

Sources of Foreign Language Anxiety in the Student-teachers' English Classrooms: A Case Study in a Spanish University

Fuentes de ansiedad lingüística en las aulas de inglés de estudiantes de magisterio: estudio de caso en una universidad española

ELENA GOÑI-OSÁCAR
ENRIQUE LAFUENTE-MILLÁN
UNIVERSIDAD DE ZARAGOZA

Foreign Language Anxiety is a common problem among learners, even more relevant if they are future teachers. This paper presents a case study that aims to identify and understand the reasons for foreign language anxiety among undergraduates learning English in a Spanish Faculty of Education. We gathered information from 63 students and 4 teachers through classroom observations, questionnaires and a focus group. The results identify three interrelated categories of causes of language anxiety. Furthermore, the explanatory model proposed here introduces the classification of *root sources*, *triggering sources*, and *contributing sources*. More specifically, we postulate that root sources can be traced to the learners themselves (poor English proficiency, low self-efficacy, etc.) and, because of this, other external factors, mainly, speaking exercises in front of the classroom, can trigger anxiety experiences. This model improves our understanding of how sources of language anxiety interact in this context and other similar learning settings.

Keywords: *foreign language anxiety sources; anxiety and English Foreign Language (EFL); speaking anxiety, second language (L2) anxiety; student teacher anxiety.*

La ansiedad lingüística es un problema común entre los aprendices, incluso más relevante si estos son futuros maestros. Este artículo presenta un estudio de caso que busca identificar y comprender las causas de ansiedad lingüística ante el aprendizaje de inglés en estudiantes de una Facultad de Educación española. Se reunió información de 63 estudiantes y 4 profesoras por medio de observaciones de aula, cuestionarios y un grupo de discusión. Los resultados identifican tres categorías interrelacionadas de causas de ansiedad lingüística. Asimismo, el modelo explicativo propuesto introduce la clasificación de: *causas raíz*, *causas desencadenantes* y *causas contribuyentes*. Más específicamente, se postula que las causas raíz están relacionadas con los aprendices (bajo nivel de inglés, baja autoeficacia, etc.) y, debido a ellas, otros factores externos, principalmente la producción oral ante la clase, pueden desencadenar experiencias de ansiedad. Este modelo mejora la comprensión de cómo las fuentes de ansiedad lingüística interactúan en este contexto y otros similares.

Palabras clave: *fuentes de ansiedad lingüística; ansiedad e inglés como lengua extranjera; ansiedad al hablar; ansiedad ante el aprendizaje de la segunda lengua; ansiedad del estudiante de Magisterio.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Foreign language anxiety or anxiety in foreign or second language learning is a type of specific anxiety related to language learning in the classroom. Wang (2005), for example, defines it as a sense of fear, tension, apprehension, nervousness, and concern in this learning context. Nevertheless, it was Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986:128) who defined it for the first time as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”.

English Foreign Language Learning Anxiety has been studied in different settings, since Horwitz et al. (1986) drew attention to its importance. These investigations have evidenced that this type of anxiety can have adverse effects on learning and classroom performance (Arnold, 2006; Gregersen, 2007; Goñi-Osácar & del Moral-Barrigüete, 2021), as well as on the learner's affective dimension (Goñi-Osácar & del Moral-Barrigüete, 2021). Gkonou and Miller (2017) suggest that when language teachers are aware of their students' language anxiety, they feel compelled to endeavor to mitigate its effects, which entails an additional pressure for the teachers. Furthermore, it has been found there is a significant negative relationship between enjoyment in the foreign language classroom and language anxiety (Dewaele, Witney, Saito & Dewaele, 2017). These findings have prompted researchers to investigate different strategies which may help to reduce second language learners' anxiety: the use of songs (Silva, 2005; Dolean, 2015); drama techniques (Atas, 2015); and systemic therapy (Sánchez & Sánchez, 2017), etc. Thus, understanding the sources of language anxiety is essential to identify and implement effective strategies that can help us reduce or avoid its adverse effects.

In past years, sources of foreign language anxiety have been a topic of interest for many researchers. Nonetheless, this research has often been limited to examining the influence of one or a few factors. As a result, even though the literature has identified a number of factors causing foreign language anxiety, our understanding of these causes and of how they interact is still incomplete. More qualitative studies are therefore necessary (Briesmaster & Briesmaster-Paredes, 2015), as they will help find a model that explains not only the isolated influence of a sole factor but also the influence of all the possible sources and its interactions within a learning context.

Moreover, the causes of anxiety amongst student teachers have received little attention, despite the consequences that their language anxiety may have on their future teaching practice. Thus, more research is necessary to shed light on this type of anxiety in teachers in training, as suggested by Arnaiz-Castro and Guillén (2012, 2013). The present qualitative case study aims to explore foreign language anxiety in students learning English in the Degrees in Primary and Infant Education in the Faculty of Education of Zaragoza University (Spain) so as to better understand the causes of this anxiety. More specifically, this study aims to answer these research questions:

- 1) To what extent do these learners experience language anxiety in the English lessons?
- 2) Which internal and external factors cause their language anxiety?
- 3) Are there other factors linked to the learning situation that boost the effect of those factors on language anxiety?
- 4) How do the causes of language anxiety interact in this context?

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In their seminal study, Horwitz et al. (1986) established that foreign language anxiety is related to three different types of anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. In subsequent research, scholars have described language anxiety as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon (Young, 1991; Dewaele, 2007) as it comprises a combination of factors, from the learning context as well as from the learner himself. Despite the multifaceted nature of the concept, research on language learning anxiety has focused mostly on the three types of anxiety described by Horwitz et al. (1986).

Communication apprehension refers to a person's anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication with one or several persons (McCroskey, 1984). Within communication apprehension, the fear of speaking in public is especially relevant in the context of the foreign language classroom. The fear of speaking in public has received different names such as "stage fright", due to its association with the apprehension experienced by actors or performers. This type of fear is a very common problem among university students, and it is noteworthy since it inhibits students' participation in the classroom and it can impair their learning (Orejudo, Herrero, Ramos, Fernández & Nuño, 2007).

Fear of exams is the second factor directly related to language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz, 2010). This type of anxiety is the tendency to be alarmed, rationally or irrationally, about the consequences derived from an inadequate performance in an exam or other type of evaluation exercise, which frequently causes cognitive interference in students (Sarason, 1984; in Arnold, 2000). According to Horwitz et al. (1986), test-anxious learners often set unrealistic self-expectations, and they are likely to experience substantial difficulty in the foreign language classroom, where mistakes in tests and quizzes are to be expected. Aydin (2008), for instance, highlighted that fear of exams was a common source of language anxiety experiences in his students.

Fear of negative evaluation can be defined as the apprehension when thinking of other people's evaluation about oneself. As reported by Ahmad, Al-Shboul, Nordin, Rahman, Burhan & Madarsh (2013), learners' fear of making mistakes, and consequently, their apprehension about negative evaluation is an important source of language anxiety. In today's society, the image one projects towards others plays a crucial role in an individual's self-esteem and self-concept, especially for teenagers and young people. In this sense, the fear of making mistakes in front of peers and, therefore, the fear of suffering their contempt and having one's image undermined can generate embarrassment and reluctance to participate in class activities in the target language (Jones, 2004; in Crichton, Templeton & Valdera, 2017).

Different researchers have found that for some learners a low proficiency in the target language within the context of the subject they are studying is another factor that provokes foreign language anxiety and can affect their learning (Phillips, 1992; Fang-peng & Dong, 2010; Arnaiz-Castro & Guillén, 2012). Similarly, believing that the rest of their classmates have greater competence in the target language is a cause for anxiety (Price, 1991; Rodriguez & Delgado, 2008). In addition, low self-efficacy, in other words, low confidence in one's capabilities to carry out a specific task (Bandura, 1977), has been shown to cause high levels of foreign language anxiety (Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006; Lahuerta, 2014).

Certain teaching methods and lesson dynamics can also increase language anxiety. According to Effiong (2015), whole class activities create more nervousness and hence may be less effective for promoting the acquisition of foreign languages than small group activities. Likewise, the classroom atmosphere and the way teachers conduct the lessons and interact with students are also factors that may affect students' language anxiety experiences (Wörde, 2003; Ewald, 2007; Suleimenova, 2013). More specifically, the teacher's corrections can be a source of nervousness for some learners (Katayama, 2007; Khattak, Jamshed, Ahmad & Baig, 2011;

Sánchez & Sánchez, 2017).

The research literature has generally agreed that speaking exercises are the activities which cause most anxiety in students (Horwitz et al., 1986; Price, 1991; Young, 1991, 1992; MacIntyre, 1995). However, a number of studies have indicated that activities involving oral comprehension (Vogely, 1998), written expression (Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert, 1999; Cheng, 2004; Qashoa, 2014), and reading comprehension (Ahmad et al., 2013) may also provoke stress in some learners.

As pointed out in the literature (Amengual-Pizarro, 2019b), the investigations conducted on foreign language anxiety in student teachers are limited in number and scope. Existing research has revealed that prospective teachers experience different levels of this type of anxiety in the classroom and have identified different factors causing anxiety, including fear of public speaking, low self-efficacy (Çubukçu, 2008; Tum, 2012; Yoon, 2012; Aydin, 2016), fear of negative evaluation by others (Aydin, 2008; Subaşı, 2010), perfectionism (Arnaiz-Castro & Guillén, 2013), or lack of competence in the target language (Arnaiz-Castro & Guillén, 2013; Kara, 2013; Yetis, 2017). None of these studies, however, offers a holistic account of the different factors involved and their interrelated effects.

3. METHOD

We decided to undertake a case study because this research method enables us to examine a complex phenomenon—such as language anxiety—, from the singularity of a case in context (Quintanilla, 2010) and because it is especially appropriate from a qualitative approach. The case study reported in this paper is *instrumental* and *collective* (Stake, 1994) which enabled us to compare the responses obtained partially with each of the two cases analysed and find patterns in the sources of this type of anxiety in the study context.

3.1. Selection of participants and study setting

For this investigation, we defined the case as the student body of a group-class who regularly attended one of the EFL subjects of the Degrees in Primary or Infant Education (Faculty of Education, Zaragoza University), together with their teachers. Two cases were selected by theoretical sampling¹ and named case A and case B. Specifically, the participants were 63 students who attended the first-year mandatory subject "English for Primary Education I" of the Degree in Primary Education, as well as their teachers. Case A consisted of 32 students from one class-group and their two teachers while case B consisted of 31 students from another class-group and their two teachers.

The students of both cases (48 females and 15 males) were mostly 18-20 years old and had graduated from high school the previous year. Their level of proficiency in the target language was heterogeneous, approximately ranging from A2 to B2. The teachers involved in the study had extensive experience teaching English as a foreign language.

The ethical requirements of informed consent, as well as confidentiality and anonymity of all the participants—students and teachers—were met, and the current ethical regulations on research at the University of Zaragoza were taken into account.

The subject was described by the course guide and the participating teachers as an EFL course following a communicative and task-based methodology. Its objective was for students

¹ The case selection was carried out by theoretical sampling, which involves two complementary strategies. In other words, we chose cases that allowed us to obtain the basic properties common to all cases and, at the same time, were different from each other to offer nuances.

to consolidate a B1 level in the four skills in the target language. The topics of most activities were connected to the field of education. The subject was taught entirely in English in full group sessions, as well as in split groups and small group sessions for oral exam practice. The evaluation tests took place at the end of the semester.

3.2. *Research techniques, procedure and data analysis*

The techniques used for the data collection were the survey, the focus group, and classroom observation. In this investigation, a semi-structured *ad-hoc* questionnaire was administered to the students as it enabled a more efficient collection of data on their views and experiences vis-à-vis foreign language anxiety. When developing the questionnaire, we took into consideration our theoretical revision, our knowledge of the classroom setting, and the objectives of the research. The instrument consisted of a total of 45 closed and open-ended questions on aspects related to the students' background and their language anxiety (sample in Appendix 1). Eight experts in the field of English teaching and psychology validated the questionnaire which was then piloted with 20 other first year students taking the same course. A list of questions, moving from the general to the specific, was prepared for the focus group (Appendix 2). The focus group and a brief complementary questionnaire were used to question the teachers about the language anxiety of learners and about the reasons for this anxiety.

Finally, a field notebook was used to collect data during the classroom observations. In the left column, descriptive notes were taken and, in the right column, the researcher/observer's reflections and interpretations.

The data collection procedure consisted of the following steps. First, initial data on the subject and the activities were collected through a small questionnaire applied to the teachers. This data, together with a revision of previous literature was used to design the semi-structured *ad-hoc* questionnaire for the students. Later, we carried out four observations in the classroom, an entire session with each of the participating teachers, to obtain data on the dynamics of the classes, the classroom atmosphere, the teachers' pedagogical style and possible sources of language anxiety.

The questionnaire was piloted and administered to the participants as a Google form survey during regular school hours before the exams in the computer room of the Faculty of Education. Those not attending these sessions (3 out of a total of 63) had the opportunity to complete it outside the classroom.

Weeks later, we conducted a focus group with the four teachers. In addition, we asked them to complete a complementary questionnaire, which included some of the questions we asked the students, to compare the views of students and teachers.

The data from the different research tools were analysed separately for case A and B in order to establish possible differences. The data analysis was performed in three phases. First, we performed a descriptive statistical analysis (absolute and relative frequencies) of quantitative data. After that, we coded the data collected through the open-ended questions analyzing data from each question first, after which we analysed all the data together in order to establish patterns regarding the sources of language anxiety. In this last phase, we worked in a deductive way, from a system of thematic categories supported by the review of the previous literature, but also inductively, creating and adapting the categories based on our data. We checked relationships among categories as well as the extreme and negative cases, that is to say, all the responses from the students who had indicated experiencing no anxiety or high language anxiety. The qualitative analysis followed Miles and Huberman's Model (1994) — reduction of the most relevant data, presentation of data, obtaining conclusions— and was performed using NVivo 11 Pro. Attention was paid both to the patterns and trends reflected in the data (nomothetic approach) and to the singularities in the data (idiographic approach) as they help to qualify the classroom reality.

After analysing the students' responses, we used the resulting list of categories to classify and interpret the data from the focus group with the teachers. Lastly, we reviewed the notes of the field notebook, compared and triangulated all the partial findings to reach the final results.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Students' language anxiety experiences

Learners' level of foreign language anxiety was investigated through the questionnaire administered to them. Table 1 shows the results of question no. 20 (see Appendix 1).

Table 1: Students' level of language anxiety in the subject English for Primary Education I.

Foreign language anxiety level	Students Case A (N=32)		Students Case B (N=31)	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
No language anxiety	5	15.63	1	3.23
Little anxiety	13	40.63	20	64.52
Quite a lot anxiety	11	34.38	7	22.58
A lot of anxiety	3	9.38	3	9.68

Table 2: Students' perception of level of language anxiety in their classroom of English for Primary Education I.

Foreign language anxiety level	Students Case A (N=32)		Students Case B (N=31)	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
No language anxiety	0	0.00	0	0.00
Little anxiety	17	53.13	18	58.06
Quite a lot anxiety	13	40.63	11	35.48
A lot of anxiety	1	3.13	1	3.23
No opinion	1	3.13	1	3.23

These results indicate that practically all the students interviewed felt some level of foreign language anxiety in the subject setting. Moreover, the results of question no. 28, in Table 2, are consistent with the above findings.

It should be pointed out that about 40% of the learners in case A and approximately 35% in case B said that they perceived a high level of anxiety among their classmates, while about 53% of students in case A and 58% in case B perceived a low level of anxiety. It is worth noting that none of the students reported perceiving no anxiety at all in their class group.

The above results revealed that the students experienced different language anxiety levels, from low level to high level. Other investigations (Kunt & Tm, 2010; Tm, 2012) have also found this variability. However, Arnaiz-Castro and Guilln (2013) and Sadiq (2017)

obtained more homogenous results with predominantly medium levels of anxiety in their investigations and Amengual-Pizarro (2019a, 2019b) found average-to-high levels.

4.2. Sources of foreign language anxiety

The integration and contrast of all the data revealed much diversity in the perceived causes of the participants' language anxiety. The following thematic categories on the causes of the participants' language anxiety appeared most frequently in the data: low English proficiency; low relative English proficiency; personality; fear of negative evaluation; public speaking anxiety; low self-efficacy; test anxiety and oral activities.

Using the data from the different tools we were able to elaborate a general explanatory model of the sources of language anxiety in the students taking part in our study. This model (see Appendix 3) classifies the sources of anxiety into three main types. In the first category we have included certain internal factors of the learner that constitute the root causes of the problem, while other external factors that trigger the language anxiety experiences are part of our second category. Finally, we identified a number of aspects linked to the learning situation that contribute to boosting or increasing their anxiety. All these sources of language anxiety included in the model will be discussed in the following two sections, under the headings root sources and triggering sources of foreign language anxiety. Within the second section, we will also refer to the contributing sources or causes that increase this type of anxiety.

4.2.1. Root sources of foreign language anxiety

Among all the internal sources found as root sources of language anxiety, the four most relevant were: their low level of competence in English, some personality traits, their fear of negative evaluation by others and their general fear of speaking in public. Besides focusing on these four aspects we will also examine the role of low self-efficacy, test anxiety and others less general factors.

a) Low level of proficiency in English

Many students reported having a low level of proficiency in English, particularly in oral production, and this perception of their (low) ability in speaking was identified by a considerable number of students as one of the most important sources of their language anxiety. It is worth noting that the teachers of both case A and B also perceived this aspect as a significant cause of anxiety. These results are consistent with other studies (Phillips, 1992; Fang-peng & Dong, 2010; Arnaiz-Castro & Guillén, 2012, 2013; Briesmaster & Briesmaster-Paredes, 2015; Yetis, 2017; Amengual-Pizarro, 2019b). Some examples of what the participants expressed are the following:

- (1) Student case A: I am a person who does not have a high level of English and, that causes me nervousness when it comes to being in class, and not being able to follow it.
- (2) Student case B: Since I do not have good English proficiency, expressing myself in public or, simply, expressing myself in English, requires a great deal of effort to me. I do not feel confident or fluent. So, I feel anxious when I hold a conversation, and when someone, either the teacher or a classmate, tells me something in English and I do not understand it. It is a very frustrating feeling.
- (3) Teacher 2 (case A): yes. Well, we should also say that anxiety also depends...

Teacher 4 (case B): on their English level.

Teacher 2 (case A): on the students' proficiency

Teacher 3 (case B): their competence, yes.

Teacher 2 (case A): because there are, really, people who have good linguistic competence.

Teacher 4 (case B): and they are not afraid to talk...

Teacher 2 (case A): exactly. They have well-developed oral skills. Then, normally, they do not have any problem. I mean, I think anxiety is related to English skills.

Besides, for some students and three of the teachers, the low proficiency in speaking could be partly due to the lack of practice in oral production at school and/or high school. Finally, some respondents emphasised that their poor pronunciation was a relevant source of nervousness, which is in agreement with the findings in other studies (Yoon, 2012; Aydin, 2016; Kra'lova, Skorvagova, Tirpakova & Markechova, 2017).

b) Relative level of proficiency within the FL classroom

The participants' perception of their relative level of competence in English also appeared as a source of language anxiety in cases A and B. Although this factor was less frequently cited by students than the previous one, for some students, their low competence and the fact that their classmates' level was higher were the most important reasons for their anxiety. The comments by teachers made clear references to the connection between language proficiency and language anxiety, but they conveyed with less emphasis that relative proficiency played a part in the students' anxiety.

In a large-scale study including over 1700 respondents from different countries, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) also highlighted the influence of the relative level of competence on the language anxiety experiences. Dewaele et al. (2017) found that the students who felt average or below class average suffered more language anxiety than those who felt above or far above average. In line with this, Subaşı (2010) contended that this type of anxiety is greater in shared oral production activities as it is easier for students to compare their output with that of peers.

c) Personality

Personality was reported, approximately by half of the students in case A and case B, as a source of their anxiety. The four teachers also mentioned it in the complementary questionnaire to the focus group. Both teachers and students cited insecurity and shyness as personality traits contributing to the language anxiety. However, it is worth noting that only the students referred to perfectionism, while teachers did not identify it a personality trait linked to anxiety. Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) and Kunt and Tüm (2010) also found a connection between this personality trait and language anxiety. Some students expressed themselves their perfectionism in the following terms:

(4) Student case A: I just wanted to note that anxiety often does not only occur when you do not have a good level of proficiency or you panic when talking in front of an audience, but you also have to take into account other variables such as marks, as it is my case. Knowing that the teacher will penalize you for committing an error, which even you notice, causes much anguish.

(5) Student case B: I am a person who always wants to say things as well as possible and without errors and, sometimes, I get so nervous about not committing them that I get stuck in my own words or I stay blank for a few seconds.

d) Fear of negative evaluation

In both cases, the answers of students suggested that a part of their language anxiety came from the fear of feeling ashamed or looking ridiculous when speaking in front of the classroom. This idea was in agreement with the perceptions of the teachers.

It should be noted that the learners attached more importance to this factor than the teachers. In fact, the words ridiculous and shame were very frequently used by the students, which pointed to the fact that this is a key factor for students at this age.

The results obtained establish a direct and clear relationship between fear of negative evaluation by others and language anxiety within the study context. Most of the participants reported experiencing this type of fear, and in case B it was found to be their main source of nervousness. Besides, the results showed that the learners were more anxious about making mistakes in front of their classmates than the teachers. Young (1994) and Horwitz (2010) also established that fear of negative evaluation has a strong influence on students' language anxiety, a finding which has been corroborated by numerous scholars (Aydin, 2008; Subaşı, 2010; Briesmaster & Briesmaster-Paredes, 2015). The following coded excerpts from participants' responses illustrate the influence of this fear on language anxiety:

(6) Student case A: The activities that I like the least are presentations because I'm afraid of making a fool of myself or saying something foolish because of my nerves.

Student case B: I get nervous because I think if I am wrong, they will think I am dumb.

(7) Teacher 2 (case A): and I believe that language anxiety, mainly, comes from ..., due to they are unable to respond well in English and they are the centre of...

Teacher 4 (case B): attention. Teacher 2 (case A): attention, or...

Teacher 1 (case A): exact.

Teacher 2 (case A): They feel ridiculous. They consider that they have made a fool of themselves.

e) General fear of public speaking

In our data, language anxiety was frequently associated with communicative fear in its variety of fear of public speaking. In contrast, only one of the 63 students participating in the study expressed his nervousness in relation to the conversation in dyads. Therefore, the results of this study coincide only partially with Horwitz et al. (1986), who associated this kind of anxiety with communicative apprehension. In fact, most of the participants expressed a positive opinion of speaking activities in pairs or small groups. In addition, in some cases, fear of speaking in public was associated with shyness:

(8) Student case A: I am very embarrassed every time I have to make a presentation, and I think it is because I am quite shy; because of my fear of being wrong and forgetting things, etc.

Student case B: Whenever I get nervous, I get nervous because of speaking in public. Not only does it happen to me in English, but it happens to me with other subjects.

Although the students of both cases mentioned the importance of this factor in their language anxiety in the classroom, the participants in case A highlighted fear of speaking in public as one of the three main reasons for anxiety. Moreover, their teachers agreed with their students on the importance of this factor.

f) Low self-efficacy

Low self-efficacy, for oral production in the target language, was also a source of language anxiety for the learners in the study. Some students felt unable to express themselves in English in an efficient way. This factor was not one of the four most relevant at a general level. However, almost half of the students in both cases reported not having a good ability for the English language (question no. 22) as one of the reasons for their anxiety. Our results on the incidence of low self-efficacy in connection with this type of anxiety agree with previous findings by Mills et al. (2006), Subaşı (2010), Lahuerta (2014), Haley, Romero and Gelgand (2015).

Interestingly, Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1997) establishes that one of the factors which affect the learner's self-efficacy is their level of general anxiety. In other words, when learners experience a feeling of anxiety while performing a task their perception of their ability to complete the task diminishes. We could therefore contend that self-efficacy both influences and is influenced by anxiety.

g) Test anxiety

Test anxiety, especially that regarding oral production tests, was another reason for the participants' language anxiety, although it did not appear as one of the main factors, possibly because the data was collected several months before the exams were scheduled to take place. However, many students in case A and case B confirmed that they experienced high anxiety when they thought about oral exams.

h) Miscellaneous

Our results revealed other less general causes of participants' anxiety, some of which have already been documented in the literature, such as the memory of previous negative experiences at school and/or high school in which the student had been teased by classmates or had not received support from the teacher (Subaşı 2010); the perception of not advancing in the target language; and low self-esteem (Young, 1994).

4.2.2. *Triggering sources of foreign language anxiety*

a) Speaking exercises in front of the class

While the factors discussed above were the root causes of the students' language anxiety, oral production tasks performed in front of all the classmates were the main external factor that triggered anxiety experiences.

The category named oral activities was the one that collected the most number of quotes, showing that activities involving oral production in front of the class (reading aloud, oral presentations, discussions in the large group, results sharing, etc.) provoked nervousness or anxiety in students with one or several of the characteristics or internal factors described in section 4.2.1. The statements below illustrate that this type of tasks was perceived as particularly stressful by students:

- (9) Student case A: Nor do I like oral presentations because I do not have much confidence when speaking in public in English and I get very nervous.
Student case B: When I have to speak in front of everyone, I get very nervous.

- (10) Teacher 3 (case B): in my case which is case B, I perceive it (language anxiety) especially when we do oral activities. When they have to talk, to use the language to express themselves they get blocked a little bit more and they get a little more nervous, I think. In the rest of the

tasks, as they are directed activities in groups or pairs, and the class atmosphere is good, they feel a little more protected. However, talking by themselves blocks them; they get stuck a little bit more.

Teacher 1 (case A): yes. In case A, the same thing happens, eh ... There is no anxiety in the classroom activities. I do not perceive it except when they have to present in groups that some of them get very nervous, and you perceive it. You do not know very well why (...)

The data collected through participant observation also confirmed that oral production activities performed in front of the whole class were a source of language anxiety for several of the participating students. In contrast, the students appeared comfortable in the classroom when they spoke in English in pairs or small groups and with people who usually sat next to them. For example, the following notes taken during our observation of an oral presentation by groups to the whole class, on the results of a survey about social networks, show different anxiety signals:

(11) A student seems nervous when she intervenes. She looks at the projected slide and touches her hair continuously.

Another student, who speaks without paper, seems nervous because he swings, touches his neck continuously, and always interrupts his presentation with the tag "eh".

Numerous research studies have identified activities involving oral production in front of the class as the major source of stress in foreign language classrooms (Young, 1990, 1994; Cheng et al., 1999; Liu, 2007; Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham, 2008; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Rodríguez & Delgado, 2008; Toth, 2008; Yan & Horwitz, 2008; Hsu, 2009; Pawlak, 2011; Effiong, 2015).

Although speaking activities were clearly the most threatening for students, in this study a small number of respondents also reported that they felt anxious by making listening, writing, or reading tasks. Besides, some participants referred to their language anxiety when they did not understand the teachers when they spoke in English. These findings are consistent with those of Liu and Hong (2021). Interestingly, the teachers did not mention this as a generating anxiety.

b) Oral exams

Oral exams appeared in the data collected from students and teachers as frequent triggers for this type of anxiety. It should be noted that like oral presentations, oral exams were anticipated situations where students with low competence, insecurity, shyness or fear of feeling ridiculous, etc. experienced intense language anxiety and stress.

(12) Student case A: Discussing this topic with my classmates, we have concluded that most of us are nervous about this test, excluding very few people who are very competent in English.

(13) Student case B: I consider that it [oral exam] is necessary. However, we do not often show what we really know, due to our fear of being wrong, or because we are very nervous and our minds go blank.

The results of our classroom observation confirmed how the oral exam of the subject provoked language anxiety in some of the students. The following notes from the field notebook illustrate this:

(14) A student asks if they can enter the [oral] exam alone instead of in pairs. He explains that he is very embarrassed that someone may be listening to him while speaking in English.

The teacher encourages and reassures the students concerning this test.

4.2.3. *Boosters of foreign language anxiety*

Our research findings revealed that other factors linked to the learning situation aggravated students' language anxiety experiences, such as the high number of students in the classroom, and the lack of cohesion in the group-class. The results showed that although the participants in case A and case B enjoyed a positive classroom atmosphere the students did not feel confident with all the classmates in the group.

- (15) Student case A: ...the classroom situation, too, since I don't feel confident with everybody. If I had to speak only with my close group of friends, I wouldn't feel so ashamed in the oral presentations to the class.
Student case B: Moreover, the fact the class group is large increases my embarrassment, and has a substantial influence [on my foreign language anxiety].

In line with the above, several students in both cases and teachers suggested promoting class cohesion as a strategy to reduce foreign language anxiety. Dörnyei (1994) highlights that promoting class cohesion is an effective strategy to increase students' motivation towards the English language, which may bring about a reduction of foreign language anxiety in the classroom.

In addition, dull and uninteresting tasks were found to be more likely to contribute to foreign language anxiety experiences than motivating tasks. During the focus group, all the teachers firmly referred to the inhibiting effect on language anxiety of those tasks which were especially motivating for the students and caught all their attention.

- (16) Teacher 2 (case A): ... It depends a lot on the type of tasks you propose. With very engaging tasks that they want to solve..., usually, they forget language anxiety... That is to say, you get them not to be conscious they are speaking in English, you know? I think the more engaging the tasks are, the more they need to communicate in English, and they forget about...[foreign language anxiety]
Teacher 1 (case A): When they are using the English language in a really functional manner, because they need it for something...,
Teacher 2 (case A): yes!
Teacher 1 (case A): something that motivates them.
Teacher 2 (case A): Yes. When they realize the task is particularly useful.
Teacher 4 (case B): Yes! When it comes to CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). When they have to organize a summer camp, and they have to sell their idea. Then, they forget the English language and focus on persuading the class that their summer camp is the best!
All: Yes, yes, yes!

Furthermore, some of the students and all four teachers pointed out that the uncertainty regarding the contents and structure of their tests was a contributing factor to foreign language anxiety. This uncertainty could be partly due to the fact that, in previous academic years, learners were mainly assessed based on their knowledge of grammar. However, in the study context, the exam consisted in reading, listening, speaking, and writing tasks.

Finally, we should note that none of the students in the study reported that the teachers' behaviour or the way they conducted the lessons were sources of anxiety. Questionnaire, focus group and observation data showed that the teachers endeavoured to create a pleasant and supportive classroom environment. More particularly, when correcting learners' mistakes they used a number of strategies such as pointing out only the most relevant errors, avoiding interrupting the student, and downplaying the mistakes made. The teachers also used positive reinforcement to increase the learners' self-efficacy. Although our data does not allow us to establish which techniques were most effective in reducing anxiety, the students generally valued positively the patience, support and empathy shown by their teachers.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study presented in this paper aimed to shed light on the sources of English language anxiety in the context of the Degrees in Primary and Infant Education in a Spanish University. By adopting a qualitative approach, we hoped to provide a better understanding of the different causes associated to language anxiety among undergraduates studying to become teachers at the study context and, at the same time, to offer insights which might be of use for interpreting other similar settings.

Our results revealed that, in this context, student teachers can experience different levels of language anxiety in their EFL classes, ranging from very low to very high levels. Furthermore, our findings confirmed that a number of learner internal factors including low level of language proficiency, perception of their relative language competence and low self-efficacy, can be significant sources of their anxiety. We also drew attention to the role of the fear of the negative evaluation, especially by peers, as well as the general fear of public speaking and oral test anxiety. In addition, several personality factors such as shyness, insecurity, and perfectionism were found to contribute to anxiety experiences.

A closer look at some of our findings reveals relevant implications both for practitioners and researchers. Even though previous research has shown there is a strong correlation between perfectionism and social anxiety (Saboonchi & Lundh, 1997), in our study none of the teachers interviewed identified perfectionism as one of the causes for anxiety. This means that educators might be less aware of the risk of anxiety in high-performing students and, as a result, may fail to see the need to use strategies to reduce anxiety when interacting with successful learners. It would also be interesting to investigate which learner internal and external (i.e. social) factors tend to promote perfectionism among students.

In connection to the fear of negative evaluation, the answers of the teachers and, especially, of students suggested that their language anxiety came largely from the fear of feeling ashamed or looking ridiculous when speaking in front of their peers. Existing studies (Echeburúa, 1993; Méndez, Inglés & Hidalgo, 2002) suggest that social fears linked to interpersonal relations are predominant in children ages 12 to 18 and that scores older adolescents. Moreover, studies have found that older adolescents show lower scores than younger adolescents on fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety (Inderbitzen & Walters, 2000). It is therefore worth noting that, despite being 18-19 years of age, the students in our study displayed characteristics that are typical of younger adolescents.

Some of the activities causing the greatest anxiety to the student-teachers in our study were those linked to the fear of negative evaluation and of looking ridiculous before other students. These activities involved whole group oral production activities (presentations, debates, reading aloud, etc.) and oral exams. We therefore contend that these activities should be regarded as "triggers" of their experiences of language anxiety due to the existence of one or several of the above internal sources that can be considered the "root causes" of the problem.

Other factors such as the size of the group and the classroom atmosphere may have some bearing on the level of anxiety experienced by students. Our results suggested that although some of the participants enjoyed a positive classroom atmosphere the students did not feel confident with all the classmates in the group. While large and non-cohesive class-groups can increase this type of anxiety, a friendly atmosphere and supportive and empathetic teachers can help diminish it. Consequently, the role of the teacher is instrumental in generating a supportive and positive learning climate, which can generally be achieved using strategies such as positive feedback and praise, aligning expectations and goals with students, as well as planning class-building games and activities. Promoting a cooperative rather than a competitive classroom environment and encouraging students to focus on their progress, rather than comparing themselves with peers, may also be helpful in developing class-group cohesion. Finally, other

aspects the students in our study valued positively include the patience, support and empathy shown by their teachers, or them addressing the problem of anxiety explicitly in class.

Language anxiety is primarily linked to oral production activities, yet we should not overlook anxiety experiences connected to the other language skills. While the teachers interviewed failed to see the link between language anxiety and activities involving skills other than speaking, a number of students did report feeling anxiety in activities such as listening, reading, and writing. More specifically, the teachers failed to notice the anxiety students experienced when they did not understand their teachers' oral discourse in English.

To conclude, the present study has used mainly qualitative data extracted from a tertiary education context in order to suggest a classification of the causes of foreign language anxiety which, in contrast with existing taxonomies (e.g., Young, 1991, 1994; Trang, Baldauf & Moni, 2013), differentiates between root sources, trigger sources, and contributing sources of language anxiety. We hope this model will contribute to the understanding of language anxiety sources and its interactions. A number of implications for teaching have also been discussed which may be useful, not only for the context of the study but also for other similar educational settings.

Foreign language anxiety is a very important issue for many learners and teachers at different levels of education. More research is needed in order to better understand why some learners experience social fears and insecurity when using the foreign language and to identify the most useful strategies to mitigate those fears and facilitate language learning.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, I. S., Al-Shboul, M. M., Nordin, M. S., Rahman, Z. A., Burhan, M. & Madarsha, K. B. (2013). The potential sources of foreign language reading anxiety in a Jordanian EFL context: A theoretical framework. *English Language Teaching*, 6(11), 89-110. doi: 10.5539/elt.v6n11p89
- Amengual-Pizarro, M. (2019a). Foreign language classroom anxiety among English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students. *International Journal of English Studies*, 8, 145-159. doi: 10.6018/ijes/2018/2/323311.
- Amengual-Pizarro, M. (2019b). Do prospective primary school teachers suffer from foreign language anxiety (FLA) in Spain? *Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 16, 9-30. doi: 10.35869/vial.v0i16.91
- Arnaiz-Castro, P. & Guillén, F. (2012). Foreign language anxiety in a Spanish university setting: Interpersonal differences. *Revista de psicodidáctica*, 17(1), 5-26.
- Arnaiz-Castro, P. & Guillén, F. (2013). Anxiety in Spanish EFL students in different university degree programmes. *Anales de psicología*, 29(2), 335-344.
- Arnold, J. (2000). *La dimensión afectiva en el aprendizaje de idiomas*. Madrid: Cambridge University Press.
- Arnold, J. (2006). Los factores afectivos en el aprendizaje del español como lengua extranjera. *Études de Linguistique Appliquée*, 144. Retrieved from http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/antologia_didactica/claves/arnold.htm

- Atas, M. (2015). The reduction of speaking anxiety in EFL learners through drama techniques. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 176, 961-969.
- Aydin, S. (2008). An investigation on the language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation among Turkish EFL learners. *Asian EFL Journal*, 30(1), 421-444.
- Aydin, S. (2016). A qualitative research on foreign language teaching anxiety. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(4), 629-642. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss4/2>
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84, 191-215.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York: Freeman.
- Briesmaster, M. & Briesmaster-Paredes, J. (2015). The relationship between teaching styles and NNPSETs' anxiety levels. *System*, 49, 145-156. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2015.01.012
- Cheng, Y. S. (2004). A measure of second language writing anxiety: Scale development and preliminary validation. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13(4), 313-335. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2004.07.001
- Cheng, Y., Horwitz, E. K. & Schallert, D. L. (1999). Language anxiety: Differentiating writing and speaking components. *Language Learning*, 49(2), 417-446. doi: 10.1111/0023-8333.00095
- Crichton, H., Templeton, B. & Valdera, F. (2017). Face values: the use of sensitive error correction to address adolescents' face' issues in the modern languages classroom. *The language Learning Journal*, 45(1), 51-65. doi: 10.1080/09571736.2013.876090
- Çubukçu, F. (2008). A study on the correlation between self-efficacy and foreign language learning anxiety. *Journal of Theory and Practice in Education*, 4(1), 148-158.
- Dewaele, J. M. (2007). The effect of multilingualism, sociobiographical, and situational factors on communicative anxiety and foreign language anxiety of mature language learners. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 11(4), 391-409.
- Dewaele, J. M. & MacIntyre, P. (2014). The two faces of Janus? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 4(2), 237-274. doi: 10.14746/ssllt.2014.4.2.5
- Dewaele, J. M., Petrides, K. V. & Furnham, A. (2008). Effects of trait emotional intelligence and sociobiographical variables on communicative anxiety and foreign language anxiety among adult multilinguals: A review and empirical investigation. *Language Learning*, 58(4), 911-960. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9922.2008.00482.x
- Dewaele, J. M., Witney, J., Saito, K. & Dewaele, L. (2017). Foreign language enjoyment and anxiety: The effect of teacher and learner variables. *Language Teaching Research*, 22(6), 676-697. doi: 10.1177/1362168817692161
- Dolean, D. D. (2015). The effects of teaching songs during foreign language classes on

students' foreign language anxiety. *Language Teaching Research*, 20(5), 638–653. doi: 10.1177/1362168815606151

Dörnyei, Z. (1994). Motivation and motivating in the foreign language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(3), 273-284. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.1994.tb02042.x

Echeburua, E. (1993). *Fobia Social*. Barcelona: Martinez Roca.

Effiong, O. (2015). Getting them speaking: Classroom social factors and foreign language anxiety. *TESOL Journal*, 7(1), 132-161. doi: 10.1002/tesj.194

Ewald, J. D. (2007). Foreign language learning anxiety in upperlevel classes: Involving students as researchers. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40, 122-142. doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.2007.tb02857.x

Fang-Peng, G. & Dong, Y. (2010). A study on college students' anxiety to spoken English. *Canadian Social Science*, 6(2), 95-101.

Gkonou, C. & Miller, E. R. (2017). Caring and emotional labour: Language teachers' engagement with anxious learners in private language school classrooms. *Language Teaching Research*, 23(3), 372-387. doi: 10.1177%2F1362168817728739

Goñi-Osácar, E. & del Moral-Barrigüete, C. (2021). Efectos de la ansiedad lingüística ante el aprendizaje del inglés en estudiantes de Magisterio: estudio de caso. *DEDiCA Revista De Educação E Humanidades (dreh)*, (19), 311-332. doi: 10.30827/dreh.vi19.21865

Gregersen, T. (2007). Breaking the code of silence: a study of teachers' non-verbal decoding accuracy of foreign language anxiety. *Language Teaching Research*, 11(2), 209-221.

Gregersen, T. & Horwitz, E. K. (2002). Language learning and perfectionism: Anxious and non-anxious language learners' reactions to their own oral performance. *The Modern Language Journal*, 86(4), 562-570.

Haley, M., Romero, M. & Gelgand, J. C. (2015). Language anxiety and counseling self-efficacy. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 43(3), 162- 172. doi: 10.1002/jmcd.12012

Horwitz, E. K. (2010). Foreign and second language anxiety. *Language Teaching*, 43, 154-167. doi: 10.1017/S026144480999036X

Horwitz, E.K., Horwitz, M.B. & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x

Hsu, C. (2009). The relationship of trait anxiety, audience nonverbal feedback, and attributions to public speaking state anxiety. *Communication Research Reports*, 26, 237-246. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08824090903074407>

Inderbitzen-Nolan H.M. & Walters K.S. (2000). Social anxiety scale for adolescents: Normative data and further evidence of construct validity. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 29(3), 360-371.

- Kara, S. (2013). Writing anxiety: A case study on students' reasons for anxiety in writing classes. *Anadolu Journal of Educational Sciences International*, 3(1), 103-111.
- Katayama, A. (2007). Japanese EFL students' preferences toward correction of classroom oral errors. *Asian EFL Journal*, 9(4), *Conference proceedings*: 289-305.
- Khattak, Z. I., Jamshed, T., Ahmad, A. & Baig, M. N. (2011). An Investigation into the causes of English language learning anxiety in students at Awkum. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 15(0), 1600-1604. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.03.337
- Kra'lova, Z., Skorvagova, E., Tirpakova, A. & Markechova, D. (2017). Reducing student teachers' foreign language pronunciation anxiety through psycho-social training. *System*, 65, 49-60. doi: 10.1016%2Fj.system.2017.01.001
- Kunt, N. & Tm, D. . (2010). Non-native student teachers' feeling of foreign language anxiety. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2, 4672-4676. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.748
- Lahuerta, A. C. (2014). Factors affecting willingness to communicate in a Spanish university context. *International Journal of English Studies*, 14(2), 39-55. doi: 10.6018/j.193611
- Liu, M. (2007). Anxiety in oral English classroom: A case study in China. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching*, 3(1), 119-137.
- Liu, M., & Hong, M. (2021). English language classroom anxiety and enjoyment in Chinese young learners. *SAGE Open*. doi: 10.1177/21582440211047550
- Liu, M. & Jackson, J. (2008). An exploration of Chinese EFL learners' unwillingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety. *Modern Language Journal*, 92, 71-86. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00687.x
- MacIntyre, P. D. (1995). How does anxiety affect second language learning? A reply to Sparks and Ganschow. *The Modern Language Journal*, 79(1), 90-99. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.1995.tb05418.x
- McCroskey, J.C. (1984). The communication apprehension perspective. In J. A. Daly & J. C. McCroskey (Eds.), *Avoiding Communication* (pp. 13-38). California: Sage Publications.
- Mndez, F. X., Ingls, C. J. & Hidalgo, M. D. (2002). Estrs en las relaciones interpersonales: un estudio descriptivo en la adolescencia. *Ansiedad y Estrs*, 8, 23-31.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mills, N., Pajares, F. & Herron, C. (2006). A reevaluation of the role of anxiety: Self-efficacy, anxiety, and their relation to reading and listening proficiency. *Foreign Language Annals*, 39, 276-295. doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.2006.tb02266.x
- Orejudo, S., Herrero, M.L., Ramos, T., Fernndez, T. & Nuo, J. (2007). Evolucin del miedo

a hablar en público en estudiantes universitarios. Predictores de cambio a lo largo de un curso académico. *Ansiedad y Estrés*, 13(1), 89-102.

Phillips, E. (1992). The Effects of language anxiety on students' oral test performance and attitudes. *The Modern Language Journal*, 76, 14-26. doi: 10.2307/329894

Pawlak, M. (2011). Anxiety as a factor influencing the use of language strategies. In M. Pawlak (Ed.), *Extending the Boundaries of Research on Second Language learning and Teaching* (pp. 149-165). Berlin, Germany: Springer.

Price, M. L. (1991). The subjective experience of foreign language anxiety: Interviews with highly anxious students. In E. K. Horwitz and D. J. Young (Eds.), *Language Anxiety: From Theory to Research to Classroom Implications* (pp. 101-108). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Qashoa, S. H. H. (2014). English writing anxiety: alleviating strategies. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 136, 59-65. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.05.288

Quintanilla, L. (2010). Investigación cualitativa: características, métodos y técnicas. In s. Fontes de Gracia, C. García-Gallego, L. Quintanilla, R. Rodríguez Fernández, P. Rubio de Lemus & E. Sarriá (Eds.), *Fundamentos de investigación en psicología* (pp. 355-410). Madrid: Editorial UNED.

Rodríguez, Y. & Delgado, V. (2008). Assessment of EFL classroom activities and instructors' personal characteristics and behaviors as sources of foreign language anxiety. *Saber - Revista Multidisciplinaria del Consejo de Investigación de la Universidad de Oriente, Cumaná*, 20(2), 212 -224.

Saboonchi, F. & Lundh, L. (1997). Perfectionism, self-consciousness and anxiety. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 22(6), 921-928. doi: 10.1016/S0191-8869(96)00274-7

Sadiq, J.M. (2017). Anxiety in English language learning: A case study of English language learners in Saudi Arabia. *English Language Teaching*, 10(7), 1-7. doi: 10.5539/elt.v10n7p1

Sánchez Solarte, A. C. & Sánchez Solarte, A. (2017). From therapy to instruction: The effect of systemic strategies on the oral performance of foreign language learners. *How*, 24(2), 160-178. doi: 10.19183/how.24.2.393

Silva, T. (2005). La reducción de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera en la enseñanza superior: el uso de canciones. *Interlingüística*, 16(2), 1029-1039.

Stake, R. (1994). Case studies. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Quality Research* (pp. 236-247). London: Sage.

Subaşı, G. (2010). What are the main sources of Turkish EFL students' anxiety in oral practice? *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 1(2), 29-49.

Suleimenova, Z. (2013). Speaking anxiety in a foreign language classroom in Kazakhstan. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 93, 1860-1868. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.10.131

- Toth, Z. (2008). Foreign language anxiety - For beginners only? In M. Nikolov & J. Horvath (Eds.), *UPRT: Empirical Studies in English Applied Linguistics* (pp. 225-246). Pécs, Hungary: Lingua Franca Csoport.
- Trang, T. T. T., Baldauf, Jr. R. B. & Moni, K. (2013). Investigating the development of foreign language anxiety: an autobiographical approach. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 34(7), 709-726. doi: 10.1080/01434632.2013.796959
- Tum, D. O. (2012). Feelings of language anxiety amongst non-native student teachers. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 47, 2055 - 2059.
- Vogely, A. J. (1998), Listening comprehension anxiety: Students' reported sources and solutions. *Foreign Language Annals*, 31(1), 67–80.
- Wang, N. (2005). *Beliefs about language learning and foreign language anxiety: A study of university students learning English as a foreign language in mainland China* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Victoria. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/1828/787>
- Wörde, V. R. (2003). Students' perspectives on foreign language anxiety. *Inquiry*, 8(1).
- 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. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9922.2007.00437.x
- Yetis, V.A. (2017). Sources of writing anxiety: A study on French language teaching students. *International Education Studies*, 10(6), 72-86.
- Yoon, T. (2012). Teaching English though English: Exploring anxiety in non-native pre-service ESL teachers. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(6), 1099e1107.
- Young, D. J. (1990). An investigation of students' perspectives on anxiety and speaking. *Foreign Language Annals*, 23, 539-553. doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.1990.tb00424.x
- Young, D. J. (1991). Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment: What does language anxiety research suggest? *The Modern Language Journal*, 75(4), 426-439. doi: 10.2307/329492
- Young, D. J. (1992). Language anxiety from the foreign language specialist's perspective: Interviews with Krashen, Omaggio Hadley, Terrell and Rardin. *Foreign Language Annals*, 25(2), 157-172. doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.1992.tb00524.x
- Young, D. J. (1994). New directions in language anxiety research. In C. A. Klee (Ed.), *Faces in a Crowd: The Individual Learner in Multisection Courses* (pp. 3-46). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire applied to the students: key questions to collect data on the sources of language anxiety (The complete questionnaire will be made available on request)

20. Mark the general level of language anxiety you experience in the classes of *English in Primary Education I*: 1) No anxiety 2) Little anxiety 3) Quite anxious 4) Very anxious.

21. Indicate how often you feel nervous -never, sometimes, often, always- in 1) speaking 2) listening 3) writing and 4) reading tasks.

22. What factors make you feel nervous in the *English in Primary Education I* classes this year? (Select all that apply).

A. My personality traits (shyness, self-critical, demanding of oneself, levels of insecurity, nervousness, etc.).

B. My general fear of speaking in public

C. A specific type of exercises or tasks

D. The difficulty of some exercises or tasks

E. My low level of English

F. The fact that my English level is lower than my classmates

G. My fear of being wrong in front of the teacher

H. My fear of being wrong in front of my classmates

I. Classroom atmosphere (lack of confidence, respect, etc.)

J. How the teacher leads the class

K. The teacher's corrections

L. Not understanding all the words that the teacher says in English

M. The high number of students in the class-group

N. The low number of students in the class-group

O. The memory of previous negative experiences in other English classes

P. The perception that other classmates are nervous

Q. The type of exams

R. The competitive classroom environment

S. The materials used

T. Thinking that I have no ability in English

U. The consequences of failing the subject

V. The classroom as a physical space

W. Believing that I will not be able to keep up with my classmates in the subject

X. Other/s

23. Point out which of the factors that you have indicated in the previous question are the three most relevant in order of importance.

24. Comment on the three factors briefly

25. Throughout your English student life, which situations or factors have caused you nervousness?

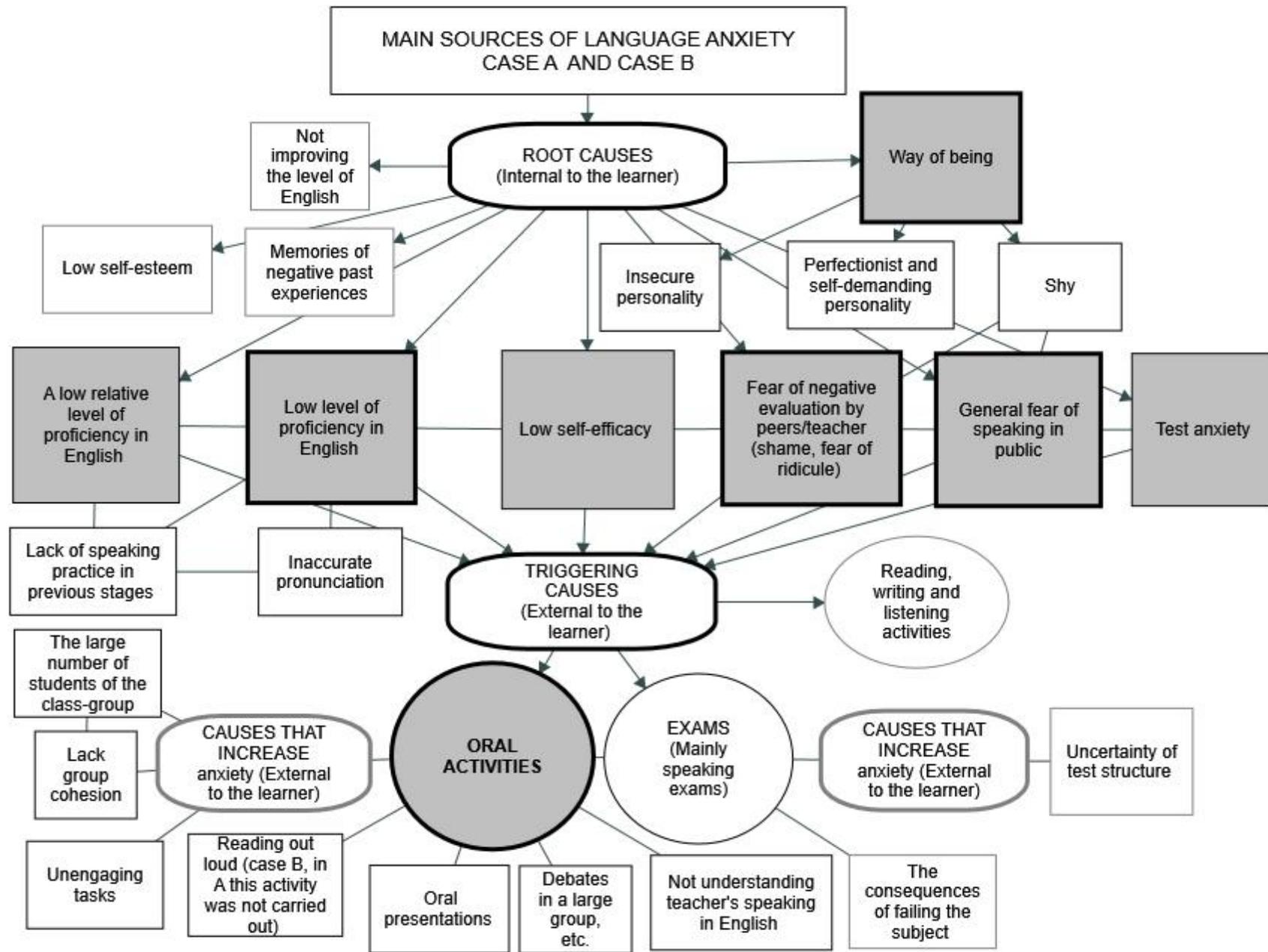
26. In your opinion, should students speak in English in class only when they are fluent and accurate? Yes or no?

27. Do you speak in class only when you are fluent and accurate? Yes or no?
28. Identify the language anxiety level that you perceive in your classmates: 1) No anxiety 2) Little anxiety 3) Quite anxious 4) Very anxious.
29. What do you rely on to identify this level?

APPENDIX 2

Sample of questions asked to the teachers in the focus group. (The complete list of questions will be made available on request)

1. Do you perceive language anxiety in the students of the subject English in Primary Education I? How do you perceive it? In what activities?
2. What about cases A and B? Do you wish to comment?
3. What difficulties do you find in your teaching task with the students of English in Primary Education I due to the phenomenon of language anxiety?
4. What about cases A and B? Do you wish to comment on anything in particular?
5. In your opinion, what teaching strategies work with learners of English in Primary Education to create stress-free classrooms?
6. This year, in the groups of cases A and B, which do you think have been your most successful strategies?
7. Concerning the correction of students' errors in the classroom, what do you think is the most appropriate way to correct the student while avoiding feelings of anxiety?
8. How do you think you can promote students' oral participation in the classroom without resulting in a feeling of nervousness?



Main sources of language anxiety in case A, and case B. Source: compiled by authors.