Overcoming the anxiety of speaking Arabic as a foreign language from students' perspectives: a qualitative case study

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Overcoming the Anxiety of Speaking Arabic as a Foreign Language from Students’ Perspectives: A Qualitative Case Study

A Thesis Submitted to

The Department of Applied Linguistics

In partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language

By

Sarah Mohamed Abou El-Goukh

December/2013
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Abstract

This exploratory study was designed to investigate the role of students’ perceptions on decreasing speaking anxiety within the Arabic as a foreign language classroom in the target language country. Qualitative methods were used in the research project. Qualitative instruments included: pre and post questionnaires, pre and post semi-structured interviews, and observation. Seven participants took part in the study; they were studying Modern Standard Arabic in an intensive program in Morocco. The results showed that students’ perceptions and their suggestions had an impact on the learning process of the students and the importance to take into consideration students suggestions and to implement them within the classroom. The implications of the study include that (1) developing the proficiency of the students plays an important role in decreasing speaking anxiety; (2) the teacher’s attitude has an impact on the process of learning and the classroom atmosphere; (3) providing students with speaking activities related to real life situations is an effective strategy to provoke student involvement and finally (4) the kind of teachers’ feedback is an important factor for motivation and overcoming anxiety in the FL classroom.
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Rationale and statement of research problem

In the past two decades, much research has been conducted in the field of foreign or second language anxiety. The literature (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Oxford, 1999; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009) has shown that anxiety affects the process of learning. This interest in research has led many researchers to investigate the psychological motivation of language learners in terms of the students' relationship to their teachers and their learning environment (Scovel, 1978). This investigation has resulted in the development of new teaching approaches, like: the Silent Way (Gattegno, 1972), Counseling-Learning (Curran, 1976), and Suggestopedia (Lozanov, 1978). Counseling-Learning stresses the role of the affective domain in promoting cognitive learning; it is founded on techniques borrowed from psychological counseling. Suggestopedia suggests that relaxation and concentration will help learners to retain greater amounts of vocabulary and structures. These three teaching methods were developed to take into consideration the affective development of the individual as the first concern (Omaggio, 1993). It is fair to claim that all of these methods are interested in controlling and regulating affective motivation (Scovel, 1978).

The current literature confirms the relation between anxiety and FL learning. Earlier studies (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Maclntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991) concluded that language courses are more anxiety provoking than courses in other subjects. Among the
reactions that are associated with FL anxiety are: freezing up, communication apprehension, frustration, avoidance (Aida, 1994; Gregersen, 2000; Horwitz et al., 1986).

Scovel (1978) suggested that anxiety sometimes can motivate language learners and help them to achieve better; yet, there are students who avoid oral communication, coming to class, and have difficulty concentrating as a result of their anxiety. Horwitz, and Cope (1986) developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), and findings from this scale have shown a negative relation between anxiety and language achievement (Horwitz, 2001). There has been a debate about whether the nature of foreign language anxiety is a cause of poor achievement or poor learners’ motivation, or bad study habits. This study focuses on the construct of speaking anxiety or communication anxiety (CA), students’ perceptions, and how to use their perceptions in addressing speaking anxiety in the AFL classroom.

Speaking anxiety has an effect on the learning process in the AFL classrooms (Elkhafaifi, 2005) and classes of FL in general. Anxiety experienced in communication in Arabic could be aggravated by students’ beliefs about learning Arabic as a foreign language; they believe it is more difficult than other languages, because of the phonics not present in their first language and the shapes of the letters that are different from the Latin letters. This anxiety also can affect students’ adaptation to the target environment and ultimately the achievement of their educational goals.

It is important in the field of FL that language instructors consider language anxiety issues and seriously rethink how languages are being taught. If we, as language teachers, choose
to ignore the effects of language anxiety on our students, we may unconsciously impede students in acquiring language proficiency in a foreign or second language (Horwitz, 1989).

Speaking anxiety in particular is the focus of this study because according to the research literature, people who are learners of FL tend to avoid, and even fear, communicating orally. Also, the development of communication apprehension is the least researched and understood issue in the FL scholarly literature (Daly, 1991). Accordingly, understanding speaking anxiety is important to find ways for its remediation. The causes of speaking anxiety and why it is deemed the most anxiety-provoking skill in FL classroom in the literature are many. These range from a negative classroom atmosphere, to other psychological factors, such as the fear of making mistakes, the fear of negative evaluation, the fear of mispronunciation, the fear of being ridiculed by colleagues, and include to the teacher's attitude and rapport with the students (Price, 1988).

The goal of this study is to explore firstly the student's beliefs about speaking anxiety in AFL classrooms, and to explore their views on decreasing anxiety. Then, to explore if applying such student suggestions set by such perspectives which will be collected in the form of a verbal data have an effect on decreasing anxiety in the AFL classroom or not. And finally to learn if living in the target language (TL) country can play a role in decreasing speaking anxiety or will provoke more anxiety. By doing this, students are being involved in the process of teaching by sharing their perceptions about AFL speaking anxiety and solutions to alleviate it and eventually by determining whether the level of speaking anxiety decreased or not. This is important because students' perceptions can help: students suggest modifications to teaching
approaches used in the class and their learning approaches as well, and students can become more confident and less anxious language learners.

Perception can clearly influence the degree of fear experienced. It is expected that students' perceptions would play a role in decreasing anxiety, because students' perceptions have been found to be a critical factor in both language learning anxiety and communication anxiety, and its role has been recognized by researchers widely (Friedman 1980; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Moreover, increasing students' knowledge about the language-learning process will help them to be more confident language learners (Horwitz & Young, 1991). Accordingly, students' perceptions can help students modify the teaching approaches used in the class and their learning approaches as well, and students can become more confident and less anxious.

Also, this study will focus on investigating the effect of residency in the TL country on decreasing speaking anxiety – does residency in the TL country has a role in decreasing speaking anxiety? Woodrow (2006) argued in her study that language learning anxiety hindered learning and investigated the reported causes using qualitative methods. According to the students’ beliefs in her study, residing in the target language environment may influence anxiety. In an attempt to find studies in the literature that investigated speaking anxiety while living in the TL country, there is only one study (Bowen, 2009) that was conducted in the TL country; however this study did not focus on investigating the effect of living in the TL on
speaking anxiety. Thus, there is no study that investigated the effect of living in the TL while learning a foreign language on decreasing speaking anxiety.

To the best of my knowledge, no other study has investigated using students’ perceptions (students’ perception here refer to how the students can contribute to improved teaching by their views) to decrease speaking anxiety in AFL classrooms and no study as well has investigated the effect of residency in the TL country on speaking anxiety. This factor of residency in the TL country and its effect on speaking anxiety is worth investigating, because it has not been investigated before, and it would be interesting to find out if residing in the TL country while learning a foreign language can decrease speaking anxiety. As mentioned earlier learning AFL is expected to cause higher levels of anxiety when studied by students whose language is not of a semantic origin because of the sounds of some letters in Arabic that are not found in other languages, the grammatical usage, the root system, and the shapes of the Arabic letters which are different from the Latin letters. These beliefs and challenges associated with learning AFL were the outcome of discussion with learners of AFL, in general, and participants in this research project, in particular. Also, learning AFL has witnessed an increase in the number of enrolled students that grew by 126% in the period between 2002 and 2006 (Furman, Goldberg, & Lusin, 2007). Despite such increase in number of students, research done on factors affecting learners’ acquisition of this language is still very limited. Hence, the current study investigates the role that students’ perceptions can play in decreasing speaking anxiety in AFL classrooms, in addition to investigating the effect of residing in an Arabic speaking country on speaking anxiety.
1.2 Research questions:

The following research questions were used to inform this study:

1. What are students' beliefs about learning Arabic as a foreign language?
2. What are students' perspectives and thoughts that could play a role in decreasing anxiety of speaking Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as a foreign language?
3. To what extent does the implementation of students' suggestions affect their level of anxiety?
4. Does residency in the target language (TL) country play a role in decreasing speaking anxiety?

1.3 Definition of terms

   a. Theoretical definition of constructs

   The terms used in this study are defined as follows:

   Anxiety: It is the subjective feeling, apprehension and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system (Spielberger, 1983).

   Speaking anxiety: It refers to the anxiety a person feels when orally communicating.

   b. Operational definition of constructs

   FL speaking Anxiety: It is the feeling of uneasiness, worry, nervousness and apprehension experienced by non-native speakers when speaking a second or FL. This definition is operationalized in the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA), which measures levels of Communication Apprehension (CA). The PRCA was originally designed to identify US university students who were anxious about public speaking, but in the years
since its inception, has been extended cross-culturally and also applied to FL learning. The overall scores range between 24 and 120. Scores below 51 represent people who have very low CA. Scores between 51-80 represent people with average CA. Scores above 80 represent people who have high levels of trait CA (McCroskey, 1977).

Table 1

1.4 Table of abbreviations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arabic as a foreign language</td>
<td>AFL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication apprehension</td>
<td>CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modern Standard Arabic</td>
<td>MSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Anxiety</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Report of Communication Apprehension</td>
<td>PRCA</td>
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<td>Target Language</td>
<td>TL</td>
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Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter consists of four sections. The four sections will cover the major themes under investigation in this research project. The first section provides a theoretical framework of anxiety and its effect on the FL classroom. The second section will review the literature on speaking anxiety, emphasizing the context of the FL classroom. The third section will focus on reviewing the role of students’ perceptions and their effect on the process of learning. Finally, the fourth section will focus on learning a FL in the TL context and whether the TL context has an effect on reducing anxiety or not.

2.1 The nature of foreign language anxiety

According to Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis (1985), the “affective filter” plays a role in preventing students from taking in the comprehensible input they receive in language classes, therefore interfering with their learning. Affective factors, including “anxiety,” prevent learners from using the language input when the emotional filter is high. When the filter’s impact is lowered, the language learners can become immersed in the language task to the extent that they forget that they are communicating in another language. The focus in this section is on one of those affective factors that affect communicating – anxiety.

One of the earliest and most prominent figures who investigated FL anxiety are Elain and Michael Horwitz. Howritzes were the principal investigators for several studies in this area and advanced a general theory about FL classroom anxiety (Horwitz, 2001, and Horwitz &
Horwitz (1986) believed that FL anxiety has three components: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

Moreover research has shown that anxiety is a relatively common phenomenon in FL classes (Horwitz, 2001, and Horwitz & Young, 1991). P.D. MacIntyre (in Young, 1999, p. 27) defined FL anxiety as ‘the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a foreign or second language.’ MacIntyre (in Young, 1999, p. 30) believed that most of the students begin learning a language without language anxiety, but then what happens is that the student faces some challenges while learning (Young, 1999), which results in the student suffering from anxiety with respect to language learning. Young (1999, p. 324) argues that if this proves to be true, then the problem is not limited to the students only, but to the instructors as well, who may not be using the right approaches in teaching. Thus, it is important for the teachers to consider what teaching approaches or methods used in the class increases or decreases students’ anxiety. Therefore, an investigation of students’ perspectives may play a role in determining those teaching styles through engaging students in the process of learning and to assess the effect of their suggestions in reducing speaking anxiety in the AFL classroom.

Generally, “anxiety is the subjective feeling, apprehension and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (Spielberger, 1983). In educational research, anxiety falls under one of three classifications. Trait anxiety is a relatively stable personality trait. A person who has trait anxiety feels anxious in different situations. State anxiety, on the other hand, is temporary and associated with a particular moment or trigger. The third type of anxiety is situation specific anxiety. This is a form of anxiety which happens frequently in specific
situations or contexts (Spielberger, Anton & Bedell, 1976). FL anxiety falls under the afore-mentioned specific situations. Specific anxiety situation is a term used to refer to people who are generally anxious in a variety of situations, to differentiate from those who are anxious only in specific situations.

Anxiety in FL learning is different from other forms of anxiety. According to Scovel (1978), there are two types of anxiety: facilitating anxiety, which motivates the learner to “fight” the new learning task and take on the new learning challenge, and debilitating anxiety, which can push the learner to escape the new educational scenario.

Within a FL situation, anxiety is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon referring to "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language (L2) contexts, such as speaking, listening, and learning" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 284). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) believed that there are three components of FL anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. CA is a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people. People who experience uneasiness speaking in groups are likely to have greater difficulty speaking in a FL class, where they have little control over the communicative situation and where their performance is constantly monitored. Figure 1, below, shows the components of FL anxiety.
In the same context, MacIntyre and Gardner (1993) stated that the strongest negative correlate pertaining to FL achievement is anxiety. Anxiety correlates negatively with the following: (1) grades in language courses (Aida, 1994); (2) proficiency test performance (Patton, 1994); and (3) self-confidence in language learning (MacIntyre & Gardner) and self-esteem (Price 1991). There are many potential sources of learners' anxiety in the FL classroom. Young (1991), in her research, categorized these sources into six types: (1) personal and interpersonal anxieties (self-esteem and communication apprehension); (2) learner beliefs about language learning; (3) instructor beliefs about language teaching; (4) instructor-learner interactions; (5) classroom procedures; (6) and testing.

The literature (Liu, 2008; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999; Panayides & Walker, 2013), suggests that language-anxious students study more than their low-anxious counterparts; however, their level of achievement often does not reflect that effort. In order to identify anxious university students and measure their anxiety, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986)
invented the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which has gained widespread popularity in subsequent research studies on anxiety in language learning situations (Aida, 1994; Kitano, 2001; Phillips, 1992; Saito, Garza, & Horwitz, 1999). This measure was tested when Horwitz, et al., tested 75 English learners of Spanish at an American university, who took the FLCAS in their scheduled language class. The study revealed that many students experienced significant FL anxiety, which affected their learning in that language. The results showed that students who had high anxiety levels reported they were afraid to speak in the TL and became nervous when speaking it. These findings are consistent with Aida’s and Kitano’s studies, which focused on the relationship between language anxiety and Japanese language learning. The study concluded that a fair amount of anxiety existed in the Japanese classroom and that FL anxiety was inversely correlated with language performance. The studies in the literature about FL classroom anxiety have targeted these four skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing (Saito et al. 1999; Sellers, 2000 and Elkhafaifi 2005). However, it is widely accepted that speaking is the most anxiety provoking skill for learners (Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999).

2.2 Speaking anxiety in foreign language classrooms

Apart from general FL classroom anxiety, many learners experience high levels of anxiety when it comes to participation in speaking activities in class. Indeed, it is often said in the literature that speaking is the most “anxiety-provoking aspect in a second language learning situation” (Horwitz & Schallert, 1999). According to Hashemi (2011), Iranian students, studying English as a foreign language (EFL), reported speaking in front of the class or giving
an oral presentation in the TL to be as highly anxiety inducing, and that speaking in the classroom is “always a problem.”

The interest in the phenomenon of speaking anxiety in this research project stems from its close relation with communication avoidance (Daly & McCroskey, 1984). In short, people who are anxious about communication generally tend to avoid communicating. It is worth mentioning that this apprehension may stem either from the student's lack of confidence about her/his ability with the second language or from her/his general CA. While the former has been recognized as a problem by ESL teachers, the latter has not generally been recognized.

Speaking publicly in the TL causes anxiety for many students, even those who feel less stressed in other aspects of language learning (Horwitz, 1986). Anxious students most likely do not take part in oral classroom activities (Ely, 1986). They end up skipping classes and postponing their homework (Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002). In a study by Liu (2006) that targeted Chinese EFL learners, the aim of the research was to examine anxiety in undergraduate non-English majors in oral English classrooms. Data were collected using a survey, observations, students’ reflective journals and interviews. Five hundred forty seven participants took part in the study, all of whom were enrolled in an English listening and speaking course in a university in Beijing, China. Liu’s research showed that more than one-third of the students appeared to be anxious in oral English classrooms. The students, generally speaking, seemed relaxed in talking in English with each other during pair work and group discussions, and most of them participated in classroom activities. Even during pair work, the more nervous students would contribute less to the discussion, because they spend more time listening, looking up
words, or thinking about what to say and how to say it in English. When answering questions alone or giving presentations at the front of the class, especially when unprepared, most students would become very nervous.

Qualitative studies have suggested that the anxiety and unwillingness to communicate have an effect on FL learning. Thus, EFL and English as second language (ESL) students tend to remain silent and unwilling to participate in class; hence, because of their silence and avoidance of participation in classroom discussions, they become more anxious (Jackson & Liu, 2008). Another qualitative study of Chinese learners of EFL supports the view that students become anxious especially regarding speaking and tend to avoid communicating (Yan & Horwitz, 2008), where the students’ comments were solely focused on the skill of speaking EFL. The students said that they feel incapable and even scared: “It seems that I had this kind of feeling (anxiety) before—that is, when the teacher suddenly asked you (to speak) …” (Yan & Horwitz, p. 160).

An investigation of the sources of FL speaking anxiety showed an association between anxiety and both fear of negative evaluation and perception of low ability in relation to peers and native speakers (Kitano, 2001). Students who experience speaking anxiety do not feel comfortable communicating in the TL because of their limited knowledge of the language (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). As a result, they are silent and withdrawn from class participation and discussion most of the time. Students who experience anxiety regard the oral production situation as a test, rather than an opportunity for communication and skills improvement. A study, by Koçak (2010) at Anadolu University aimed at finding the main
reasons for what causes students to be anxious while speaking. The students reported their lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, in addition to fear of failure, as the main reasons for feeling anxious while speaking. Other reasons that may cause speaking anxiety, as reported by Chinese learners of EFL are: unsureness of their answers and being afraid of being laughed at if their answers were wrong (Yan & Horwitz, 2008).

Our interest in the phenomenon of speaking anxiety results from its close relation to communication avoidance (Daly & McCroskey, 1984). As indicated by all the previous research, people who are anxious about communication generally tend to avoid communicating. The concern also in this area of research regarding speaking is attributed to the role that the communicative approach has played in the classroom environment, and the importance of using eclectic communicative approaches in instruction, rather than using a one-way communication method that does not include using the language in communication and interaction. One-way methods proved to have potential drawbacks as exemplified in methods like the Silent Way, the Direct Method, the Grammar-Translation Method, and the Total Physical Response (Omaggio, 2000, p. 106-29).

2.3 The role of students’ perspectives and their effect on decreasing speaking anxiety

In this study, students' perspectives will be investigated and incorporated in the process of teaching as means of reducing speaking anxiety in the AFL classroom. In this context, students’ perspectives refer to how learners see the problem, and how they can contribute ideas for decreasing their speaking anxiety. Students' perspectives have been deemed as a critical
factor in both language learning anxiety and CA. Its role has been recognized by researchers widely (Friedman, 1980; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Increasing students' knowledge about the language learning process will help them to be more confident language learners (Horwitz & Young, 1991). Accordingly, students' perceptions can help students to modify the teaching approaches used in the class and their learning approaches as well. However, there are only few studies in the literature that used students’ perspectives as a classroom technique as a means to improve their TL understanding and learning.

In her study, Woodrow (2006) found that almost all of the participants reported that the most out-of-class stressor was communicating with the TL native speakers. The study indicated that the participants attributed anxiety to a range of factors, but particularly referred to face-to-face communication with native speakers. Interaction with non-native speakers was not considered a stressor by most of the participants. In the meantime, the study also indicated low anxiety for group discussions. This supports using collaborative teaching techniques that focus on student-student interaction only as form of scaffolding that must be done to encourage learners to be able to handle real life communication with native speakers.

According to Price (1988), who was so much aware of the reluctance of the students in his class to speak, the more he approached discussing anxiety issues with his students, the more they were willing to discuss their feelings about FL learning. When he asked the students, who were studying French, about their perceptions regarding aspects that bothered them the most in FL classes, their answers were surprisingly consistent; they all named speaking in the TL as what caused them the most anxiety when learning a FL. When Price asked the students for their
perceptions and for suggestions on how to alleviate anxiety, some students suggested that the
instructors could encourage students to make more mistakes and let them know that they are not
supposed to speak the TL fluently after two semesters. The researcher here investigated
students’ beliefs about the challenges that bothered them the most in class, but not the effect of
implementing their suggestions on the process of learning.

Also in their study, Koch and Terrell (1991) focused on investigating students’ beliefs
and perceptions that may play a role in decreasing speaking anxiety. They found that students
experienced oral communication anxiety, even in the classes where the Natural Approach (NA)
– was used, a method which aims to decrease anxiety. Koch and Terrell found that teachers can
reduce speaking anxiety by considering the students' beliefs and asking them which aspects
causes them difficulty, by stimulating a dialogue, as well as asking them for ways to alleviate
their anxiety. Similarly, the importance of considering learners beliefs in the process of learning
was supported by Foss and Reitzel’s work (1988), which presented several techniques for
reducing language anxiety which stems from learner beliefs. They believe that if students can
determine their irrational beliefs or fears, they will be able to interpret anxiety-provoking
situations in more realistic ways, and eventually students will opt to approach, rather than avoid,
an anxiety-evoking situation. To help students recognize their fears about language learning,
Foss and Reitzel recommend that the instructor ask students to express any fears and then to
write them on the board. In this way individual students can see they are not alone in
experiencing anxiety. These findings came consistent with Liu and Jackson research (2008),
which found that if teachers discuss the significance of speech communication with their
students at the beginning of the semester and share with them the reasons why they feel anxious


when they learn a FL, students may become more active and confident in their English classes. Students may also risk using the language more often. Liu and Jackson also suggested that the learners’ beliefs about their learning strategies and perceptions should be taken into consideration in further research.

These results were also supported by Awan, Azher, Anwar and Naz (2010) who found that teachers need to deal with anxiety-provoking situations within the class by considering students’ suggestions and needs, taking into account that these could play a role in improving the environment of teaching and thus help students overcome their speaking anxiety. Awan, *et al*, investigated classroom situations provoking anxiety. They concluded that speaking in front of others is rated as the biggest cause of anxiety, followed by worries about grammatical mistakes, pronunciation errors and being unable to talk spontaneously. Suggestions showed that the classroom environment should be encouraging and motivating students.

While these are studies that focused on students’ suggestions to improve the process of learning, there is a study that examined the effect of implementing students’ perceptions. Tsiplakides and Keramida’s 2009 research used 15 participants who were third grade students in a lower secondary school in Greece. All of the students had been studying English for a total of five years, and the average classroom level was intermediate. Tsiplakides and Keramida examined the characteristics of anxious students and the sources of FL speaking anxiety, implemented interventions to overcome it, and evaluated the effectiveness of these methods for reducing FL speaking anxiety in the English classroom. The instruments used in collecting data were: semi-structured interviews, group discussion, and direct observation. The research used
classroom interventions which varied: project work, a supportive classroom atmosphere, teacher-students relations, and providing indirect correction. The effectiveness of these interventions is that the students showed improvement during learning.

The results of the study were consistent with previous studies, which suggest that teachers should not deem slower students as lazy, lacking motivation, or having poor attitude (Gregersen, 2005). The study showed that implementing the suggestions of the students improved the achievement of the students. The final conclusion was that teachers need to take up the role of researcher in their own classrooms.

Before finding strategies to help students overcome FL speaking anxiety, raise motivation, and increase FL performance, teachers need to know their students, their attitudes toward oral production, and to pay attention to the factors which cause students low performance and their reluctance to take part in speaking activities. Oxford (1999) suggested that language teachers can reduce anxiety through considering students’ needs and considering their perceptions through engaging them in the process of learning. She suggested a number of strategies that can diminish language anxiety: “(1) provide multiple opportunities for classroom success in the language; (2) create a non-threatening environment and encouraging risk-taking; (3) reduce the atmosphere of competition present in class between the students; (4) give permission to students to use the language with less than perfect performance; (5) encourage students to relax through games in teaching; (6) use fair testing methods; (7) help students assess their own performance in class; (8) give meaningful rewards to help support language use; and (9) enable students to recognize anxiety-maintaining beliefs.”
2.4 The effect of residency in the TL country on speaking anxiety

It is expected that residency in the TL country may play a role in decreasing speaking anxiety and accordingly promote the speaking skill. Generally speaking, studies conducted in study abroad contexts in all subjects proved that study abroad achieves better results compared to students who studied at home (Freed, 1995). In a study by Allen and Herron (2003), they found that students who studied French as a FL in a study abroad context improved in terms of linguistics, developed better proficiency and experienced less anxiety. The students attributed this improvement to their enhanced self-confidence which was the result of interaction with NSs. It is worth mentioning that those students felt anxious at the beginning when they had to deal with day-to-day needs in the target culture because of their limited French abilities; yet, it is their interaction with NSs and practicing the language throughout their study abroad context that helped. However, this may not be the case here in this study due to the diglossic situation of Arabic since the students were speaking a language variety (MSA) different from what is spoken in the streets by the NSs (colloquial). It is interesting to find out in the results section if there might be a positive impact on decreasing the speaking anxiety of the students being in contact with the colloquial dialect. For language learners, study abroad is often deemed as a necessary required step to develop language proficiency, as it provides the opportunity for extensive “immersion” in the TL (Trentman, 2012). Kinginger (2009) concluded in his study that study abroad context is considered as one of the means to encourage students to major and minor in a FL and a way to dramatically improve their communicative skills (Gray, Murdock, & Stebbins, 2002; Kinginger, 2008).
According to students’ reports, living in the TL environment may influence anxiety (Woodrow 2006). It is argued that living in the second language environment could increase or decrease anxiety, when it comes to managing everyday situations. In her study, Woodrow investigated the effect of out-of class and in-class communication with native speakers (NSs) on the oral performance anxiety of the students. The students were studying EFL in Australia. Although the aim of the study was not to find an evidence to support the distinction between the two types of anxiety or the type of learners, Woodrow concluded that some students reported that out-of class communication is more anxiety provoking than in-class communication. Students reported that due to a number of reasons, including being afraid of engaging with NSs because the students’ English may be incorrect.

I feel anxiety when I talk with native English speakers, because I know my English...my speaking English...is not correct, so maybe it makes the native English speakers confused and maybe sometimes what I’m speaking...what I’m talking about is not interesting to native speakers. I think so these kinds of things (Woodrow, 2006, p. 320).

While other students said that speaking with NSs is not as anxiety inducing as in-class communication, and that they feel less confident in class and more embarrassed from both the teacher and their colleagues in the classroom than in conversations with NSs.

When I speak to my teacher and ask some question to my teacher I usually feel very anxious. And when I am asked to speak in front of the English class I
usually very anxious. I can’t remember anything I just maybe ah... ah... ah
(Woodrow, p. 321).

In an attempt to find other studies in the literature that investigated speaking anxiety while residency in the TL country, there is only one study (Bowen, 2009) that was conducted in the TL country; however this study did not focus on investigating the effect of living in the TL on speaking anxiety. Rather it focused on the effect of using humanistic techniques on reducing speaking anxiety. Thus, there is no study that focused mainly on investigating the effect of living in the TL while learning a FL on decreasing speaking anxiety.

2.5 Conclusion:

This review of the literature demonstrates that language anxiety is a problem that exists in classrooms all over the world in all languages, and in the four skills areas: listening, reading, speaking and writing. The reviewed studies show that anxiety negatively correlates with language learning and constitutes both a challenge and an impediment to students’ achievement in the FL classroom. Moreover, there is agreement that speaking is the most anxiety provoking skill, due to reasons like fear and embarrassment.

Regarding the perceptions of the students, it is widely accepted that students’ perceptions of the process of learning plays a key role in how the students come to awareness of their experiences and how the adjustment of teaching methods to students’ feedback can have a positive impact on the student’s language acquisition. Also, a review of existing research showed there had been no study that investigates the effect of residency in the TL country on
decreasing the level of anxiety of FL learners. However, the studies had found support for the view that study abroad learning has better results for developing the fluency and proficiency of students. The effect of residency in the TL country may not have a positive result on decreasing speaking anxiety as expected since the students are learning a variety (MSA) different from that spoken by NSs (colloquial); yet, the researcher wants to find out if there are other factors – like the culture - in residency in the TL country that can affect anxiety. Reviewing all these themes in the literature suggests that responding to students’ perceptions in the AFL classroom may positively have an impact on their level of anxiety. The research gap in this review is to investigate students’ perceptions regarding speaking anxiety in the AFL classroom, and to investigate their perceptions to overcome speaking anxiety, and to find out what role does residency in the TL country can play in decreasing the speaking anxiety of the students although they were speaking a language variety different from the language variety used in the streets by the locals.
Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter consists of seven sections. The seven sections will present the methods used, the selected sample, the research questions, and the way data were collected and analyzed. The first section will discuss the research design. The second section is about the setting of the study. The third section provides information about the participants. The fourth section deals with the instruments and procedures of the data. The fifth section describes the pilot study. The sixth and seventh sections detail the data collection procedures and data analysis respectively.

3.1 Research design

As mentioned previously, the purpose of this study is to explore students’ perceptions of speaking anxiety and whether their suggestions—that will be drawn from their perceptions—can play a role in decreasing their speaking anxiety within the context of the AFL classroom.

This is an exploratory, qualitative case study. Regarding the importance of case studies and their contributions to knowledge, Flyvbjerg (2006) said that a greater number of case studies will strengthen research in social science. According to Stake (1995), the case study methodology is a methodology of inquiry in which the investigator explores a program, a process, an activity, an event or a number of individuals. Cases are confined by time and activity; researchers collect the data using a number of data collection procedures in a restricted period of time. In this study, data were collected through using semi-structured interviews, self-
report questionnaires and observation. The semi-structured interviews were conducted, audio-taped and transcribed into text documents and analyzed; the self-report questionnaires were completed by the students, collected, and then analyzed.

3.2 The setting for the study

As mentioned before, MSA classes were the setting for carrying out the study, and the researcher carrying out the study was the teacher of the class, because the research is interested in the face-to-face verbal interaction between the teacher and learners. Also, classroom-based research was conducted. Classroom-based research refers to “an ongoing and cumulative intellectual inquiry by classroom teachers into the nature of teaching and learning in their own classrooms” (Cross & Steadman, 1996). Classroom-based research is used in this study in order to provide information for teachers on how to improve student achievement in language classrooms and to “contribute to our general research knowledge about how language classrooms work” (Allwright in Nunan 1992, p.109). Another reason for choosing the classroom as the setting for carrying out the case study because it is preferred to conduct case studies in the natural context to maximize the ecological validity or the ability to interpret the results in as natural a context as possible (Duff, 2008). The study was carried out at the Arabic and North African Studies (ARANAS) Program, Al-Akhawayn University, Ifrane, Morocco in the summer intensive semester. Only one class participated in the study. The teacher taught the students twelve and half hours per week. The class met five days a week for two and a half hours daily. The levels of the classes were determined by the ARANAS Program as per the ACTFL guidelines. MSA was the only language used in the class; English was used only at the first week of classes, and thereafter students were asked to speak only Arabic. The textbook
used in the class is *Al-Kitaab Fii Taallum Al-Arabiyya Part 1* (1995). The program and the textbook were targeting the four skills: speaking, writing, listening, and reading. At first, the teacher assigned the speaking activities in the book (before considering the suggestions of the students), in addition to oral presentations and external speaking activities related to topics covered in the book. The feedback given to the students was sometimes a delayed feedback and at times an immediate feedback.

3.3 Participants

The participants were students studying MSA at the ARANAS Program at Al-Akhawayn University. This was the first time for all participants to visit an Arabic speaking country. None of them was an Arabic heritage student. So, it was first time for all participants to interact regularly with the NSs outside the classroom.

**a. Profile of the participants**

The number of participants was nine AFL learners (five males and four females). However, two participants were excluded from the study, because they attended for only four weeks, while the intensive program was eight weeks long. Accordingly, the final number of participants was seven (five males and two females). The names of the students below are not their real names for ethical reasons: “*for ethical reasons, researchers should not use the real names of participants… In some cases; therefore, it may be necessary to withhold or change some biographical details in order to protect the privacy of participants…*” (Duff, 2008).

Michael is an American student from Maryland. He is studying at the University of Hawaii. He is not an Arabic heritage learner. In his home country, he studied two semesters of Arabic and four years of Spanish. For him, Arabic is more difficult than Spanish because of the
sounds of the letters. Before coming to Morocco, he studied the textbook *Alif Baa’*. He studies Arabic as part of his university’s program requirements. This was his first time in an Arabic speaking country. He has no friends who are NSs of Arabic. Michaels’s biggest challenge, which caused him anxiety when speaking in class, was putting the words in the correct order and the pronunciation of some Arabic letters. He had no problem at all, according to him, with embarrassment or fear from peers’ judgment. The main cause of Michaels’s speaking anxiety in class was not the fear of judgment from his peers when committing mistakes or saying the wrong answer but rather was using the correct order of words.

Ken is an American student from Ohio. He studies at the Cleveland's Army as part of the Army Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC). He is not an Arabic heritage learner. In his home country, he studied two semesters of Arabic, and he studied Spanish in high school. He said that Arabic is probably the most difficult language for him. It was his first time to study Arabic abroad. He has no friends who speak Arabic as a native language. He wanted to study Arabic for joining the Army. Before coming to Morocco, he studied with the textbook *Alif Baa’*. Ken was one of the smartest students in class; however, what caused him speaking anxiety is that the vocabulary in the book sometimes is not functional and does not reflect real-life situations. So, he sometimes felt hesitant and unsure because of the lack of the necessary vocabulary.

Randy is an American undergraduate student. Part of his extended family is from Lebanon. However, he was born in America to a Lebanese father and American mother, and his parents have always lived in America. His father lived in America since he was seven years old.
He has never been to Lebanon. He said that Arabic was never used at home. He studied Arabic, because he wanted to visit the Arab world, particularly Lebanon, and to communicate with NSs and to visit his extended family in Lebanon. It was his first time in an Arabic speaking country. In his home country, he studied Arabic for three semesters. He said he came to Morocco, because he did not achieve much. He said his professors were giving him A’s all the time, which he felt did not reflect his real proficiency level. He said that his problem with previous AFL classes was that one teacher taught the whole class in English and another teacher taught all the class in Arabic, before they were even ready. He studied with the textbook *Alif Baa’*.

Randy was very good at writing and had almost no problem with spelling. However, what caused him speaking anxiety was putting the words in order, because he mentioned that he was transferring the syntax from English into Arabic. Also, his lack of vocabulary and not knowing how to use which word in which context, caused him reluctance and hesitation when speaking.

Jeff is an American graduate student from Virginia. He was studying Arabic as part of his master degree requirements. He is not an Arabic heritage learner. It was his first time in an Arabic speaking country. Before coming to Morocco, he studied two semesters of Arabic in college and two years of French in high school. For him, Arabic is more difficult because of the sounds of the letters and the different grammatical usage. Jeff felt anxious when speaking AFL because of his uncertainty about the utterance of some sounds and the usage of the correct words. He said his hesitation caused him to be very anxious and reticent to speak. According to him, more practice on speaking is needed, especially with topics that relate to real-life situations. In his home country, he studied with the textbook *Alif Baa’*.
Steve is a Lithuanian undergraduate student. He lives and studies political science in France. He is not an Arabic heritage learner. It was the first time for him in an Arabic speaking country. In France, he studied with the textbook *Alif Baa*. Arabic was his fifth foreign language. He had studied two semesters of Arabic. For him, Arabic was the most difficult language he has studied, because he thinks that Arabic is not a language only of new rules and new vocabulary, but also of new concepts, compared to the other languages he has studied. He studied Arabic, because it was part of his undergraduate studies requirements, and because he wanted to work in an embassy or in a famous newspaper in the Arab world. His main reason for feeling anxious when speaking was the uncertainty about expressing himself. He attributed this to his uncertainty of the correct pronunciation and using the correct word. He thinks that more practice on speaking could help in being less anxious. He also thinks that the encouraging attitude and feedback of the teacher are important in helping him feel less anxious. He said that he had a negative experience learning French as a foreign language, because the teacher was discouraging and was always telling him, “*You have learned that before--you should do it right,*” and he became anxious and turned against French. This contrasts with his experience with learning AFL, in which his Egyptian teacher in France was always encouraging him to build interest in Arabic, even though he started off learning Arabic with difficulty with the alphabet and phonics. She also encouraged him to go to summer school to improve his learning. This encouraged him a lot and made him comfortable and motivated him to learn Arabic: “*Talking about instructors, I have to say that I had a wonderful Egyptian Arabic teacher in France. . . .She played a big role in encouraging me to learn Arabic...even though my pronunciation of the letters was horrible.*”
Mimi is an American undergraduate student from New York. She studies education in
the State University of New York at Cortland. It was her first time in an Arabic speaking
country. She is not an Arabic heritage learner. She had completed two semesters of Arabic and
two semesters of French. Regarding speaking anxiety, she felt that students speaking over each
other in the class caused her anxiety. Also, she said there should be more speaking activities,
because she feels anxious when she takes long time to choose the correct word and being unsure
of the pronunciation. “I guess more focus on speaking activities may help.” Before coming to
Morocco, she studied with the textbook Alif Baa’.

Catherine is an American student from Idaho. She studies international relations at Idaho
State University. It was her first time in an Arabic speaking country. She is not an Arabic
heritage learner. She studied Arabic in her home university as part of her program requirements.
She has completed two semesters of Arabic. She has studied five foreign languages. Arabic is
the most difficult language for her because of the pronunciation of some sounds in Arabic, such
as, haa’, khaa’, cayn, and ghayn. Before coming to Morocco, she studied with the textbook Alif
Baa’. For her, the main reason for feeling anxious when speaking was students speaking over
each other, because she felt that sometimes other students answered for her, and she was not
given a chance to answer. She thought also that more speaking activities should be used in class,
because she felt anxious when choosing the correct word and correct pronunciation. “Sometimes
I am not sure which word should go in and the same thing for the pronunciation,” she said. She
wanted to study Arabic to work in a non-governmental organization (NGO) in the Middle East
in the future.
By the time they came to Morocco, all the participants were in a “Novice-high level” class, as per the ACTFL guidelines, which were adopted by the institution in Morocco to determine the proficiency levels of the students. The reason behind choosing this proficiency level to carry out the research project was not only because the institution assigned it to the teacher, but because the researcher preferred it. It is expected that at this early stage of learning, MSA students were expected to have problems in their production of target-like MSA speaking. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 25.

The participants involved in the study were chosen on the basis of the willingness of the director of the program to allow the researcher to conduct the study, on one hand, and on the willingness of the students themselves to participate in the study, on the other hand. The students were highly interested in participating in the study, because they really experienced anxiety while speaking: this was revealed when the PRCA was conducted which showed that students experienced high levels of speaking anxiety.

The researcher contacted the director of the program who is responsible for the classes and requested an appointment, in which the researcher presented a detailed description of the study's objectives and the chosen instruments to be used in the study. The researcher presented the IRB consent forms to the students, and those who agreed to participate, signed the form. There was no other opportunity to add more participants, due to the limited number of classes on one hand, and the differences in the proficiency levels of the students and the language study tracks (MSA-only classes or Colloquial Arabic classes) they were studying on the other hand.
3.4 Instruments and procedures:

a. Instructional period:

The class had eight weeks of intensive instruction by their class teacher, because the language program was intensive. The period of instruction was twelve and half hours per week. The class was introduced to the vocabulary of MSA related to different topics, as well as structures of MSA grammar. The amount of input that the students were introduced to enabled them to speak on a variety of topics as their proficiency levels allowed.

b. Teacher as researcher:

The teacher collected the data needed for the study. It is worth mentioning here that the teacher was the researcher. A teacher as a researcher approach is one in which the teacher is required to make use of a scientific inquiry to formulate and answer questions that are pertaining to their own classrooms (Santa & Santa, 1995). As mentioned earlier, the teacher investigated students’ perceptions to use it as a way to overcome speaking anxiety in the AFL classroom. The teacher as a researcher approach has advantages and disadvantages to consider. According to Vásquez (2008), the advantages are: “privileged access to real-life data, possibility to adopt a multi-functional approach, and continuing professional development.” While the limitations that may have an effect on the reliability of the study results: teachers may lack specific training to carry out a successful research and budget as well as time limitations. However, Vásquez concluded his article by saying that “There seem to be more advantages for teachers to do research than to refrain from doing it...” (Vásquez, p.8). In this research project the lack of some research skills may be applied because the researcher for example could have used an
observer or a checklist rather than observing the class by herself and accordingly this would have saved time. It is suggested also by Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) that a “teacher as a researcher” approach is a helpful tool. Such an approach, which brings together theory and practice, can positively affect both the professional development of English teachers and the anxiety levels of the students, and thus accelerating the students’ language acquisition.

c. **Instruments:**

For the purpose of this study, a triangulation method was used; the three techniques that were used to collect data from the participants were qualitative – survey, semi-structured interview, and observation. The triangulation method was used to improve the reliability of the results. The teacher collected the data needed for the study.

The qualitative method was chosen for many reasons, the most important of which was that a quantitative study was inappropriate, given the small pool of participants. Moreover, qualitative research methods are important in exploring the meaning that participants or individuals give to the events by sharing their experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative research questions often begin with what or how, so that the investigator can gather detailed and thick descriptive information with respect to the topic he or she is investigating (Patton, 2005). For the current study, I explored students’ beliefs about their speaking anxiety in AFL classroom and their perspectives that could be used to decrease speaking anxiety. The effect of their perceptions on speaking anxiety was also an important component of this research. Qualitative methods emphasize the role of the researcher as an active participant in the study.
In this study, I, the researcher was the key instrument in collecting and analyzing the data. Qualitative research methods used in this study included: a pre-and post-questionnaire, a pre-and post-semi-structured interview, and observation.

There are many ways in which speaking anxiety can be measured: behavioral observations, physiological assessments, and self-reports. The three ways of measurement are uncorrelated (Clevenger, 1959). They are uncorrelated because they are tapping different domains of interest. Behavioral observations are limited to visible signs of nervousness, while physiological measures are less visible, so both tend to be poor measures of the psychological aspects of apprehension. However, the most widely used method in measuring communication apprehension (CA) is self-reports. Self-reports are appropriate when they are directed toward matters of perception in which the respondent has no reason to fear negative consequences from any answer given (McCroskey, 1984). There is a variety of self-report measures in the scholarly literature. The most commonly used to measure CA is the one invented by McCroskey, its name is the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) - see appendix 1.

The questionnaire that was used is a questionnaire that was initially devised by McCroskey called PRCA. The PRCA is widely known to have both great reliability and validity in measuring communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1977). The internal reliability ranges between 92 and 96 while the test-retest reliability is over 82. This questionnaire was administered to the participants at two different times: one in the middle of the semester and the second, at the end of the semester, to measure the change in the students’ amount of anxiety. The PRCA is the most commonly used in the literature (Horwitz & Young, 1991; Bowen, 2009). The PRCA questionnaire and the tables of the pre and post-questionnaires with raw
scores are presented in the appendix. The PRCA consists of 24 statements relating to feelings about communication in groups, meetings, conversations, and in public speaking. The responses possible on each questionnaire item range from strongly agree to strongly disagree, and corresponds to a number ranging from 1-5. It is likely that persons who are anxious about communicating in different public contexts will also experience language anxiety and will have negative feelings toward orally communicating in the TL. It helps the researcher to identify students with high anxiety (HA). This is important in my study because the questionnaire results revealed students with HA and students with less anxiety. There was no student who did not suffer from speaking anxiety according to the pre-questionnaire. Though the students said in the pre-interview that they do not think they experience anxiety, the pre-questionnaire showed that all the students experienced high level of speaking anxiety. The PRCA is designed to test communication apprehension in terms of group discussions, meetings, conversations, and public speaking, to get an overall result about speaking anxiety across different situations. The four sections: group discussions, conversations, meetings, and public speaking, each included six statements as shown below. The scoring procedure for the PRCA is to add the sub-scores together to reach the overall score. Scores can range from 24-120. Scores below 51 represent people who have very low CA. Scores between 51-80 represent people with average CA. Scores above 80 represent people who have high levels of trait CA as follows:

**Group discussion**: 18+ scores for items 2, 4 and 6 – scores for items 1, 3 and 5.

Q1. I dislike participating in group discussions.

Q2. Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussions.

Q3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.

Q4. I like to get involved in group discussions.
Q5. Engaging in a group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.
Q6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.

**Meetings:** 18+ scores for items 8, 9 and 12 – scores for items 7, 10 and 11.

Q7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.
Q8. Usually, I am comfortable when I have to participate in a meeting.
Q9. I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at a meeting.
Q10. I am afraid to express myself at meetings.
Q11. Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.
Q12. I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.

**Conversations:** 18+ scores for items 14, 16 and 17 – scores for items 13, 15 and 18.

Q13. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.
Q14. I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.
Q15. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations.
Q16. Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.
Q17. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.
Q18. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.

**Public speaking:** 18+ scores for items 19, 21 and 23 – scores for items 20, 22 and 24.

Q19. I have no fear of giving a speech.
Q20. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.
Q21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
Q22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
Q23. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
Q24. While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.
It should be noted that the PRCA is normally used to determine the communication apprehension levels in speakers using their mother tongue. The fact that the students in this study were communicating in an FL resulted in communication apprehension levels which were higher than the norms provided by McCroskey (1977). The norms that are used in this study to measure CA of the students are taken from studies that used norms in measuring levels of anxiety of learners of FL (Bowen, 2009). This is the only change in the application of the questionnaire. The analysis of the PRCA data will be subjected to descriptive statistical analysis, because the method used in this study is qualitative, not quantitative. Since the PRCA is used to measure the level of speaking anxiety in public contexts and conversation settings. It was important to use other instruments to detect anxiety when using the TL. For this purpose the triangulation method, including the semi structured interviews and the observation were used.

The semi-structured interview is open, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. There were two interviews one was conducted at the middle of the semester, the pre-interview, and another one at the end of the semester, the post-interview. This was done to compare the verbal data of the participants in the pre-interview to their verbal data in the post-interview and to find out if the students' perspectives played a role in decreasing anxiety or not.

The pre-interview consisted of two parts. The reason for establishing the first part of the interview was to obtain a good knowledge about each interviewee’s personal experience with studying FLs, both in the past and in the present, so that the researcher would get thick, in-depth
information about each participant, since in a case study, it is so important to have detailed information about each participant.

Examples of questions from the first part of the pre-interview that address the above goals include:

- How many FL courses did you study so far?
- Which FL was the most difficult of all?
- How do you view your progress of learning MSA as a foreign language?

The reason for asking such questions was to know students’ beliefs about the Arabic language in terms of difficulty and what did they notice was different in studying Arabic, as compared to other languages. The second part of the pre-interview is more structured, focused on anxiety and its causes and ways to make speaking less stressful. The questions from the second part of the pre-interview that address the mentioned goals include: What bothered you in previous AFL classes and what bothers you in the current class the most with respect to speaking activities?

- Are there other things about speaking in FL classes that bother you?
- Do you have any idea as to why you feel anxious when speaking in your language classes?
- Does residing in the target language country helps in making you less anxious while speaking the target language? Why?
- Do you believe that smaller classes are better in decreasing speaking anxiety than bigger classes? Why?
• Do you have any ideas as to how speaking in language classes might be made less stressful?
• Does the instructor attitude – friendly or superior – to the students play a role in decreasing speaking anxiety? Why?
• Which is better in decreasing speaking anxiety: on spot correction or afterward feedback?
• What do you prefer: teacher correction only or your friends correction?
• Which helps you more: when the teacher tells you that what you are saying is completely wrong or when she encourages you by saying that the answer is partially correct?
• Is it better to do speaking activities as the ones in the book by translating them or have them in the TL?
• Do you have any comments about the teacher when she gives speaking activities in class?

After the pre-interview, all the suggestions of the students were taken into consideration by the researcher to be used as means of reducing speaking anxiety in the AFL classroom and to find out the impact of those suggestions by the end of the semester.

The post-interview was conducted at the end of the semester. It consisted of four questions that addressed the experience of the learner after the end of the semester, and it was used to find out if they feel less anxious, and if so, why do they think they feel less anxious? If speaking anxiety in the AFL classroom decreased that means that integrating student perceptions within class teaching played a role in alleviating anxiety and this accordingly supports what has been said by
scholars that engaging (involving them by considering their opinions and perceptions) students' in the process of learning could make them more confident (Tsiplakides & Keramida 2009).

In the post-interview, there were different items from the pre-interview that investigated students' beliefs about the reduced level of anxiety in light of the perceptions they offered at the pre-interview. Example of questions from the post-interview include:

- How was your experience during this semester in learning MSA as a foreign language?
- Did you realize any difference regarding being anxious while speaking as to that of the beginning of the semester?
- What were the most remarkable thing/things - from your point of view - that helped in decreasing your speaking anxiety?
- What role did the teacher play in decreasing your speaking anxiety?

The researcher asked these questions with the aim of getting information from the students to understand their experience in learning MSA, such as their progress in learning Arabic, how they viewed their oral performance at the end, compared to the beginning of the semester, and what suggestions helped them the most in reducing their speaking anxiety. Their answers on the post-interview were compared with those mentioned in the pre-interview to see if there is progress in their performance. Also, the post-interview included questions about what students’ suggestions, when implemented, helped reduce speaking anxiety.

The third qualitative technique that was used in collecting data is the observation done by the investigator regarding the students’ progress throughout the semester. The researcher preferred to use observation, along with the other instruments, to further validate the results of
the study through triangulation. Using a triangulation method adds weight to the results and makes the results more reliable, by using different instruments to test the same thing. Also, the study has all the criteria that made it adaptable to participant observation, according to Jorgensen (1989):

“(1) The research problem is concerned with human meanings and interactions.” Learner perceptions of AFL are the human meanings in this study;
“(2) The phenomenon of investigation is observable through everyday life situations or settings.” This was available because the teacher is the researcher and was present every day in the class and could note aspects of CA that learners could display;
“(3) The researcher is able to gain access to an appropriate setting.” The setting in this research project was the class to which the learner had full access;
“(4) The study was limited in size because seven participants took part in the study;
“(5) Study questions are appropriate for case study.” The research questions were set to test the objectives of the study and to gather the necessary data clearly and appropriately;
“(6), and the research problem can be addressed by qualitative data gathered by direct observation and other means pertinent to the field setting.” Qualitative data are used in this study, drawn from observations, interviews, and questionnaires.

The researcher is the observer in this study, where the researcher himself or herself participates and observes in the everyday life situation. However, observations have limitations that may affect the results of the study, such as: selection bias, loss to follow up, the length of time required for the study, the participants may react with extreme behavior or by taking part
in untypical activities (Jorgensen, 1989). The researcher tried to avoid such limitations. The selection bias did not apply on this research project, since it is based on only one class of seven participants that was assigned already by the institution and as mentioned, there was no opportunity to choose the participants, since they were assigned to the course according to their proficiency level (Novice-high). In terms of absence, there was no opportunity to lose following up in conducting the study, because the researcher was not absent any day throughout the semester. Sometimes there was absence on the part of the students; however, the absences were not many, since they were limited by the regulations of the institution to two times during the intensive program. However, there might be another factor that could affect the following up like being too caught up in class activities to notice or observe some of targeted features. That is why the researcher felt it could have been better to ask a colleague to observe the class.

The observer or the teacher (the teacher is the researcher) was present on all class days, five days a week. The researcher took field notes after each class, from the beginning to the end of the term and on each student. These notes targeted the points of students‘ weaknesses while speaking, like pronunciation, structures, and wrong usage of vocabulary, as well as the students’ behavior when it comes to speaking – hesitation, reluctance, and avoidance or willingness to speak, which reflects their level of anxiety. The researcher was taking notes on how the students reacted when the teacher implemented their suggestions after each session.

3.5 Pilot study
In order to test the research questions, the researcher conducted a pilot study in summer, 2013. The aim of the pilot study was mainly to test the pre-interview’s semi-structured questions and to find out what questions would elicit students’ responses about the main reasons or factors for feeling anxious while speaking in the AFL classroom and what strategies they suggested could play a role in reducing speaking anxiety.

The pilot study helped the researcher realize that a few changes in the study methodology were needed. On conducting the pre-interview with three students, five questions were added, because the researcher found that the existing questions are not sufficient to indicate the factors of speaking anxiety. Example of some of the questions that were added includes:

• Which is better in decreasing speaking anxiety: on spot correction or afterward feedback?
• Do you think weekly oral presentations will help in decreasing speaking anxiety?
• Which helps you more: when the teacher tells you that what you are saying is completely wrong or when he or she motivates you by saying that the answer is partially correct?
• Do you have any comments about the teachers when they give speaking activities in class?

The pilot study was conducted only on the questions of the pre-interview, because the researcher found that there is no need to test the questions of the post-interview, since students’ perceptions were the main focus point in this research. Also, there was no need to pre-test the
PRCA, since its reliability and validity have already been established, and it has been used widely to test the levels of speaking anxiety.

### 3.6 Data collection procedures

As for the data of the PRCA, the data was gathered through adding the scores of each participant and was then analyzed and interpreted qualitatively. As for the pre-and post-interviews, the procedures were as follows:

- The students were interviewed for 30 minutes each at the middle of the semester.
- Students were interviewed individually
- The data were audio recorded.
- Analysis of the interview was conducted by listening to and then transcribing the taped data. The method used in analyzing the data is the coding where the data was divided into themes.
- The verbal data that was gathered were confidential, as is usual research protocol. The post-interview was at the end of the semester. The post-interview ranged from 10 to 15 minutes.
- Analysis of the interview was conducted by listening to and then transcribing the taped data.
- The data will be kept with the researcher only until the research is completed and then the researcher can delete them, to guarantee the confidentiality of the interview content.
After the pre-interview and asking the participants about their suggestions that could play a role in decreasing speaking anxiety, the researcher was taking notes on how the students reacted when the teacher implemented their suggestions.

The observations will be discussed in chapter 4.

In the current study, the data collected for each research question is gathered through the above-mentioned procedures, where the pre- and post-PRCA were used to collect data for Research Questions 1 and 3. While the pre- and post-interviews are used to answer questions 1 through 4, while the observations provide detailed descriptions of the students’ performance throughout the semester, so it answers Research Questions 1 through 3.

3.7 Data analysis

The data collected from the surveys was entered into a computer file for analysis using SPSS-Windows, v. 17.0. Descriptive statistics used in the analysis included frequency, the mean, and the standard deviation for both the pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire.

The data collected from the interviews were recorded through Audacity – an audio-recording software program. The data were transcribed by the researcher and then the researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the themes that emerged from the interview. Thematic analysis is a technique used for “finding and marking the underlying ideas in the data, grouping similar information together, and relating different ideas and themes to one another” (Rubin & Rubin 1995, p. 229). The researcher preferred to use thematic analysis to categorize
the underlying data of the pre-interview and the post-interview into themes that are related to the objectives of this study.

Regarding the last instrument that was used in collecting data, observation, the researcher used a prepared observation sheet to systematize the note taking. The researcher wrote notes after each class, from the beginning of the semester, on each student in the class. To take notes, the researcher used a separate observation sheet for each student. The researcher used two observation sheets: one at the beginning of the semester, before taking students’ suggestions and a different one after taking the students’ perceptions into consideration. In the first observation sheet, the researcher took notes on the following points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Avoidance to talk and hesitation</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Correct usage of words</th>
<th>Willingness to participate</th>
<th>Using vocab in different contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The notes targeted the points of weaknesses while speaking, like pronunciation, structures, and wrong usage of vocabulary, as well as the students’ attitude when it comes to speaking – hesitation, reluctance, etc.

After the pre-interview, the researcher was taking notes on how the students reacted when the teacher implemented their suggestions. The researcher was taking notes considering the following points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Avoidance to talk</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Correct usage of words</th>
<th>On-the-spot feedback</th>
<th>Willingness to participate</th>
<th>Oral presentations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this research was to investigate students’ beliefs about speaking anxiety in the AFL classroom, access their perspectives that could play a role in decreasing speaking anxiety, and to assess the effect of these implementations on reducing speaking anxiety. The research also investigated the impact of language study in the TL country on students’ speaking anxiety. The following research questions informed this study:

(1) What are students' beliefs about learning Arabic as a foreign language?

(2) What are students' perspectives and thoughts that could play a role in decreasing anxiety of speaking Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as a foreign language?

(3) To what extent does the implementation of students' suggestions affect their level of anxiety?

(4) Does residency in the TL country play a role in decreasing speaking anxiety?

The PRCA questionnaires measured the level of speaking anxiety of the students. Semi-structured interviews allowed the students to describe their perceptions about speaking anxiety in learning a FL and ways to reduce it. Systematic observation of students’ classroom behavior
helped elaborate the students speaking anxiety over time and with different activities. The research findings reported in this chapter are an outcome of the analysis of the following: the questionnaires, the interviews and the observations.

The data collected for each research question is gathered through the above-mentioned procedures, where the pre and post PRCA were used to collect data for Research Questions 1 and 3. The semi-structured pre- and post- interviews were used to glean data on Research Questions 1 through 4, while the observations provided detailed description of the students’ performance throughout the semester, thereby informing on Research Questions 1 through 3. The following section will discuss the study findings with respect to each research question. It is worth mentioning that the researcher reported the results in group not as individual cases despite differences in students’ background and difference in languages previously studied, this could have been the result of their similarity in AFL level of proficiency making this factor the most influential compared to other background factors in dealing with CA. However, further research is needed to verify that.

4.1 Study findings

5. First research question: What are students' beliefs about learning Arabic as a foreign language?

When asked about their beliefs about AFL compared to previous languages they have learned, almost the seven students reported that Arabic is the most difficult FL they have studied. One of the participants who studied Japanese before, said that Arabic is even harder than Japanese. The FLs that were studied by the participants included French, Japanese, Spanish, and Russian. Six participants out of seven reported that Arabic is the most difficult of
all, except a student who said that French was more difficult for her. The students who reported Arabic as the most difficult reported a number of reasons, the foremost of which was that the different sounds of the Arabic alphabet, compared to English as their first language; all students agreed on that point. The students also reported that several factors unique to Arabic made learning it more difficult:

1. the different alphabet, compared to the Latin alphabet in terms of the shapes of the letters and how they are written,
2. sentence word order
3. pronunciation of some letters
4. a different syntax
5. the root system in Arabic.

The responses of the participants regarding the causes of speaking anxiety in the AFL classroom were surprisingly consistent. All participants named embarrassment from committing pronunciation errors in front of their colleagues as the number one stressor while speaking the TL. They attributed the fact why they feel anxious while speaking to a number of reasons including unsureness of what they are saying, hesitation, not knowing the correct usage or the order of words and grammatical structures. Here are two examples of the students’ remarks:

“It is hard to think what you want to say exactly because this makes me feel anxious about getting it wrong… there is a lot of hesitation about using the correct usage of words and grammar. . .”
“I guess it is just only the unsureness of what I am saying sometimes: unsure of the sounds and the proper usage of words.”

The second cause was that they become anxious when their peers interfere while they are answering or overlap their turns in participation: six students mentioned that this caused them anxiety and impeded them when speaking, because they feel that their colleagues underestimate them, especially when the interference is from their smarter or more hard-working colleagues. The student said “Sometimes some colleagues speak over each other, so it is hard to speak if you are not aggressive, or if you are not sure of what you wanna say.” This was also supported by the notes taken by the researcher in the observation sheet on the students’ oral performance. The researcher found that all students had problems in speaking, such as hesitation, errors in pronunciation, wrong usage of words. Even the most hard-working student in class, who usually got high grades on written tests, had problems with specific utterances and pronunciation. All these factors positively motivated the teacher to conduct the study, in order to help the students to overcome their speaking anxiety, but it is worth mentioning also here that the teacher up to that moment only worked on students’ linguistic difficulties, considering it the only means to help them get over their communication difficulties and ultimately their CA. The teacher kept on observing the students, (who gave somewhat constant performances) every day in the class throughout the time of the study.

Two other factors of why they feel anxious are as follows: being anxious from their colleagues’ judgment; and being unable to express themselves. One student said that in this class, he felt less anxious compared to previous FL classes, and he attributed this to the teacher’s attitude, “being nice and friendly and not mean.”
The researcher also used the pre-questionnaire to measure the level of speaking anxiety. As mentioned previously, the instrument used to measure the level of speaking anxiety was the PRCA. The pre-questionnaire was given to the students and scores were computed to determine their level of speaking anxiety. The data were analyzed by using the formula of adding the scores of the PRCA (see appendix 1). The scores of the participants were all above 80, which indicate high level of anxiety. Also, a descriptive statistics analysis was done to find out the statement that ranked the highest frequency for “I strongly agree”. The statement that ranked the highest was Q15: “Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations.”

b. Second research question: What are students’ perspectives and thoughts that could play a role in decreasing anxiety of speaking Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as a foreign language?

This research question is the core of this study because it investigates students’ perceptions and what suggestions they have for teaching strategies that could play a role in decreasing speaking anxiety in the AFL classroom. When asked about solutions that may decrease speaking anxiety in AFL classroom, students recommended a number of suggestions. Surprisingly, many of the suggestions from the students were in agreement throughout the individual interviews.

One of the surprising things that students agreed on regarding decreasing speaking anxiety is that they prefer on-the-spot feedback rather than delayed feedback when doing speaking activities in class. As a teacher, I had thought the opposite of what they suggested: I thought that giving on-the spot-feedback while speaking would cause interruption and anxiety while the students stated otherwise. This assumption of the teacher is supported by Walker (in
Omaggio, 1993) who reported that students believed that frequent feedback and intervention from the teacher destroyed their confidence and they preferred to be allowed to communicate freely. The students in the current study attributed their preference of on-the-spot feedback to a number of reasons as indicated in the following statements they made:

“On-the-spot, because when you fix a mistake on the spot, it kind of helps you think about what else you wanna say, so you do not keep on the incorrect thing.”

“I think it should be corrected fairly, sooner than later, so you won’t go down on the wrong road.”

Another thing that all participants agreed on and believed would contribute to decreasing speaking anxiety is small classes, rather than big classes. They said that in smaller classes, much attention can be given to the students, there are more one-on-one conversations and speaking activities and less pressure. They said also that in smaller classes, they feel they can have a better opportunity to do more speaking activities, which will accordingly help in practicing more and overcoming mistakes, and thus becoming more confident and less anxious, in contrast to bigger classes, where each student may not have enough time to speak. One student said, “In smaller classes, I do not feel the pressure that I do not want to be in class.”

All participants also suggested that there should be more speaking activities, other than those in the textbooks, because as learners of FL, they think that the speaking activities in the textbooks have nothing to do with real life situations, so in addition to the activities included in the textbook, they preferred that the teacher would introduce additional materials addressing
real life needs and basic conversation activities, things that they may use in the TL country or with native speakers.

Then the participants were asked about a speaking activity in the textbook AL-Kitab part 1, which was present in every new lesson. The activity was about some questions written in English, including all the vocabulary that students studied during the lesson. The students were asked to ask these questions in group work or pairs to each other by translating them. The reason behind asking the participants about this activity particularly was to find out whether translating from the first language (L1) causes anxiety while speaking, or whether this is considered a form of student scaffolding that reduces students’ anxiety. To this, six of the seven students said that they prefer the questions in the TL and to avoid using the translation method while speaking. Students supported their suggestion by saying that they came to the class to learn a language and not to translate it:

“We are here because we are supposed to be learning a language, not translating it. . .”

Another reason for why they preferred the activity in TL was that it enables them to guess the meaning from deducing grammatical rules in the questions. The one student who said that she preferred the activity in the L1, said she preferred it because it is easier for her and helps her understand quickly, but she did not make it clear how much this affects her CA.

The teacher wanted to look into the perceptions of the students regarding weekly oral presentations and if they can play a role in decreasing speaking anxiety. So, the seven participants confirmed that weekly oral presentations will be helpful in decreasing speaking anxiety, especially if conducted weekly, because it helps them to practice speaking and speak
for a long time in front of their colleagues. It is worth mentioning that when the teacher gave the students oral presentations, she asked them not to read from a paper, but just to have main points and pictures and to speak about it, so that the activity would not turn into reading instead of speaking. One student said: “I think the idea of oral presentations would be good, if conducted on a weekly basis. Though it is scary for me and my colleagues, but at least it forces us to speak for a long time.”

Other perceptions of the students that may contribute to decreasing speaking anxiety were using language learning games in speaking activities; this is supported by Oxford (1999) recommendations to decrease anxiety in which she suggested “encouraging students to relax through games in teaching”. Other perceptions included not interfering or interrupting other students turns while speaking, and one student suggested not to separate speaking activities into a separate part of the class, but rather to make it as an integral part of the lesson, without giving it separate section or a particular day, so that students would not skip it. Also they suggested giving more opportunities for all students to participate, “…because when the teacher says now speaking, some students turn red…I’d prefer if you work it into the entire class.”

The researcher also wanted to investigate students’ perceptions about the role of the instructor that could help in decreasing speaking anxiety in the AFL classroom. The interest in this aspect came from previous research (Yan & Horwitz, 2008) which suggested that “a teacher’s personality, philosophy, and skill were all perceived to influence the way the students are taught and their level of anxiety. For example, students felt that lively, dynamic, and energetic teachers were more likely to arrange the class and use the textbook in a more efficient way.” On asking the students about the teacher’s attitude in class, whether being superior (by
superior the researcher mean that the teacher is adopting a very serious attitude, lacking sense of humor, not allowing a fun atmosphere in class), or friendly helps more in decreasing speaking anxiety, all participants said that indeed the friendlier attitude helped them more and made them feel less anxious. Through the responses of the students in the interview, some students said that superior attitude of previous teachers was not helpful at all, and one student literally said that the teacher was “*mean,*” not allowing any sense of humor in the class.

“Our teacher was mean, the class was too serious to the extent that some students were afraid to speak or say the answer; they were afraid that the teacher may reject them …”

The teacher adopted this friendly attitude with the students since the beginning of the semester, so the students were able to recognize the difference, comparing it to the attitude of their previous teachers.

The participants were asked about which type of correction, teacher-correction-only or peer correction, plays a role in decreasing speaking anxiety. Four of the seven students said that teacher-correction-only makes them feel less anxious while speaking in the class: they said they prefer teacher-correction-only, because they feel if other students corrected them, they will feel more anxious, because it is a kind of a competition. The other three participants said that both kinds of corrections, from the teacher and students, are OK. One student explained:

“Both, because other students motivate me, because if others know the answers and I do not, it pushes me and makes me jealous”
Again regarding feedback from the teacher, the students were asked what encourages them more while doing speaking activities: when the teacher says the whole answer is wrong, or when she says something like, “part of it is right,” or “you are very close to the answer?” All the participants agreed; they said encouragement and saying that part of what they are saying is right, helped decrease speaking anxiety more, what they added is that they like it more when the teacher gives them clues or hints, rather than saying the correct answer directly, because clues and hints make them think, and this reinforces the learning better.

c. Third research question: To what extent does the implementation of students' suggestions affect their level of anxiety?

This research question was set to investigate the effect of implementing students’ suggestions. The instruments that were used to collect data for the third Research Question were the post-interview and the post-questionnaire.

As previously mentioned, two interviews were conducted. At the last day of classes, the teacher conducted the post-interview with the students to find out if their perspectives and suggestions for teaching strategies, which the teacher then implemented, played a role in decreasing the level of their speaking anxiety or not. The post-interview consisted of only four questions, and it is short, because its aim was to focus on two aspects only: (1) the effect of using students’ perspectives in decreasing speaking anxiety in the AFL classroom, and (2) the role that the instructor played in
decreasing their speaking anxiety. The data was analyzed by transcribing it and then using coding to divide it into themes.

On asking the students about how they felt about their oral performance and whether they think they became less anxious, all students responded that they felt an improvement in their performance and that they feel more confident compared to the beginning of the semester; the only challenge they faced is the colloquial dialect used by NSs. Students said, “I believe I improved a lot. My vocabulary has increased, as well as my proper use of grammar while speaking,” “Yes. In the beginning of the semester I felt more anxious to speak, because of my lack of vocabulary. Now I feel confident that I can converse with people.”

One student said that in the beginning of the semester, he felt anxious because of the lack of the vocabulary, but at the end of the semester, he felt more confident. This increased confidence is not due to increased proficiency only, but due to the teacher’s practices that helped in increasing proficiency and thus decreasing speaking anxiety. As noted previously, the students asked for more speaking activities and speaking activities other than those in the textbook, (they needed topics that address their everyday needs). By giving more speaking activities and topics associated with everyday situations, the students became more confident to speak and recycled the vocabulary in different contexts, as well as practicing the correct utterances, which helped eventually in decreasing speaking anxiety and increasing their proficiency. After asking the students about what they think about their oral performance in the class, the researcher wanted to know what suggestions helped in decreasing speaking anxiety and therefore, improving their performance.
The students responded that the different suggestions they suggested in the pre-interview played a role in decreasing their speaking anxiety, among these suggestions were: (1) more focus on speaking activities and (2) speaking activities related to real life situations. The teacher chose speaking topics related to everyday life and asked the students to suggest topics of discussion. As a result, students increased their speaking proficiency, which played a role in decreasing their speaking anxiety.

Also, the teacher’s attitude was an important factor: students said that the teacher’s attitude of being friendly and active in the class (moving around the class, following up with the students in class, etc.) in teaching helped a lot in creating a less anxiety-provoking atmosphere, where they were encouraged to make errors and avoid hesitation. Though the teacher did not implement the suggestion of creating smaller classes, (since the class was already small), smaller classes tend to play an effective role in learning FL, because the students are given more opportunity to participate, the teacher is being more attentive with a small number of students in the class, and the students are provided with the appropriate and necessary feedback in the class. All these factors helped to provide more opportunities for the students to participate in class discussions and receive the necessary feedback, which will eventually help in both increasing their proficiency and accordingly decreasing their speaking anxiety. Students also reported class presentations in the TL helped a lot in developing their understanding and comprehension, not only with speaking, but with listening. Finally, the on-the-spot-feedback helped in reinforcing the correct usage of words and structures. According to one student,

“I believe different classroom discussions, as well as going out and speaking with people. Doing this helped me with speaking and made me feel less anxious.”
Regarding students’ perceptions about the role of the teacher in decreasing speaking anxiety, the seven students said that the teacher’s attitude of being friendly, providing the necessary and appropriate feedback, and giving everyone the opportunity to speak, and implementing students’ teaching suggestions played a role in decreasing their level of speaking anxiety. Also, the students reported that encouraging students through feedback and giving clues or hints to reach the right answers, rather than simply telling them the correct answer directly helped their learning a lot. Students said what helped was that,

“My teacher gave everyone an opportunity to speak and to answer questions in class; also, implementing oral exercises to the weekly test.”

“The teacher’s attitude helped a lot in making the classroom atmosphere more comfortable.”

Regarding the observation, after conducting the pre-interview and taking the students’ suggestions into consideration, the teacher compiled all the suggestions and started to use them. The researcher took notes on the reactions of the students to the implementation of their suggestions: more focus on speaking activities and topics related to real life: the researcher evaluated or took notes on the student performance in terms of avoidance to talk, hesitation, using the correct vocabulary in the right context, correct pronunciation and willingness to participate.

After investigating the perceptions of the students regarding their oral performance, after implementing their suggestions, we can say that students’ suggested procedures matched with the pedagogical procedures that expert practitioners usually recommend for increasing speaking proficiency. Though the study did not target the development in students’ speaking proficiency,
it is possible that learners’ increased speaking proficiency has reduced their level of communication anxiety.

Then after the research project was completed, the teacher compared the notes that were taken on every participant. All the students did make a progress in terms of speaking in class, willingness to participate in class discussions and they became more confident. The teacher noticed this improvement in their performance, through their willingness to participate and not escaping or avoiding the questions or class discussion, because as mentioned earlier, the students initially would say: “I do not know,” without even trying. Of course, their linguistic performance improved gradually, which eventually played a role in decreasing their speaking anxiety.

One of the factors that was representing a challenge to the students and contributed to their speaking anxiety is the wrong usage of words, which were contributing to their uncertainty and hesitation. The teacher tried to fix this by presenting more speaking activities related to real life situations on different topics (each week the teacher asked the students to suggest topics for speaking; these topics included ordering food, buying clothes, buying flight tickets, going to the hair dresser, riding public transportation, and the like). Through presenting more speaking activities, as students suggested in the pre-interview, and activities related to real-life situations to fit different students’ needs, the students came to reinforce the range of vocabulary they have learned, by using it in different contexts; hence, the pragmatic usage of words was stressed and focused on more, which helped students recycle their vocabulary. Through recycling their vocabulary at different times, in different contexts, the students became less hesitant in using
the vocabulary, which accordingly helped in making them less anxious. The anxiety and uncertainty were reduced gradually.

The thing that the students suggested and was the most remarkable, which had a definite positive effect, is giving equal turns to the students and avoiding overlapping in turns (overlapping here refers to when the students talk over the turns of each other or respond on behalf of the student who is supposed to answer). By this change, the teacher found that the students became more confident and their voices were heard. This suggestion had a very positive impact, and its implementation in the class was noticed by the students, and they said, “Thank you. We feel more comfortable and that we are progressing quickly.” The teacher was able to see its immediate impact on the students’ attitudes.

The other suggestions were useful also, especially those pertaining to feedback. The students felt more confident when the teacher was giving them a chance or a clue to correct their answer. One fruitful result of this technique is that starting in the 6th week of class, the students knew the correct answer when their colleagues were making errors. The researcher observed the students’ reactions to on-the-spot feedback, as students said they preferred it to delayed feedback. The researcher did not notice any communication breakdown or reluctance resulting from interference and giving on-the-spot feedback while students were speaking or giving their oral presentations. It is worth mentioning that the students reported in the pre-interview the fear to make mistakes in front of their peers as one of the causes of anxiety. However, the researcher thinks that the encouraging feedback given to the students in the form of clues and hints, in
addition to the encouraging attitude of the teacher, helped in building their confidence and in allowing them to tolerate making mistakes.

The post-questionnaire was also used to determine the level of speaking anxiety after implementing their suggestions, as compared to the pre-questionnaire. For that purpose, an analysis to compare the means of the two data sets was done. The analysis of the data to determine the mean of the two data sets (pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire) was done based on the total scores of all the participants, after calculating the score of each participant individually, and then the researcher determined the level of anxiety as per the scoring of the PRCA (as is explained in the methodology chapter). The average of the total scores are displayed, but not the individual scores, since the individual scores already revealed high levels of anxiety in the pre-questionnaire and average level of anxiety in the post-questionnaire. The aim of the analysis here was to find out the difference in the average between the two data sets.

Table 2

*Report of the means of the two data sets*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-questionnaire</th>
<th>Post-questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>99.14</td>
<td>74.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows that the average of the seven students’ speaking anxiety changed in the post-questionnaire, compared to the pre-questionnaire, which means that the students’ perceptions played a role in decreasing their level of speaking anxiety.

The researcher could not use inferential statistics to compare the two sets of data, since a larger sample was needed; thus, due to the small pool of participants and because this study used qualitative methods, the researcher used descriptive statistics to investigate the issues of interest in this study. Speaking anxiety is operationalized by the PRCA, where scores can range from 24-120. Scores below 51 represent people who have very low Communication Anxiety (CA). Scores between 51-80 represent people with average CA. Scores above 80 represent people who have high levels of trait CA. By taking these scores into consideration and applying them to the results of the study, we find that the average of the pre-questionnaire was above 80, which represents high levels of speaking anxiety. Comparing this result with the result of the post-questionnaire, we find that the average of the post-questionnaire is 74.57, which represents average levels of speaking anxiety.

Also, another thing which supports the change that has occurred in the students’ speaking anxiety is the change in the order of the questions. The questions here refer to the 24 questions that were in the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire. In table 3, the questions in the red columns in the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire are arranged in an ascending order, where the first question in both questionnaires is the question that occurred with a high frequency to the answer number 1 (strongly agree) on the Likert scale. The footnotes, below, after the table refer to the statements of the questionnaire.
### Table 3

**Descriptive statistics of the pre and post questionnaires**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-questionnaire</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Post-questionnaire</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q15</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>1.429</td>
<td>1.253566</td>
<td></td>
<td>Q16</td>
<td>1.429</td>
<td>.5345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q21</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>1.429</td>
<td>1.253566</td>
<td></td>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>1.571</td>
<td>0.786796</td>
<td></td>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>2.143</td>
<td>1.3452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>1.714</td>
<td>0.951190</td>
<td></td>
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<td>.6901</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.253566</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.857</td>
<td>1.069045</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>1.857</td>
<td>0.899735</td>
<td></td>
<td>Q14</td>
<td>2.429</td>
<td>.5345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.704336</td>
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<td>Q22</td>
<td>2.714</td>
<td>1.1127</td>
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<td>0.786796</td>
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<td>0.534522</td>
<td>Q15</td>
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<td>.6901</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Q1: I dislike participating in group discussions.

Q2: Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussions.

Q3: I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.

Q4: I like to get involved in group discussions.

Q5: Engaging in a group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.

Q6: I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.

Q7: Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.

Q8: Usually, I am comfortable when I have to participate in a meeting.

Q9: I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at a meeting.

Q10: I am afraid to express myself at meetings.

Q11: Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.

Q12: I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.

Q13: While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.

Q14: I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.

Q15: Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations.

Q16: Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.

Q17: While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.
In the pre-questionnaire, the first question (Q 15) that came with the highest frequency of “strongly agree” is “Ordinarily, I am very tense and nervous in conversations.” This indicates that during the pre-questionnaire, the students experienced high levels of speaking anxiety. What is more surprising that this question ranked the last in the post-questionnaire. On the other hand, the first question that ranked the highest frequency to the answer number “I strongly agree” is (Q 16) “Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.” It is clear here that this statement is the opposite of statement number 15, and if this meant anything it means that the level of speaking anxiety of the students did decrease.

*d. Fourth research question:* Does residency in the TL country play a role in decreasing speaking anxiety?

The fifth theme that emerged in the thematic analysis of the pre-interviews is used to answer the last Research Question. The researcher took the opportunity of conducting the study in an Arabic speaking country to pinpoint this in the current research project. The researcher wanted to explore what factors of residing in the TL country affects the anxiety of the students. One participant said, “Yes, living in the TL

Q18: I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.
Q19: I have no fear of giving a speech.
Q20: Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.
Q21: I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
Q22: My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
Q23: I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
country can reduce speaking anxiety,” because when he spoke Arabic (even though he was not speaking the colloquial dialect with the NSs, but was using MSA), native speakers appreciated it very much, and they even helped him. The other six participants said they did not have this experience, “not here in Morocco,” because Moroccan Colloquial Arabic is what is spoken in the streets, while they were studying intensive MSA. However, it is worth mentioning that all participants said that they recognized a difference in their progress, from when they studied Arabic before in non-Arabic speaking countries and that there are factors in the TL country that helped in their progress. This confirmation from the students about their progress comes in line with the studies that proved that the study abroad context yield better results in developing proficiency in all disciplines (Gray, Murdock, & Stebbins, 2002; Kinginger, 2008). Among these factors that helped in their progress in studying AFL, they said they felt they understood Arabic better, because they could pick up words which are common between colloquial Arabic and MSA. In addition, they hear the language all the time in the streets and in the shops. Also, some students said that because the program is intensive, and because they only came to Morocco to study AFL and no other courses, they feel they achieved better progress compared to where they previously studied the language. One student suggested it could have been better if there was a pledge to force the students on campus to speak only Arabic. This was consistent with what some students mentioned that regardless of the language spoken in the streets, the fact that the native students on campus and faculty speak English and French did not help in developing the proficiency of their Arabic, as they had hoped. Upon asking them if MSA was spoken by native speakers, could it play a role in decreasing speaking anxiety,
all students said, “Yes, definitely,” because it will give more opportunities to practice speaking and gain confidence while talking with people. A student said, “Not here in Morocco because Arabic is not spoken, but I recognize that I understand it better than before, because I hear people speaking, making phone calls in Arabic. My roommate also helps me, because I even pick up more words, which make me understands better and put things together better.” Another student commented, “If MSA was spoken in the streets, it would have definitely played a role in decreasing speaking anxiety.”

In short, answering this research question was difficult, with inconclusive results; however, it still suggests that the study abroad context helped in developing proficiency. Also, from the students’ responses, it is not only the locals in the streets that could help in developing the proficiency of the students through communication, but the people they deal with in the setting of the study could help and have an effect on developing their communication as well, if there was an Arabic-only pledge. Further research is needed to investigate whether students who are studying the spoken colloquial dialect in an Arabic speaking country reduce their anxiety and achieve better language proficiency.

Table 4

A summary of the students’ perceptions that played a role in decreasing their speaking anxiety

| Students’ Suggestions for Helping Decrease Speaking Anxiety |
More speaking activities related to real life situations

On-the-spot feedback

Smaller classes

Speaking activities should be in the TL

Teacher’s attitude of being friendly

Encouraging feedback and giving clues

4.2 Conclusion

The three instruments that were used in this study to collect data were very helpful in collecting data for the four Research Questions and played a role in decreasing speaking anxiety, through involving the students in the process of classroom learning through implementing their suggestions. It is found that most of their suggestions intersect with recommendations that practitioners usually recommend to increase the proficiency of the students, which accordingly helps in decreasing their speaking anxiety. One point needs to be further investigated, which is the effect of learning colloquial AFL in an Arabic speaking country. The results of the study need to be experimented with a larger sample, before regarding the results as generalizable, since the number of participants in this study was limited. Then, the method of adjusting teaching strategies to students’ perceptions could be applied by other teachers to alleviate speaking anxiety. However, it depends on whether the teacher likes to
consider those results in other classes or not, since other teachers have their different ways of teaching.
Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1 Discussion of findings

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the results of the study that was carried out in an MSA AFL class to investigate the effect of students’ perceptions on decreasing speaking anxiety, in addition to the effect of residing in the TL country on decreasing speaking anxiety. The results are discussed in terms of the data attained by the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and observations, as described in the previous chapter. The data are interpreted in terms of other studies conducted by other researchers in the area of FL anxiety; specifically speaking anxiety.

The study targeted the four research questions. Through Research Question 1, the researcher learned about the background of the students learning FLs in general and AFL in particular, and why they believe that Arabic is a difficult, if not the most difficult language to learn (according to that group of students). This investigation of the students’ beliefs about language learning was accomplished in the first part of the pre-interview. The data that were gathered through the pre-interview showed that students find AFL to be a difficult language. The difficulty, in their opinion, stems from the fact that it is a language with different sounds, letters and concept, in which students find it hard to utter some sounds, which causes them hesitation and unsureness and consequently anxiety about speaking. It is important to investigate the learners’ beliefs about FL as suggested by Bowen (2009) in his study in which he found that this discussion played a role in decreasing speaking anxiety. He suggests teacher should: “discuss and correct students’ expectations and erroneous beliefs about language
learning at the beginning of the course. Be open to having these discussions at periodic intervals throughout the course.”

The current study reveals that AFL learners who took part in this study suffer from anxiety when speaking using the TL. This is also consistent with Liu and Jackson’s (2008) results in their study on EFL Chinese learners, who experienced anxiety when speaking in the classroom using the TL which is very different from their first language with respect to sounds, letters, word order, etc. These anxiety provoking factors (different sound, letters, and putting the words in order) were consistent with Awan, Azher, Anwar, and Naz’s (2010) study, which concluded that students are worried about making grammatical mistakes, pronunciation errors and being unable to respond quickly because of hesitation, and they rate the mentioned factors as the biggest causes of anxiety. This is also supported by Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) who concluded in their study that students who experience speaking anxiety do not feel comfortable communicating in the TL because of their limited knowledge of the language. All the above suggests that there is a relationship between proficiency level and speaking anxiety.

Research Question 2 focused on gathering suggestions through students’ perspectives to implement them in the classroom and to test if implementing students’ suggestions has an impact on decreasing their level of speaking anxiety or not. On reviewing the recommendations that were suggested by the students, it was found that they were consistent with expert recommendations to help in decreasing speaking anxiety (e.g., Tsiplakides and Keramida 2009). It was recommended by the students that they should participate in more speaking tasks related to everyday life, that creating a friendly classroom atmosphere, and creating a supportive classroom, where the teacher should make it clear to the students that errors are allowed and to
provide a positive and encouraging feedback are all important. One of the important and unexpected suggestions from the seven students is when they agreed that on-the-spot feedback is preferable while speaking; the researcher thought that this may cause communication breakdown, if the teacher intervened while the student is taking part in a speaking activity. This may not be consistent with previous studies in the literature (Metcalfe, Kornell, & Finn, 2009; O’Connell, 1974) that investigated the effect of immediate feedback versus delayed feedback on learning. Both studies concluded that delayed feedback proved to be more beneficial on developing the fluency of the students in the class. Students also suggested that the speaking activities should be in the TL to promote the usage of the TL. This contradicts with what Levine (2003) and Yoshida (2013) said in their studies, which found that the usage of the TL in classroom communication provoked anxiety. Students’ also suggested the attitude of the teacher to be an important factor in reducing speaking anxiety and in creating a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom. This is supported by Yan and Horwitz (2008), where they came to the conclusion in their study after interviewing students who said that teachers who are lively, dynamic, friendly and had a good sense of humor help in creating a less anxiety provoking atmosphere and encourage students to speak. According to Yan and Horwitz, “The teacher in the first year was monotonous and dull; then in the second year, we had another one, and she was very lively in class. She asked us to become active, more dynamic. But we were not used to (that) in the beginning, since we were more used to the way things were in the first year, that kind of . . . model. Then, after a long time, we started to form the habit of discussing what the teacher said in class. That took a long, long time . . . If you are used to this way, to talk right away, you won’t be afraid . . . I think it is pretty important. If many students are talking, I can also jump in with one or two sentences.” (Yan & Horwitz, p. 163). This also came in line with
Oxford (1999) discussion of factors that could reduce anxiety in the classroom: “create a non-threatening environment” and “give permission to students to use the language with less than perfect performance”.

The students’ suggestion about class sizes were supported by Shamim, (1996) who interviewed students in Pakistan and found that smaller classes are more effective than bigger classes. Shamim came to the conclusion that bigger classes allows the class to be divided into two zones: the front zone and the back zone, where students in the front zone are considered good students, and students who preferred to sit at the back avoided communication and were referred to as dull or bad students. This was consistent with students’ suggestions in this study. They said that smaller classes allow everyone to take part in the classroom discussion and to be more focused on as compared to a bigger class. All the above indicates that students’ perceptions were mostly in line with research about reducing CA. The only point of difference lies in perceiving on-the-spot feedback as beneficial rather than disturbing.

The results for Research Question 3 reveal that implementing students’ suggestions in the classroom and engaging them in the process of learning decreased the students’ speaking anxiety of the students in the AFL classroom, as was predicted. This indicates that engaging students in the process of learning by having them reflect on this process and taking their suggestions and recommendations into consideration may result in decreasing their speaking anxiety and improving the process of learning. It is worth mentioning also that the perceptions of the students intersected with education experts’ recommendations on developing the students’ language proficiency. Hence, it could easily be said that working on developing the
proficiency through overcoming the linguistic difficulties of the students can decrease their speaking anxiety.

Regarding the fourth Research Question, students did not feel the progress they expected before coming to an Arabic speaking country, because the language variety they studied, MSA, was not the variety used by the locals, Moroccan Colloquial Dialect. However, all students agreed that compared to where they studied AFL before in non-Arabic speaking countries, they can feel a progress of some kind due to the factors mentioned in the previous chapter (picking words in the streets that are common between MSA and colloquial, hearing their roommates speaking on the phone, the fact they are studying only Arabic and nothing else made them focus more on their studying, and whenever they tried speaking MSA in the streets, NSs were encouraging and helping them though NSs were speaking colloquial and not MSA). This may support previous findings that were done on second language learning in a study abroad context (Freed, 1995), which concluded that those who studied abroad achieved higher fluency scores, compared to those who studied only in their home countries. However, the above results may not necessarily be the case in Arabic because of the diglossic situation in this language. Thus, the language spoken by the people of the target culture if regarded by students as different, then living in target culture may not be helpful. On the other hand, if regarded as being a variety of Arabic, then this would open the door for learning from members of the target culture. If students feel that they have done some progress living in the target culture compared to living in others, then this is an indication that listening to a variety of Arabic could have a positive effect on other varieties -something that is worth researching.
Last but not the least, the teacher as a researcher approach had a positive impact on the process of learning, suggesting teachers should not be withdrawn or distant from their students and their needs. This point is supported by Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) in the findings of their study.

“Before employing strategies to help students overcome FL speaking anxiety, foster motivation, and increase FL performance, practitioners should get to know their students, their attitudes toward oral production, to shed light on the reasons that underlie their low performance and their unwillingness to engage in speaking activities.”

(Tsiplakides & Keramida, p.43)

Finally, the suggestions that were introduced in this study could be implemented in AFL classrooms by almost any teacher to attain better results in the process of learning, or teachers can invent new ways of reducing speaking anxiety and taking their students’ needs into account.

5.2 Pedagogical implications

This research yields the following recommendations for improving classroom methods:

- Engage learners in the process of learning through discussing the challenges they face and ways to alleviate it.
- Developing the proficiency of the students, through working on their specific linguistic difficulties, plays an important role in decreasing speaking anxiety. As shown through this study that some learners had linguistic problems with putting the words in the right order, pronunciation, word usage, etc. These problems were causing anxiety to the students where they feel reluctant and hesitant.
• The teacher’s attitude has an impact on the process of learning and the classroom atmosphere. This is important because it affects the learners to tolerate the idea of making mistakes while speaking like pronunciation errors, wrong word choice, etc.

• Providing students with speaking activities related to real life situations is an effective strategy to provoke student involvement. This is an important factor that teachers should consider. Not all the topics in the textbook are reflecting real life situations. So, the teacher should address the students’ needs by asking them what topics not mentioned in the book needs to be discussed. By doing this, the students are using more functional vocabulary and structures that may help in decreasing their anxiety.

• The kind of teachers’ feedback is an important factor for motivation and overcoming anxiety in the FL classroom. The teacher should consider the kind of feedback provided to the students and its effect on their learning. This was clearly shown when interviewing one of the students, who was studying French, in which he said that a previous teacher’s feedback was not encouraging and accordingly turned him against learning that language.

5.3 Limitations and delimitations of the study

The following points identify reasons why the study’s generalizations are limited or ways the research could be improved:

1. The study is restricted to students with the Novice-high level of Arabic language.

2. The study is only limited to investigating anxiety pertaining to speaking only and no other skills as writing.
3. The study covered a relatively small number of participants: this is due to the lack of a big pool of students with the proficiency level needed for the study.

4. The researcher might have asked one of the colleagues to help in observing the class or might have used a checklist to make it easier for recalling the students’ performance in the classroom.

5. The teacher-as-researcher approach has limitations, like the lack of some research skills, which requires training, as well as the practical limitations of time.

6. Students’ perceptions intersected with recommendations from education practitioners for developing proficiency; however, the effect of developing proficiency on reducing speaking anxiety was not a factor investigated in this research project.

7. Qualitative research methods have their own limitations; some of the limitations are as follows:
   a. Research quality is heavily dependent on the individual skills of the researcher and may be affected by personal biases.
   b. The interpretation and analysis of data are time consuming
   c. The investigator’s presence at the gathering of the data, which is difficult to be avoidable in qualitative research, can affect the subjects' response.

5.4 Suggestions for further research:

   During this research, several interesting areas of research emerged that were also linked with feelings of anxiety. These areas were, however, outside the framework of this thesis.

Among the areas that need to be investigated or improved upon in future research:

1. Investigate the effect on speaking anxiety of studying colloquial Arabic in an Arabic speaking country where a colloquial dialect is spoken.
2. Expand the study by involving more participants. Replicating the study using a larger sample will give more reliability to the results.

3. Investigating if listening to a variety of Arabic could develop proficiency and have a positive effect on other varieties of the same language.
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doi:10.1002/0470013192.bsa514


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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


Appendix A

The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension

DIRECTIONS: This instrument is composed of twenty-four statements concerning feelings about communicating with other people. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you strongly agree (1SA), agree (2-A), undecided (3-U), disagree (4-D), or strongly disagree (5-SD).

Work quickly. Record your first impression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I dislike participating in group discussions</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussions.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I like to get involved in group discussions.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Engaging in a group discussion with new people makes me tense and</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nervous.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Usually I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at a meeting.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am afraid to express myself at meetings.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel very nervous.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I have no fear of giving a speech.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speech.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know.</td>
<td>1-S.A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Personal Report of Communication Apprehension Scoring

SCORING: Compute sub scores for four communication contexts—group discussions, meetings, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking—and an overall communication apprehension (CA) score. Strongly agree=1 point, agree=2 points, undecided=3 points, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub scores</th>
<th>Scoring formula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group discussion</td>
<td>18+scores for items 2, 4, and 6;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– scores for items 1, 3, and 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>18+scores for items 8, 9, and 12;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– scores for items 7, 10, and 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal conversations</td>
<td>18+scores for items 14, 16, and 17;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– scores for items 13, 15, and 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public speaking</td>
<td>18+scores for items 19, 21, and 23;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– scores for items 20, 22, and 24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score range between 24 and 120. Scores below 51 represent people who have very low CA. Scores between 51-80 represent people with average CA. Scores above 80 represent people who have high levels of trait CA.
Appendix B

The pre-interview:

First Part:

1. How many foreign language courses did you study so far?

2. Which foreign language was the most difficult of all?

3. How do you view your progress of learning MSA as a foreign language?

Second Part:

4. What bothered you in previous AFL classes and what bothers you in the current class the most with respect to speaking activities?

5. Are there other things about speaking in foreign language classes that bother you?

6. Do you have any idea as to why you feel anxious when speaking in your language classes?

7. Does residing in the target language country helps in making you less anxious while speaking the target language? Why?

8. Do you believe that smaller classes are better in decreasing speaking anxiety than bigger classes? Why?

9. Do you have any ideas as to how speaking in language classes might be made less stressful?
10. Does the instructor attitude – friendly or superior – to the students play a role in decreasing speaking anxiety? Why?

11. Do you think that weekly oral presentations will help in decreasing speaking anxiety?

12. Which is better in decreasing speaking anxiety: on-the-spot correction or afterward feedback?

13. What do you prefer: teacher correction only or your friends correction?

14. Which helps you more: when the teacher tells you that what you are saying is completely wrong or when she encourages you by saying that the answer is partially correct?

15. Is it better to do speaking activities as the ones in the book by translating them or have them in the TL?

16. Do you have any comments about the teacher when she gives speaking activities in class?

17. The post-interview:

18. How was your experience during this semester in learning MSA as a foreign language?

19. Did you realize any difference regarding the level of anxiety during communication as compared to the beginning of the semester?
20. What were the most remarkable thing/things - from your point of view - that helped in decreasing your speaking anxiety?

21. What role did the teacher play in decreasing your speaking anxiety?
Appendix C

Table 5

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Appendix D

Table 6

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Appendix E

Table 7

*Sample of observation sheet after a class*

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<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Correct usage of words</th>
<th>Willing to participate</th>
<th>Using vocab in different contexts</th>
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<td>Kim does not take part in class discussions except when called upon and she finds it easy to say I do not know due to unsureness of the answer</td>
<td>The pronunciation is good in most cases however facing difficulty in words ح، خ، ع with letters خ، ح، ع where she feels embarrassed sometimes from her colleagues judgment and easily say I do not know can I write it on the board! She prefers writing over speaking because she likes to write her answers on the board rather than speaking</td>
<td>Using numbers while speaking is a big challenge students still overlap them, needs more practice in using numbers orally in different speaking exercises. This overlap made the student anxious about taking the weekly oral test</td>
<td>Throughout the class she is silent and avoiding to participate she said students overlapping her turn makes her feel underestimated and anxious regarding speaking she quickly says OK go ahead (to her colleague)</td>
<td>Using words in wrong contexts because usually she finds both words close in utterance. Needs more activities</td>
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