer that speaking anxiety has a negative effect on learning and speaking the second language. The followings are some of the aspects of learning that speaking anxiety affects:

#### **1. Language learning process**

According to MacIntyre and Gardner, the output of the language of students is negatively affected because of negative effects of speaking anxiety on students' concentrating and processing the input in the class (Xiuqin, 37).

## **2. Grades**

Basic (2011) states that the motivation of speaking anxious students is less than of other learners. And that learners' grades depend on their participation on classroom activities. Learners who are quiet and do not participate in classroom activities tend to receive lower grades. Thus, their lack of chances to participate in classroom activities contributes to less learning (10).

## **3. Speaking ability**

Fang-Peng and Dong (2010) find in their study on Chinese college students that learners with high level of anxiety had low spoken English ability. Moreover, there are other factors that lead to high anxiety such as the attention to intonation and pronunciation and the interference of their mother tongue (Subaşı,2010.35).

## **4. Self-confidence**

Through Aydin's empirical study (1991) to discover the sources of foreign language anxiety on Turkish students learning English as a foreign language, the findings show that anxiety prevents learners to speak and reduces their self-confidence (Subaşı, 2010.34). In addition, Basic (2011) claims that *"speaking anxiety create a low self-confidence which makes students remain quiet in all situation"* (4)

## **VI. Foreign language anxiety and the four skills**

Ay (2010) states that recent studies have attempt to explore the relationship between foreign language anxiety and reading, writing, and listening in addition to speaking. However, the more assertion has been given to the correlation between foreign language anxiety and the speaking skill (84).

### **1. Foreign language anxiety and reading, listening, and writing**

#### **1.1. Foreign language anxiety and the reading skill**

Several studies have been conducted on foreign language reading anxiety. Sellers (2000) carries out study that explore the relationship between foreign language anxiety and reading comprehension. His findings reveals that unlike low anxious learners, high anxious learners recall less the content of the passage they read. He deduce that high anxious learners lose their concentration during the reading tasks. Consequently, their comprehension of the reading passage is affected (Capan and Karaca, 2012.1364).

### **1.2. Foreign language anxiety and the listening skill**

Campbell (1999) claims listening can be considered not to be anxiety Provoking. However, current research has shown that listening activities may also cause anxiety (Ay,2010.84). Horwitz, Horwitz, and cope (1986, 126) report that anxious learners face difficulties in differentiating the sounds and the structure of the target language.

### **1.3. Foreign language anxiety and writing skill**

Other studies have been carried out to look for the link between foreign language anxiety and the writing skill. Cheng et al. (1991), in their study research, conclude that considerable and negative associations exists between second language writing anxiety and students' writing achievement (Wilson, 123).

## **2. Foreign language speaking anxiety in comparison to other skills**

Through a view of literature, we notice that anxiety is negatively correlated with speaking skill. We also notice that anxiety can affects the other skills. However, most of the researchers agree that anxiety affects more the speaking skill. Young (1991) states that speaking is considered by both teachers and learners as the most stressful skill among the other skills (Subaşı, 2010.32). In addition to considering speaking as the most anxiety provoking, Leki (1991) consider writing as the least anxiety provoking (Ay, 2010.84).

## **VI. Tips for helping learners overcome their speaking anxiety**



Learners should make some contributions to decrease their speaking anxiety. they should know that anxiety has an effective role in impacting their speaking performance, and realize how to deal with and decrease their nervousness about speaking. The followings are some suggestions given by some researchers that may assist students cope with their anxieties.

### **1. Practice and preparation**

Practice and preparation are two ways that may assist learners overcoming their speaking anxieties. Kanar (2011,293) states that *“preparation and practice are the keys to feeling confident about giving a speech or presentation”*. In addition, learners in Liu’s study (2007,132) think that increasing their self-confidence will be done through preparation and practice. Learners should practice the foreign language even outside the classroom and prepare themselves well to enhance their speaking performance.

### **2. Eliminating fear of making mistakes**

Eliminating fear of making mistakes is another way to students should adopt to decrease their speaking anxiety. Learners should know that making mistakes is a part of learning languages. Consequently, they have to take the risk of making mistakes.

### **3. Positive self-talk**

Positive self-talk is a helpful way for learners to decrease their speaking anxiety. Oxford (1991) states that positive self-talk is a kind of *“self-encouragement”* that assist learners get rid of negative ideas.

## **VII. strategies for overcoming speech anxiety in language learning**

Due to the great effects of speaking anxiety on students’ learning and speaking performance, some involvements should be done to decrease it. Aida (1994) claims that teachers should try to make some interventions to assist anxious learners (Tsiplakides, 2009.43). The followings are some strategies provided by researchers that teachers can use to reduce students’ speaking anxiety:

## **1. Relaxed atmosphere**

Many researchers like Liu (2007), Tsiplakides (2009) and others find that creating a relaxed atmosphere in foreign language classroom is an effective procedure that assist reducing learners foreign language anxiety. Liu claims in his study that the environment of learning should be supportive and non-threatening environment (133). in order to create a relaxed atmosphere teachers can use different procedures that help learners feel more comfortable. According to Tsiplakides teachers can create friendly classroom atmosphere by avoiding overcorrecting the mistakes of the students. Other researchers suggest different ways to establish this relaxed atmosphere like using games and music.

## **2. Group work**

Another procedure for overcoming students' speaking anxiety is group work. Tsui states that the collaboration of the students in classroom is an effective way to reduce their anxiety (Allright and Bailey,1991.27). Group work has many advantages. It can reduce students' fear of failure because in group works, they share their answers with each one in the group.

Creating relaxed atmosphere and making group work are two procedures that teachers can use to decrease students' speaking anxiety. Teachers should be aware of the effect of speaking anxiety. Thus, they should assist them reduce their anxieties by following the above strategies.

## **Conclusion**

Many researchers studied foreign language speaking anxiety and provided it with various definitions. Foreign language speech anxiety has been studied from different aspects. For example, some studies have investigated its correlation with language skills, others have explored its causes, and others searched for procedures to cope with it and reduce it. There are many causes of foreign language speech anxiety such

as student's lack of preparation, lack of vocabulary, fear of making mistakes and so on. Moreover, anxious learners can be distinguished from non anxious ones by a number of characteristics : physical and mental. Researchers show that because of the negative effects of anxiety on students' learning and speaking performance, it can affect grades, speaking ability, and self-confidence of the students. Anxiety affects the four skills. However, the great effect is on the speaking skill more than the other skills. Furthermore, can overcome their speech anxiety by following some ways. Besides, teachers also have a role in reducing anxiety in their foreign language classes and assist learners conquer their speech anxiety.

**Section two**

**Field Work**

# **Chapter Three**

## **Analysis of Data Collected**

## I. The analysis of the students' feedback questionnaire

### Introduction

We used the questionnaire in collecting data, through this questionnaire; we aim to discover the existence of anxiety in learning the foreign language. As well, we aim to discover the causes of this issue, and its effects on learners speaking skill development. In addition, our main goal is to find out ways that can help students overcome their speaking skill, and some strategies that teacher can do to help them. The questionnaire was distributed to thirty students from the population of third year LMD (of English) of Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. The student's feedback questionnaire contains six sections. The first section is entitled "Background information" aims to obtain information about the participants. The second one is entitled "Anxiety and Foreign language" aims to discover the existence of anxiety on the participants. The third one is entitled "Foreign language speaking anxiety" aims to explore the effects of foreign language anxiety on the participants speaking skill in comparison to the other skills. The fourth one is entitled "Causes of foreign language speaking anxiety" aims to discover the causes of foreign language speaking anxiety. The fifth one is entitled "Anxiety and oral activities" aims to discover the difficulties participants face in oral activities. The sixth entitled "Reducing foreign language speaking anxiety" aims to find strategies to reduce speaking anxiety. This questionnaire consists of three item questions from the foreign language Classroom Anxiety scale.

### Section one: background information

1- You are :

Male

☐

female

☐

Responses	Participants	%
Male	14	35%
Female	24	65%

**Table01: Participant's gender**

From the table, we can see that the number of females is 24 (65%), and the number of males is 14 (35%). This means that our sample consists of both male and female, however, the number of female students is more than the number of male students.

The information got from this table can help us in discovering whether anxiety exists among one gender or both of them. And our population, in this study, includes both genders and female is more than male.

2- In secondary school, you were in:

Literary stream ☐

Scientific stream ☐

Responses	Participants	%
Literary stream	22	55%
Scientific stream	18	45%

**Table02: Participant's stream**

It is seen, from this table, that learners who were in literary stream are 22 (55%), and those who were in scientific stream are 18 (45%). This reflects that the participants of our study came from the both literary and scientific stream. However, the number of literary stream students is a little bit higher than the number of scientific stream students.

Because our sample includes participants of both streams, we may discover that anxiety influences the participants of both of streams.

3- You have started studying English in:

Primary school ☐

Middle school ☐

High school ☐

Responses	Participants	%
Primary school	0	0
Secondary school	37	92.5
Middle school	3	7.5

**Table03: Participant's experience in studying**

From this table, we notice that there are no participants who started studying English at primary school. And 37 (92.5%) participants who started studying it at middle school, and those who started studying it at high school are only 3 (7.5%). The majority of the participants have started to study English at the middle school, so they have nearly the same experience in studying it.

Based on these results, we can deduce that most of the participants have intermediate experience in studying English, and their long experience in studying may control level of their anxiety.

4- Your choice to study English at university was :

Voluntary ☐ Obligated ☐

Responses	Participants	%
Voluntary	36	90
obliged	4	10

**Table04: Participant's choice to study English**

This table shows that the participants who chose to study English voluntary are 36 (90%), and those who are obliged it study it are 4 (10%). The number of the participants who chose to study English is more than those who are obliged.

It seems that the participants are able to study English since the majority of them chose it voluntary. However if we find that the participants experience anxiety, we can say that even if they are able to learn English, their anxiety prevents them from achieving better in learning.

5- Do you like English language:

☐ ☐



Yes

No

Responses	Participants	%
Yes	36	90
No	4	10

**Table05: Participants attitude towards English language**

This table reveals that the participants who like the English language are 36 (90%), and those who do not like it are 4 (10%). The number of the participants who like English is much more than the number of those who do not like it.

Since the majority of the participants like to study English, we assume that they will not face difficulties in learning the foreign language. However, if we find that they face difficulties in their learning, it may be because of their anxiety.

## **Section two: Anxiety and foreign language learning**

1- Do you think that learning English as foreign language is difficult:

Yes ☐

No ☐

Responses	Participants	%
Yes	15	37.5
No	25	62.5

**Table06: Participant's opinion about learning English as foreign language**

It is seen from this table that the participants who think that learning English as foreign language is difficult are 15 (37.5%), and those who think that learning English as a foreign language is not difficult are 25 (62.5). The number of participants who think that learning English as foreign language is difficult, is less than the number of those who think that it is

not difficult to learn it. Consequently, the number of the participants who believe that learning English as a foreign language is high.

2- If yes, is anxiety among the causes of your foreign language learning difficulties :

Yes ☐ No ☐

Responses	Participants	%
Yes	14	35
No	6	15
No answer	20	50

**Table07: Participant's perception of whether anxiety is among the causes of their foreign language on learning difficulties.**

The table shows that the participants who reported that anxiety is among the causes of their foreign language learning difficulties are 14 (35%), those who reported that anxiety is not among the causes of their foreign language learning difficulties are 6 (15%), and those who provided no answer are 20 (60%). The participants who provided no answer may be because the current question contains "If yes".

Based on these out comes, we can say that the participants do not consider learning English as a difficult task; however, anxiety gets in their way of learning and make it difficult for them.

3- Does anxiety affect your foreign language learning :

Yes ☐ No ☐

Responses	Participants	%
Yes	21	52.5

No	18	45
No answer	1	2.5

**Table08: Participant's perception about the effect of anxiety on their foreign language learning**

We notice from this table that the participants who reported that anxiety affects their foreign language learning are 21 (52.5%), and those who reported that anxiety does not affect their foreign language learning are 18 (45%), and those who provided no answer are 1 (2.5%). The number of the participants who believe that anxiety affects their foreign language learning is a little bit higher than those who does not believe it affect their foreign language learning.

If we compare the finding of this table with result of table 07, we observe that the number of the participants who think that anxiety affect their foreign language learning is more than the number of those who consider anxiety as one of the causes of their foreign language difficulties. Accordingly, we can say that the number given in the table (07) does not give the exact number of the participants suffering from anxiety. The data given in both tables inform us that anxiety has a great impact on the foreign language learning of the majority of the participants.

4- If yes, to what extent anxiety affects your foreign language learning:

High extent ☐ Intermediate extent ☐ Low extent ☐

Responses	Participants	%
High extent	8	20
Intermediate extent	19	47.5
Low extent	9	22.5
No answer	4	10

**Table09: Participant's perception about the extent to what anxiety affects their foreign language learning**

We can see, from this table, that the participants who reported that anxiety has a high extent in effecting their foreign language learning are 8 (20%), those who reported that it has an intermediate extent are 19 (47.5%), those who reported that it has a low effect extent are 9 ( 22.5%), and those who provided no answer are 4 (10%). The amount of the participants who think that anxiety has an intermediate extent in effecting their foreign language learning is more than the other amount.

The above outcomes give us an idea that anxiety affects foreign language learning of majority of the participants, we discover that anxiety influences participant's foreign language learning but with different extents.

### **Section three: Foreign language speaking anxiety**

1- Do you face difficulties in learning the four skills:

Yes

No

Responses	Participants	%
Yes	21	52.5
No	19	47.5

**Table10: Participants perception about the difficulties they may face in learning the four skills**

The table shows that the participants who reported that they face difficulties are 21 (52.5%), and those who reported that they do not face difficulties in learning the four skills are 19 (47.5%). The number of the participants who believe that they do not face difficulties is less than the number of those who reported that they face difficulties in learning the four skills.

We deduce that learning the four skills is difficult for most of the participants. And we can say that anxiety is one of the causes of student's difficulties in learning the four skills, and this because of the results in table (07), that shows that the majority of the participants consider anxiety as cause of their foreign language learning difficulties.

2- What do you think about speaking the foreign language:

Easy ☐ Difficult ☐

Responses	Participants	%
Easy	18	45
Difficult	22	55

**Table11: Participant's opinion about speaking English**

The table reveals that the participants who think that speaking the foreign language is easy are 18 (45%) and those who believe that speaking the foreign language is difficult are 22 (55%). The number of the participants who consider speaking the foreign language as a difficult task is more than the number of the participants who consider it as a easy task. This means that the majority of the participants find speaking the foreign language difficult.

It is possible that anxiety is the cause of the participant's speaking difficulty, since in table (08) it is mentioned that the anxiety affects the foreign language learning of the majority of the participants.

3- If you have difficulties in speaking the foreign language, do you consider anxiety as a cause of these difficulties :

Yes ☐ No ☐

Responses	Participants	%
Yes	29	72.5
No	11	27.5

**Table12: Participant's consideration of whether anxiety is /is not a cause of their difficulties in speaking the foreign language**

The table illustrates that the participants who consider anxiety as a cause of their difficulties in speaking the foreign language are 29 (72.5%), and those who do not consider it as cause of their foreign language speaking difficulties are 11 (27.5%). The amount of the participants who consider the anxiety as the cause of their difficulties in speaking the foreign language is high than the amount of those who reported that anxiety is not the cause.

From these outcomes, we conclude that anxiety affects speaking the foreign language of the majority of the participants. Consequently, anxiety is one of the causes of the participant's speaking difficulties.

4- You feel more anxious when you :

Write  Read  Listen  Speak

Responses	Participants	%
Write	4	10
Read	1	2.5
Listen	7	17.5
Speak	26	65
Read and write	1	2.5
No answer	1	2.5

**Table13: The difficulties in which the participants feel more anxious**

The table demonstrates that the participants who feel more anxious in writing are 4 (10%), those who feel more anxious in reading are 1 (2.5%), those who feel more anxious in listening are 7 (17.5%), and those who feel more anxious in speaking are 26 (65%).

However, there is one participant who reported that he feels more anxious in more than one skill: in reading and writing (2.5%). Besides, the participants who provided no answer are 1 (2.5%). According to the above number, it seems that the majority of the participants feel more anxious when speaking.

We deduce that speaking is the most anxiety provoking skill in comparison to the other skills.

5- You achieve better in:

Written tests

Oral tests

Responses	Participants	%
Written tests	26	65
Oral tests	14	35

**Table14: Participants perception about their achievement in written and oral Tests**

The table shows that the participants who achieve better in written tests are 26 (65%), and those who achieve better in oral tests are 14 (35%). The number of the participants who achieve better in written tests are more than the number of the participants who achieve better in oral tests.

From the table (13) which reveals that the majority of the participants feel more anxious in speaking, we deduce that student's low achievement in oral tests is due to their speaking.

6- If you are anxious speaker, you classify yourself as:

High anxious speaker

Intermediate anxious speaker

Low anxious speaker

Responses	Participants	%
High anxious speaker	9	22.5
Intermediate anxious speaker	19	47.5
Low anxious speaker	12	30

**Table15: Participants perception about the level of their foreign language speaking anxiety**

The table reveals that participants who are high anxious speakers are 9 (22.5%) those who are intermediate anxious speaker are 19 (47.5%), and those who are low anxious speaker are 12 (30%). From all these numbers, it is seen that the number of the participants who consider themselves as intermediate speakers is the biggest number. The number of the participants who consider themselves as high anxious is less than the number of those who consider themselves as low anxious speakers.

We discovered that the most of the participants experience the feeling of anxiety, but with different levels.

#### **Section four: Causes of foreign language anxiety**

1- You never feel quite sure of yourself when you are speaking in your foreign language classroom?

SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD ☐

Responses	Participants	%
Strongly agree	7	17.5
Agree	14	35
Neutral	6	15
Disagree	9	22.5
Strongly disagree	4	10



**Table16: Participants perception about their uncertainty in speaking the foreign language**

The table clarifies that the participants who are strong agree about their uncertainty to speak the foreign language in the class are 7 (17.5%), those who agree are 14 (35%), those who are neutral are 6 (15%), those who disagree are 9 (22.5%), and those who strongly disagree are 4 (10%). The amount of the participants who agree is more than the other amount, and the amount of the participants who strongly disagree is the least amount.

The majority of the participants have low self-confidence which makes them feel unsure about themselves in speaking the foreign language. Accordingly, we deduce that lack of confidence is one of the causes of the participants speaking anxiety.

2- You start to panic when you have to speak without any preparation in language class:

SA  A  N  D  SD

Responses	Participants	%
Strongly agree	10	25
Agree	17	42.5
Neutral	2	5
Disagree	8	20
Strongly disagree	3	7.5

**Table17: Participants perception about starting to panic when they have to speak without preparation**

We can see from the table that the participants who strongly agree that they start to panic when they have to speak without any preparation in language class are 10 (25%), those who agree are 17 (42.5%), those who are neutral are 2 (5%), those who disagree are 8 (20%), and those who strongly disagree are 3 (7.5%). The amount of the participants who agree is more than the others amounts, and the amount of the participants who are strongly agree is more than the rest amounts.

These numbers shows that the majority of the participant start to panic when they have to speak without preparation. Consequently, being unprepared is one of the sources of participants speaking anxiety.

3- You are afraid that the other students will laugh at you when you have not prepared in advance:

SA  A  N  D  SD

Responses	Participants	%
Strongly agree	8	20
Agree	10	25
Neutral	6	15
Disagree	12	30
Strongly disagree	4	10

**Table18: Participants' perception about the panic from their peer's laugh when Being unprepared**

The table show that the participants who are strongly agree that they are afraid that the other students will laugh at them when they have not prepared in advance are 8 (20%), those who agree are 10 (25%), those who are neutral 6 (15%), those who are disagree are 12 (30%), and those who are strongly disagree are 4 (10%). The number of the participants who disagree is more than the other numbers.

We can deduce from the above results that fear of peers' laugh is another cause of the participants speaking anxiety.

### Section five: anxiety and oral activities

1. You have difficulties in expressing your ideas in English ?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Responses	Participants	%
Yes	23	57.5
No	17	42.5

**Table 19: participant's perception about their difficulty in expressing their ideas in English**

It is seen from the table that the participants who reported that they have difficulties in expressing their ideas in English are 23 (57.5%), those who reported that they do not have difficulties are 17 (42.5%). The amount of the participants who face difficulties is more than the amount of those who do not face difficulties.

From the results shown in this table, we can say that the majority of our participants have difficulty in expressing their ideas in English.

2. In oral tasks, you feel more anxious in:

role play ☐ free discussion ☐ oral presentation ☐

Responses	Participants	%
Role plays	18	45
Free discussions	9	22.5
Oral presentation	11	27.5
Role plays and free discussion	2	5

**Table 20: participants' perception about the oral task in which they experience more anxiety**

we notice from the table that the participants who feel more anxious in role plays are 18 (45%), those who feel more anxious in free discussion are 9 (22.5%), and those who feel more anxious in oral presentation are 11 (27.5%). However, there are other participants who reported that they feel more anxious in role plays and free discussion, and they are 2 (5%). The number of the participants who feel more anxious in role plays is more than the other numbers. Besides, the number of the participants who feel more anxious in free discussion is the least number.

We notice that the tasks which tends to provoke much anxiety for the participants is role plays. Since in role plays, learners are obliged to act and perform in front of the whole class. We can say that the participants' great anxiety in role plays is because of the stress of being obliged to act and being the center of attention of their peers and teachers.

3. In your opinion, which factor may cause your fear of speaking?

Lack of vocabulary ☐ lack of preparation ☐ lack of practice ☐  
 Fear of being center of attention ☐

Responses	Participants	%
Lack of vocabulary	15	35
Lack of preparation	6	15
Lack of practice	3	7.5
Fear of being center of attention	15	37.5
Lack of vocabulary and fear of being center of attention	1	2.5

Lack of vocabulary and preparation and practice	1	2.5
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**Table 21: participants' cause of their speaking anxiety**

The table demonstrate that the participants who referred to their fear of speaking to lack of vocabulary are 15 (37.5%), those who referred it to lack of preparation are 6 (15%), those who referred it to lack of practice are 3 (7.5%), and those who referred it to being center of attention are 15 (35%). The number of the participants who referred their fear of speaking to their lack of vocabulary is more than the rest numbers. In addition, there are other participants who attributed their fear of speaking to more than one cause. One participant (2.5%) who attributed it to lack of vocabulary and fear of being center of attention, and one participant (2.5%) who attributed it to lack of vocabulary, lack of practice, and lack of preparation.

The outcomes show us that the majority of the participants experience anxiety. We can say from the above outcomes that there are many causes of students' speech anxiety. Each participant has a cause or more than one; however, the participants vary in the cause of their speaking anxiety.

## **Section six : reducing foreign language anxiety**

### **1. What do you think you can do in order to reduce you anxiety ?**

The number of the participants who responded to this question is 19 (47.5%), and the number of those who did not answer it is 21 (52.5%). The number of the participants who did not answer the question is more than the number of those who answer to it. The responses of the participants of the way they think can do to reduce anxiety are summarized as follows: improving self-confidence, practice, preparation, avoiding fear of making mistakes, practicing self-talk, and learning in groups. The participants who answered this question show that they are aware of the effects of anxiety in preventing their speaking performance, also they are aware of ways they can rely on to reduce their speaking anxiety. The reason behind participants' non-

answering the question may be because they do not know how to reduce their anxiety, therefore, they need some advice.

2. What do you want from your teacher to do in order to reduce you anxiety ?

The number of the participants who answered this question is 19 (47.5%), and the number of those who did not answer it is 21 (52.5%). The number of the participants who did not answer the question is a little bit more than the number of those who answer it. We deduce from the results of the questions that the participants who did not answer the first question did not also answer the second one. The participants reported a set of needs from their teachers. These needs are summarized as: encouraging students, creating friendly and relaxed atmosphere, choosing interesting topics, avoid overcorrecting learners' mistakes, and adopting new and good teaching strategies.

All these results show us that teachers may play a great role in reducing learners' speaking anxiety.

### **Conclusion:**

From the analysis of the students' feedback questionnaire, we conclude that most foreign language learners choose to study the foreign language voluntarily. Foreign language learners choose to study other language in addition to their first language because they think that they are able to learn it. However, before they start to learn another language they were not familiar with the difficulties that they may face when learning. When these learners start learning, they discover these difficulties. One of the causes of foreign language learning difficulties is anxiety.

Anxiety plays a major role in learners' foreign language achievement. It has a negative effect on most foreign language learners' learning. Among its effects on students' learning is its effects on the speaking skill which is more than on the other skills. Speaking is considered as the most anxiety provoking skill. Foreign language learners attribute their speaking anxiety to difficulty in expressing their ideas in the foreign language, lack of preparation, fear of peer's laugh, fear of teacher's correction to their

mistakes. Most of students need some advice to control their speaking anxiety, and some help from their teachers to reduce it. The students can depend on different ways to overcome their speaking anxiety. Moreover, teachers can play a great role in assisting the students to reduce their speaking anxiety.

## I. The analysis of teachers' feedback questionnaire

### Introduction

In addition to the questionnaire of students, we use another one for teachers. It was distributed to eight teachers from the department of English at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. This questionnaire consists of four sections. The first section is entitled "background information", the second section is entitled "speaking skill", and the third question is entitled "speaking and anxiety". Via this questionnaire, we aim to know about the existence of anxiety through the view of teachers. Besides, we aim to know their suggestions about the appropriate ways to reduce students' foreign language speaking anxiety.

### Section one: Background information

1. You are

Male

☐

female

☐

Responses	Participants	%
Male	2	25
Female	6	75

**Table 22: participants' gender**

It is seen from the table that the number of male is 2 (25%), and the number of the females is 6 (75%). The number of females is more than the number of males. Both male and female teachers answer to our questionnaire.

2. How long have you been teaching ?

from the results, we have found teachers' experience in teaching English at the university is restricted between three and twenty. According to the outcomes we can consider these teachers as experienced teachers. Teachers experience can help us in taking a clear view about the phenomenon of foreign language speaking anxiety.



## Section two: Speaking skill

1. which types of activities do you choose for speaking skill ?

information gap activities  free discussion task   
 role play  story telling task  others

Responses	Participants	%
Information gap activities	1	12.5
Role play/ free discussion task	2	25
story telling / role play	1	12.5
Others/ role play	4	50

**Table23: Type of participants' activities that teachers use for speaking**

This table reveals that all the participants' choose more than one activity for speaking. Participants' who choose information gap and role plays is 1 (12.5%), those who choose role play and free discussion are 2 (25%), those who choose story-telling and role play are 1 (12.5%), and those who choose others and role plays are 4 (50%). The number of the participants' who choose role play and other activities are more than the others.

2. For what purpose do you choose this kind of activities ?

To build fluency  to build accuracy

Responses	Participants	%
To build fluency	2	25
to build accuracy	2	25
Both	4	50

**Table 24: participants' reason of activity choice**

From this table, we notice that the number of the participants who choose to build fluency is 2 (25%), the number of those who choose to build accuracy is 2 (25%). However, there are other participants who choose both to build fluency and accuracy. The participants who choose the both of them are 4 (50%). The number of the participants who choose both fluency and accuracy is more than the other numbers.

### Section three: Speaking and anxiety

1. Have you noticed that some of your students are reluctant to speak the foreign language?

Yes  no

Responses	Participants	%
Yes	6	75
No	2	25

**Table25: Participants' perception about students suffering from speaking anxiety**

It is seen in this table that the number of the participants who notice that their students are reluctant to speak is 6 (75%), and the number of those who do not notice that their students are reluctant to speak is 2 (25%). The number of participants who answer with yes is more than the number of those who answer with no.

2. Do you consider anxiety as one of the causes of your students' inhibition to speak the foreign language?

Yes  no

Responses	Participants	%
Yes	8	100

No	0	0
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**Table26: Participants' perception about anxiety as causes of students' inhibition to speak**

This table reveals that the amount of the participants who consider anxiety as a cause of their students' inhibition to speak is 8 (100%). There is no participant who do not consider the anxiety as a cause of students inhibition to speak. All the participants agree that anxiety is one of the causes of the students' inhibition to speak the foreign language.

3. Do you motivate your students ?

Yes  no

Responses	Participants	%
Yes	8	100
No	0	0

**Table27: Participants' perception about motivating their students**

In this table, we notice that the number of the participants who motivate their students are 8 (100%). There is no participants who do not motivate their students. We can say that teachers (participants) are aware of their students' need.

4. If yes, How do you motivate them ?

Since all the participants answer with yes, all of them answer the question. Many suggestions are given by participants providing students with advices like: Better late than never, speaking is necessary for academic achievement and needed in all domains. According to one of the participants, students should keep in their mind that making mistakes is a part of dreaming.

5. Do you think that anxiety affects the four skills ?

Yes  no

Responses	Participants	%
Yes	8	100
No	0	0

**table 28: participants' perception about whether anxiety affects the four skills**

The number of the participants' who think that anxiety affects the four skills, is 8 (100%), there is no participants who think that anxiety does not affects the four skills.

6. Do you think that anxiety is related to the speaking skill more than the other skills ?

yes  no

Responses	Participants	%
Yes	8	100
No	0	0

**table 29: participants' perception about whether anxiety is related to the speaking more than the other skills**

All the participants agreed that anxiety is related to the speaking skill more than the other skills. That means that anxiety has a great impact on the foreign language speaking.

7. What are the strategies that you think you have to apply in order to reduce your students' speaking anxiety?

Participants suggest some strategies that can be used in order to reduce students speaking anxiety. These strategies are: Providing new topics, using a authentic materials such as movies, songs, speeches of famous people; practicing the language outside the walls

of class; the teachers should guide them to use good websites to practice the language on the net; creating a relaxed atmosphere and so on.

## **Conclusion**

From the the analysis of the teachers' feedback, we arrived to many outcomes. anxiety is a phenomenon that always exists in foreign language classes. It affects the four skills; however, it greatly impact the speaking skill. Students are anxious when they are required to speak the foreign language in front of the audience. Teachers are aware of the effects of anxiety on their students' learning and speaking performance. For that reason they try to motivate them by giving them advices such as making mistakes are a part of learning. Teachers suggest many strategies in order to reduce their student's anxiety: bring new topics and use authentic materials, voice chat with the teacher outside the walls of class, creating a relaxed atmosphere for student.

## **Recommendations**

For the purpose of reducing foreign language speech anxiety and achieving better learning and speaking performance, we provide some suggestions for both teachers and learners.

1. Teachers and learners should implement the appropriate strategies in order to reduce speaking anxiety.
2. Teachers and learners should have a good relationship to create a relaxed atmosphere which help the learners in achieving better.
3. Students should bear in their minds that making mistakes is a part of learning. So they should not be afraid of making mistakes.
4. Students should also bear in their minds that nervousness is natural and it can be controlled.
5. Learners should practice the language inside and outside the classroom in order to increase their English proficiency and reduce their speaking anxiety.

## **General conclusion**

Foreign language anxiety is an important issue that has a considerable effects on students learning. Due to its importance, various studies have explored it from different angles such as : its existence, its correlation with student's achievement. These studies have exposed that foreign language anxiety affects the majority of foreign language learners in different aspects. The phenomenon of foreign language anxiety is generated classroom of foreign language because of many causes: some of these causes results from the learner, some from the teacher, and some from the instruction given in classroom.

Most of the studies that have been carried out on foreign language anxiety proved that the most anxiety provoking skill is speaking. Consequently, many studies seek to explore the phenomenon of foreign language speaking anxiety. Researchers who deal with this issue, examine it from different angles such as its relationship with the four skills, its causes, and the strategies to cope with it. Foreign language speaking anxious students can be characterized by number of characteristics: some of them are physical and others are mental. The previous studies showed that the interventions of both teachers and learners can reduce foreign language speaking anxiety.

The present study exposes various results concerning the relationship between anxiety and the speaking skill, its causes, and the appropriate strategies to reduce it. Foreign language anxiety affects the learning of the majority of learners. Both teachers and learners are familiar with this issue, and they considered it as a big obstacle in learning foreign language. Anxiety prevents learners to develop their speaking skill. Students' speech anxiety results from many factors such as shyness, lack of vocabulary, lack of practice, lack of preparation, lack of self-confidence, and so on. Foreign language speaking anxiety can be recognized by many signs such as shaking hands, dry mouth, mispronunciation, stammering, low voice, silence, avoiding eye contact with the teacher.

Since teachers and learners contribute in the emergence of speaking anxiety, both of them can reduce it. Learners can decrease their speech anxiety by preparing themselves, practicing the foreign language inside and outside the classroom, avoiding fear of making mistakes, practicing self-talk, developing their self-confidence. Teachers can use some strategies that assist in reducing the existence of anxiety in their classes by creating friendly and relaxed atmosphere, motivating learners to speak, avoiding overcorrecting mistakes, making games, avoiding obliging them to speak. Reducing students' foreign language speaking anxiety can help them enhance their speaking performance. Based on these outcomes, we can say that the present study answers our dissertation' research question. The results of this study show that anxiety is related to the speaking skill more than the other skills. They also display different procedures and strategies that teachers and learners can use to overcome anxiety and help in enhancing foreign language learning and speaking performance.



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## Appendices

### appendix I

#### students' feedback questionnaire

**Note :**

**Anxiety :** is an emotion, feeling of fear, and worry.

Please put a cross (x) in the appropriate box.

SA= strongly agree    A= agree    N= neutral    D= disagree    SD= strongly disagree

#### Section one : background information

1. You are

Male ☐                      Female ☐

2. In secondary school, you were in

Literary stream ☐                      Scientific stream ☐

3. You have started studying English in

Primary school ☐                      secondary school ☐                      high school ☐

4. Your choice to study English at the university

Voluntary ☐                      obliged ☐

5. Do you like English language ?

Yes ☐    No ☐

#### Section two: anxiety and foreign language anxiety

1. Do you think that learning English as a foreign language is difficult ?

☐    ☐

Yes

No

2. If yes, is anxiety among the causes of your foreign language learning difficulties?

Yes ☐

No ☐

3. Does anxiety affect your foreign language learning?

Yes ☐

No ☐

4. If yes, to what extent anxiety affects your foreign language learning?

High extent ☐ intermediate extent ☐ low extent ☐

### Section three: foreign language speaking anxiety

1. Do you face difficulties in learning the four skills?

Yes ☐

No ☐

2. What do you think about speaking the foreign language?

Easy ☐

difficult ☐

3. If you have difficulties in speaking the foreign language, do you consider anxiety as a cause of these difficulties?

Yes ☐

No ☐

4. You feel more anxious when you

write ☐ read ☐ listen ☐ speak ☐

5. You achieve better in

Written tests ☐ oral tests ☐

6. If you are an anxious speaker, you classify yourself as

High anxious speaker ☐ intermediate anxious speaker ☐  
Low anxious speaker ☐

#### Section four: cause of foreign language speaking anxiety

1. You never feel quite sure of yourself when you are speaking in your foreign language class

SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD ☐

2. You start to panic when you have to speak without any preparation in language class

SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD ☐

3. You are afraid that the other students will laugh at you when you have not prepared in advance

SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD ☐

#### Section five: Anxiety and oral activities

1. you have difficulties in expressing your ideas in English ?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. In the oral tasks, where do you feel more anxious ?

Role plays ☐ free discussions ☐ oral presentation ☐

3. Check any of the following factors that may cause your fear of speaking

Lack of vocabulary ☐ lack of preparation ☐  
Lack of practice ☐ fear of being center of attention ☐

## Section six: Reducing foreign language speaking anxiety

1. What do you think you can do in order to reduce your anxiety?
2. What do you want from your teacher to do in order to reduce your anxiety?

## Appendix II

### Teachers' feedback questionnaire

#### Section one : Background information:

1. You are

Male  Female

2. How long have you been teaching English ?

.....

.....

#### Section two: speaking skill

1. which type of activities do you choose for speaking skill ?

information gap activity  free discussion task   
role play  story telling task   
others

2. For what purpose do you choose this kind of activities ?

To build fluency  To build accuracy

#### Section three : speaking and anxiety

1. Have you noticed that some of your students are reluctant to speak the foreign language ?

Yes ☐

No ☐

2. Do you consider anxiety as one of the causes of your students' inhibition to speak the foreign language ?

Yes ☐

No ☐

3. Do you motivate your students to speak ?

Yes ☐

No ☐

4. If yes, how do you motivate them ?

.....  
.....

5. Do you think that anxiety affects the four skills ?

Yes ☐

No ☐

6. Do you think that anxiety is related to the speaking skill more than the other skills ?

Yes ☐

No ☐

7. What are the strategies that you think you have to apply in order to reduce your students' speaking anxiety ?

.....  
.....  
.....