

**TESIS DOCTORAL**



**ANXIETY IN LEARNING ENGLISH  
AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: ITS ASSOCIATIONS WITH  
STUDENT VARIABLES, WITH OVERALL PROFICIENCY,  
AND WITH PERFORMANCE  
ON AN ORAL TEST**

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Memoria presentada por la licenciada en Filosofía y Letras (Sección Filología Hispánica) Jean Todd Stephenson Wilson, con el título “Anxiety in Learning English as a Foreign Language: Its Associations with Student Variables, with Overall Proficiency, and with Performance on an Oral Test”, para aspirar al Grado de Doctora en Filología Inglesa por la Universidad de Granada.

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Granada, ....., 2006

**Dedication**

To my family

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables .....	17
List of Figures .....	19
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<i>General Objectives</i> .....	24
<i>Research Background</i> .....	26
<i>Overview of the Thesis</i> .....	29
<i>Significance of this Research</i> .....	31
<i>Definitions and Explanations of Terms Used in this Thesis</i> .....	32
<b>PART I</b>	
<b>REVIEW OF THE SELECTED AND EMPIRICAL LITERATURE</b>	
Introduction .....	38
I.1. General Anxiety and Academic Anxiety .....	40
<i>I.1.2. State Anxiety and Trait Anxiety</i> .....	42
<i>I.1.2.1. Measurement of State Anxiety and of Trait Anxiety</i> .....	42
<i>I.1.3. Situation-Specific Anxiety</i> .....	44
I.1.4. Facilitating Anxiety and Debilitating Anxiety .....	45
I.1.4.1. Measurement of Facilitating Anxiety and of Debilitating <i>Anxiety</i> .....	46
<i>I.1.5. Anxiety in Testing Situations</i> .....	47
<i>I.1.6. Manifestations of General Anxiety and of Academic Anxiety</i> .....	50

I.2. Anxiety in Language Learning .....	53
<i>I.2.1. Early Studies</i> .....	53
<i>I.2.2. The Measurement of Anxiety in Language Learning</i> .....	57
<i>I.2.2.1. The Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (AMBT)</i> .....	57
<i>I.2.2.2. The French Class Anxiety Scale</i> .....	58
<i>I.2.2.3. The French Use Anxiety Scale</i> .....	59
<i>I.2.2.4. The Scale of Language Class Discomfort</i> .....	59
<i>I.2.2.5. Other Ways of Assessing Anxiety in the Second and                 Foreign Language</i> .....	60
I.3. The Development of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) .....	65
<i>I.3.1. Background</i> .....	65
<i>I.3.2. Description of the article “Foreign Language Classroom                 Anxiety” (Horwitz, Horwitz, &amp; Cope, 1986)</i> .....	66
<i>I.3.2.1. A Definition of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety</i> .....	66
<i>I.3.2.2. Theoretical Considerations</i> .....	67
<i>I.3.2.3. Measurement of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety</i> .....	68
<i>I.3.2.4. Horwitz et al.’s (1986) Results and Conclusions</i> .....	69
<i>I.3.3. After the FLCAS</i> .....	70
<i>I.3.3.1 The Reliability of the FLCAS</i> .....	71
I.4. Sources of Language Anxiety .....	77
I.5. Language Anxiety and its Associations with Language Achievement .....	85
<i>I.5.1. Anxiety Studies in which Final Grades were Used as a                 Measure of Language Achievement</i> .....	87
<i>I.5.2. Anxiety Studies in which More than One Measure of                 Language Performance were Used</i> .....	89
<i>I.5.2.1. Language Anxiety, Self-Perceptions about                 Achievement, and Expectations of Success in                 Language Learning</i> .....	92

1.5.3. <i>Language Anxiety: a ‘Cause’ or an ‘Effect’ of Language Achievement?</i> .....	93
1.5.3.1. <i>A ‘Vicious Circle’ in the Relationships Between Language Anxiety and Achievement</i> .....	94
I.6. Investigations into Language Anxiety in Relation to the Four Skills, and to Vocabulary .....	97
1.6.1. <i>Language Anxiety in the Listening Skill</i> .....	97
1.6.2. <i>Language Anxiety in the Speaking Skill</i> .....	102
1.6.3. <i>Language Anxiety in the Reading Skill</i> .....	114
1.6.4. <i>Language Anxiety in the Writing Skill</i> .....	120
1.6.5. <i>Language Anxiety in Two or More Skills</i> .....	122
1.6.6. <i>Language Anxiety and Vocabulary Learning</i> .....	132
I.7. Learner Variables and their Associations with Language Anxiety and with Language Achievement .....	137
1.7.1. <i>Age</i> .....	137
1.7.2. <i>Gender</i> .....	138
1.7.3. <i>Visits to the Target Language Country</i> .....	141
1.7.4. <i>Status of Foreign Language Course: Required, Elective, or Major</i> .....	143
1.7.5. <i>Language Level, and Year of Study</i> .....	144
1.7.6. <i>Language Anxiety and its Associations with Learning Styles, and with Learning Strategies</i> .....	146
1.7.7. <i>Language Anxiety and Multiple Learner Variables</i> .....	149
I.8. Teaching Implications for the Alleviation of Language Anxiety .....	154
1.8.1. <i>Implications for Alleviating Language Anxiety in the Teaching of the Four Skills</i> .....	159
1.8.2. <i>Implications for Alleviating Language Anxiety in Relation to Learning Style, to Learning Strategies, and to Vocabulary Learning</i> .....	165
Conclusion .....	167

## PART II

### ANXIETY IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: ITS ASSOCIATIONS WITH STUDENT VARIABLES, WITH OVERALL PROFICIENCY, AND WITH PERFORMANCE ON AN ORAL TEST. AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

II.1. Research Questions .....	170
II.2. Operational Definitions .....	171
II.3. Method .....	174
<i>II.3.1. Participants</i> .....	174
<i>II.3.2. Instruments</i> .....	176
<i>II.3.2.1. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, FLCAS, (Horwitz et al., 1986)</i> .....	176
<i>II.3.2.1.1. The original FLCAS.</i> .....	176
<i>II.3.2.1.2. The Spanish version of the FLCAS.</i> .....	178
<i>II.3.2.2. The Oral Test (based on Phillips, 1992)</i> .....	180
<i>II.3.2.3. The Eight Oral Performance Criteria (Hunt, 1965; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Loban, 1976; Phillips, 1990, 1992)</i> ...	181
<i>II.3.2.4. Teacher Ranking (based on Phillips, 1990, 1992)</i> .....	183
<i>II.3.2.5. The Written Test (Naunton, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c)</i> .....	183
<i>II.3.2.6. The Quick Placement Test (Oxford University Press &amp; University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2001)</i> .....	184
<i>II.3.2.7. The Background Questionnaire (Stephenson &amp; Hewitt, 2006)</i> .....	187
<i>II.3.2.8. Two Open-Ended Questions for Interviews with Selected Highly Anxious Students (based on Phillips, 1992)</i> ...	189

<i>II.3.3. Procedure</i> .....	190
<i>II.3.3.1. Piloting the Scales and Tests</i> .....	190
<i>II.3.3.2. Teaching Background and Step-by-Step         Administration of the Instruments</i> .....	191
<i>II.3.4. Selection and Definition of Variables</i> .....	199
<i>II.3.4.1. Research Design</i> .....	205
<i>II.3.5. Data Analysis</i> .....	209
<i>II.3.5.1. Analytical Techniques Employed</i> .....	209
<i>II.3.5.1.1. The first research question.</i> .....	209
<i>II.3.5.1.2. The second, third, and fourth research questions.</i> ...	212
<i>II.3.5.1.3. The fifth research question.</i> .....	214
<i>II.4. Results</i> .....	216
<i>II.4.1. Descriptive Statistics for the Principle Variables         Employed in this Study</i> .....	216
<i>II.4.1.1. Descriptive Statistics for the Oral Test Grade</i> .....	217
<i>II.4.1.2. Descriptive Statistics for the Eight Oral             Performance Criteria Variables</i> .....	217
<i>II.4.1.3. Descriptive Statistics for the Written Test Average             and for Teacher Ranking</i> .....	219
<i>II.4.1.4. Descriptive Statistics for the Quick Placement Test</i> .....	220
<i>II.4.1.5. Descriptive Statistics for the Foreign Language             Classroom Anxiety Scale</i> .....	221
<i>II.4.1.6. Descriptive Statistics for the Background             Questionnaire Data</i> .....	221
<i>II.4.2. Results for the First Research Question</i> .....	231
<i>II.4.2.1. The Oral Test Grade and FLCAS Scores: Pearson             Correlations, Partial Correlations, and             Analyses of Variance</i> .....	231
<i>II.4.2.2. The Eight Oral Performance Criteria Variables and</i>	

<i>FLCAS Scores: Pearson Correlations, Partial Correlations, and Analyses of Variance</i> .....	234
II.4.2.3. <i>Summary of Principal Results for the First Research Question</i> .....	241
II.4.3. <i>Results for the Second Research Question</i> .....	243
II.4.3.1. <i>Pearson Correlations</i> .....	243
II.4.3.2. <i>Standard Multiple Regression Analysis</i> .....	247
II.4.4. <i>Results for the Third Research Question</i> .....	250
II.4.4.1. <i>Pearson Correlations</i> .....	250
II.4.4.2. <i>Standard Multiple Regression Analysis</i> .....	253
II.4.5. <i>Results for the Fourth Research Question</i> .....	255
II.4.5.1. <i>Pearson Correlations</i> .....	255
II.4.5.2. <i>Standard Multiple Regression Analysis</i> .....	258
II.4.6. <i>Results for the Fifth Research Question</i> .....	260
II.4.6.1. <i>Selection of the Highly Anxious Students</i> .....	260
II.4.6.1.1. <i>High-ability anxious students.</i> .....	261
II.4.6.1.2. <i>Low-ability anxious students.</i> .....	262
II.4.6.2. <i>Anxious Students' Comments about the Oral Test</i> .....	264
II.4.6.2.1. <i>Similarities in highly anxious students' reactions to the oral test.</i> .....	264
II.4.6.2.2. <i>Differences in highly anxious students' reactions to the oral test.</i> .....	265
II.4.6.2.3. <i>Individual reactions to the oral test.</i> .....	268
II.5. <i>Discussion and Conclusions</i> .....	271
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	319

<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>339</b>
APPENDIX A: Glossary of Terms Relating to Variables, to Research Design, and to Data Analysis .....	340
APPENDIX B: The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, Horwitz., & Cope, 1986) .....	344
APPENDIX C: The Original Oral Exam (Phillips, 1992) .....	346
APPENDIX D: The English for Specific Purposes Subject, and Other Subjects Studied in the <i>Diplomatura de Relaciones Laborales</i> University Diploma Course at the <i>Ciencias del Trabajo</i> Faculty, University of Granada .....	349
APPENDIX E: Data for Students Enrolled in <i>Diplomatura de Relaciones Laborales</i> Degree Course at the <i>Ciencias del Trabajo</i> Faculty for the Academic Year 2004-2005 .....	351
APPENDIX F: Extra Information about Rodriguez and Abreu's Spanish Version of the FLCAS .....	353
APPENDIX G: Post-Pilot Spanish Version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Translated from the Original Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, Horwitz et al., 1986) .....	354
APPENDIX H: The Oral Test (Translated and Adapted from Phillips, 1992, p. 26) .....	357
APPENDIX I: Identifying and Measuring the Eight Oral Performance Criteria (Based on Hunt, 1965; Larsen Freeman, 1983; Loban, 1975; Phillips, 1990, 1992) .....	359
APPENDIX J: The Written Test (Naunton, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c) .....	368
APPENDIX K: The Background Questionnaire (Original Spanish Version) (Stephenson & Hewitt, 2006) .....	376
APPENDIX L: The Background Questionnaire (Stephenson & Hewitt, 2006) with English Translation of Items .....	380
APPENDIX M: The Oral Test Grade Scoring Sheet .....	384
APPENDIX N: Discrepancy in the Name of the First Oral Performance Criteria Variable in Phillips (1992) .....	385
APPENDIX O: Frequency Table for the Oral Test .....	386

APPENDIX P: Frequency Table for Teacher Ranking, Written Test Average, and Teacher Ranking and Written Test Average .....	387
APPENDIX Q: Frequency Table for the Quick Placement Test .....	389
APPENDIX R: The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale: Frequency Table for Total Scores .....	390
APPENDIX S: The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale: Frequency Table for Responses to Individual Items .....	391
APPENDIX T: Summary of Demographic, Academic, Cognitive, and Affective Data Pertaining to Participants (N = 40) with Numbers and Percentages .....	394
APPENDIX U: Frequency Tables for Selected Demographic, Academic, Cognitive, and Affective Variables .....	396
APPENDIX V: Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA of Three Anxiety Groups (1 = Low, 2 = Moderate, 3 = High) Conducted on (a) the Oral Test Grade, (b) the Fifth Oral Performance Criteria Variable, Average Length of Maze, and (c) the Sixth Oral Performance Criteria Variable, Percent of Total Words in Mazes .....	406
APPENDIX W: Summary in Spanish .....	409

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. <i>Examples of Can-do Items with Corresponding Instructions for the Experimental Tasks (MacIntyre, Noels, K.A., &amp; Clément, R., 1997, pp. 286-287)</i> .....	130
Table 2. <i>Chart of Equivalent Language Levels, Showing how ALTE Levels and Council of Europe Levels Correspond to Each Other</i> .....	185
Table 3. <i>Paper and Pen Scores, and Equivalent ALTE Levels, for Part 1, and Parts 1 &amp; 2 of the Quick Placement Test</i> .....	187
Table 4. <i>Summary of the Teaching Background and the Procedure Schedule and Dates</i> .....	197
Table 5. <i>Descriptive Statistics for the Oral Test Grade</i> .....	217
Table 6. <i>Descriptive Statistics for the Eight Oral Performance Criteria Variables</i> .....	218
Table 7. <i>Descriptive Statistics for Written Test Average</i> .....	219
Table 8. <i>Descriptive Statistics for the Quick Placement Test</i> .....	220
Table 9. <i>Descriptive Statistics for Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale</i> .....	221
Table 10. <i>Parental Education Levels</i> .....	222
Table 11. <i>Parental Occupations</i> .....	223
Table 12. <i>Statements about Reasons for Learning English with Numbers of Students who Selected each Agreement/Disagreement Option</i> .....	228
Table 13. <i>Pearson Correlation for Oral Test Grade and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale Scores</i> .....	231
Table 14. <i>Partial Correlations for Oral Test Grade and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale Scores, Controlling for Three Language Ability Measures</i> .....	232
Table 15. <i>Results of ANOVA for the Three Anxiety Groups Conducted on the Oral Test Grade</i> .....	233
Table 16. <i>Pearson Correlations for the Eight Oral Performance Criteria and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale Scores</i> .....	235
Table 17. <i>Partial Correlations for the Eight Oral Performance Criteria and FLCAS Scores, Controlling for Three Ability Measures</i> .....	236

Table 18. <i>Results of ANOVA for the Fifth Oral Exam Performance Criteria</i> <i>Variable: Average Length of Maze</i> .....	237
Table 19. <i>Results of ANOVA for the Sixth Oral Performance Criteria</i> <i>Variable: Percent of Total Words in Mazes</i> .....	239
Table 20. <i>Summary of Principal Results for the</i> <i>First Research Question</i> .....	241
Table 21. <i>Pearson Correlations Between Global Level of English as Measured</i> <i>by Quick Placement Test Scores, and Demographic, Academic,</i> <i>Cognitive, and Affective Variables</i> .....	244
Table 22. <i>Standard Multiple Regression Analysis of Demographic, Academic,</i> <i>Cognitive, and Affective Variables (IVs) as Predictors of</i> <i>Quick Placement Test (DV)</i> .....	248
Table 23. <i>Pearson Correlations Between the Oral Test Grade and</i> <i>Demographic, Academic, Cognitive, and Affective Variables</i> .....	250
Table 24. <i>Standard Multiple Regression Analysis of Demographic, Academic,</i> <i>Cognitive, and Affective Variables (IVs) as Predictors of</i> <i>Oral Test Grade (DV)</i> .....	254
Table 25. <i>Pearson Correlations Between the Foreign Language</i> <i>Classroom Anxiety Scale, and Demographic, Academic, Cognitive,</i> <i>and Affective Variables</i> .....	255
Table 26. <i>Standard Multiple Regression Analysis of Demographic, Academic,</i> <i>Cognitive, and Affective Variables (IVs) as Predictors of</i> <i>Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (DV)</i> .....	259

**LIST OF FIGURES**

- Figure 1.* Graph of ANOVA showing differences in mean Oral test scores among three anxiety groups (low, moderate, and high) .....234
- Figure 2.* Graph of ANOVA showing differences in mean Average length of maze among three anxiety groups (low, moderate, and high) .....238
- Figure 3.* Graph of ANOVA showing differences in mean Percentage of total words in mazes among three anxiety groups (low, moderate, and high) .....240

## ABSTRACT

One objective of this thesis was to examine relationships between foreign language anxiety and global proficiency in English in a group of university students, and between foreign language anxiety and their performance on an oral test. A second objective was to scrutinize demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics of the participants in relation to overall language proficiency, to performance on an oral test, and to foreign language anxiety. Reactions of highly anxious participants to the speaking test were also sought.

Forty students, who were taking English for Specific Purposes as a *Libre Configuración* (elective) subject at the *Facultad de Ciencias del Trabajo* (Faculty of Work Sciences) at the University of Granada during the academic year 2004-2005, took part. At the beginning of the first *cuatrimestre* (semester), an English proficiency test (Quick Placement Test, Oxford University Press & University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2001), was administered, and students completed an anxiety instrument (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) and a Background Questionnaire (Stephenson & Hewitt, 2006). At the end of the first semester, they took an oral test (based on Phillips, 1992) and a written test (Naunton, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c), coinciding with the University '*parcial*' (partial) exams. Six highly anxious participants (three of high ability, three of low ability) were interviewed immediately after their speaking test.

Pearson correlations were carried out to evaluate associations between language anxiety and performance on the oral test, as measured by overall grades and by several performance criteria (Hunt, 1965; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Loban, 1976; Phillips, 1990, 1992). Analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were computed to investigate differences in oral performance among three anxiety groups (low, moderate, and high). Correlations were also carried out between some thirty demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective participant variables and overall English proficiency, oral test grades, and language anxiety. Multiple regression analysis was performed to identify which of the participant variables best predicted overall proficiency, oral grades, and language anxiety.

Results indicated a statistically significant and negative relationship between language anxiety and oral test grades, and between language anxiety and two oral performance criteria. ANOVA results for mean oral test grades revealed that students from the highly anxious group performed on average significantly more poorly than those from the moderate- and low-anxiety groups, while for one of the oral performance criteria, percent of maze words (that is, incorrect or superfluous words or fragments, Loban, 1976) produced in the test, the low-anxiety group uttered on average a significantly larger proportion of mazes than did the moderate-anxious group. Regression results revealed that the earlier the age at which English learning had started, the less interest shown in obtaining credits, and the lower the level of language anxiety, the higher overall English language proficiency tended to be in these students. Younger age, interest in studying English for other than academic or professional reasons, and lower levels of language anxiety predicted higher oral grades in these students. Participants who had a lower estimation of their own language level, who did not know or speak any other foreign languages, and who were female, tended to have higher levels of foreign language anxiety. Interviews indicated that students of both high and low abilities had found the test to be very unnerving.

The thesis extended other studies, and contributed new perspectives to the language anxiety research: while, as speculated, foreign language anxiety appeared to exert a deleterious influence on overall English proficiency and on oral test scores, there was evidence to suggest that facilitating anxiety improved some aspects of oral performance in moderately-anxious students. Both global English proficiency and oral performance seemed to be enhanced by motives other than material benefit, such as travel and communication with foreigners. Starting to study English early in life and accumulated periods of language study in schools appeared to be advantageous to overall proficiency and to oral scores, respectively. Older students were seemingly at a disadvantage regarding oral test grades, and female participants in this study tended to exhibit higher levels of language anxiety. A high estimation of one's own linguistic ability and knowledge of other foreign languages appeared to be associated with attenuated language anxiety levels. Interviews with highly anxious students suggested that those of low ability were more inclined to use 'bottom-up' learning strategies for the oral test, such as memorization and translation.



## **INTRODUCTION**

## General Objectives

Language teachers, including myself, have observed on numerous occasions the apprehension and discomfort experienced by many students who are attempting to acquire and produce a foreign language. This nervousness or anxiety frequently seems to become particularly aggravated when students are required to speak in class, and during exams and tests. These personal observations have been supported in the studies of many authors who have examined anxiety in language students. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a), for example, asserted that “[a]nxiety poses several potential problems for the student of a foreign language because it can interfere with the acquisition, retention, and production of the new language” (p. 86).

As a teacher of English as a Foreign Language at the University of Granada, I teach English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at several Faculties, helping increase students’ knowledge and develop the skills that they need in their specialist area during their university course and that they will probably require in their future professional career. I have had the opportunity to observe, in an informal way, hundreds of such students, and have speculated that many Spanish learners of English at Granada University might be liable to feel language-anxious, in their general English language learning and above all in the speaking skill, for the following reasons.

First, although the level of my courses is approximately intermediate level, past experience has shown that most students’ actual global level is lower. This may be because they register on the courses after several years without any contact with English. Or it may be due to the unfamiliar topics and vocabulary, the authentic or semi-

authentic material, and the tasks in English, which often simulate real-life situations related to their particular specialist area.

Second, in these courses, although a four-skills approach is used (taking in listening, speaking, reading, and writing), the oral skill is emphasised both in class and in tests. This may provoke anxiety because although the level of English studied at high school in Andalucía reaches approximately intermediate level, the speaking skill tends to be ignored as it is not as yet required in the University entrance exam, *Selectividad*.

Third, as my students are studying English for Specific Purposes, that is, in courses that are directed towards their future profession, they may perceive that English, and especially speaking in English, is of crucial importance for success in finding a job and achieving promotion in their professional career.

These thoughts on anxiety, or what Hansen (1977) called “an experience of general uneasiness, a sense of foreboding, a feeling of tension” (p. 91), and my speculations about its relationships with foreign language learning, overall and in the speaking skill, have inspired the research that is reported in this thesis. Like many teachers, I have intuitively felt that anxiety might exert a deleterious influence on language achievement, and equally intuitively, that poor language achievement might arouse even more anxiety.

My general research objectives have been to ascertain if these intuitions are well-founded, and to clarify as far as possible the complex interplay amongst anxiety, overall proficiency in English, and achievement in the oral skill in a group of English for Specific Purposes students (N = 40) at the Faculty of Labour Science (*Ciencias del Trabajo*) at the University of Granada. As well, I wished to widen my scrutiny of these intertwined relationships by investigating what personal characteristics might be

associated with their anxiety, with their general English language proficiency, and with their performance on an oral test, and be predictors of these three variables.

## Research Background

In order to carry out these objectives, I initiated a search through the literature on anxiety and its relationships to foreign and second language learning. This quest included reading primary studies published in journals and secondary work contained in books that I located on the shelves of two libraries in Britain: the Robinson Library at the University of Newcastle and the British Library in London, and at three Faculty libraries at the University of Granada: *Psicología*, *Filosofía y Letras*, and *Ciencias de la Educación*. Electronic searches of the PsychInfo and Eric databases offered as part of the Silver Platter service, available on the University of Granada Library webpage, also yielded much information about books, dissertations, and articles, many of which could be downloaded in their full text version. I obtained several articles through the Granada University *Préstamo Interbibliotecario* (interlibrary loan) service, and retrieved information directly from the Internet. Many colleagues kindly gave me books and articles, and a language anxiety researcher, Dr. Máximo Rodríguez, graciously sent me an unpublished scale.

My initial doctoral research, reported in my *Trabajo de Investigación*, containing my own original detailed survey of 22 primary investigations into language anxiety, paved the way in many respects for my current project. In the *Trabajo*, I decided to examine articles on anxiety where Ellis, a major author in our field, had left off in his (1994) survey. Although Ellis's book was published in 1994, the last language

anxiety article he mentioned in it was written in 1991, so I modestly ‘picked up the threads’, as it were, of his work from that date, starting my survey in that same year, except for Horwitz, Howitz, and Cope’s (1986) pivotal study. Each article description was arranged in chronological order and headed with the name(s) of its author(s), date, title, journal name, volume, issue, and page numbers. In each case, I described the contents of the article: the purpose(s) of the investigation, participants, materials, procedures, results, and where applicable, limitations and suggestions for future research as stated by the author(s). I then wrote a section on teaching implications, as expressly recommended by the authors, and/or which, to my mind, the results of the investigation suggested. I also included my thoughts on the usefulness of this research, and other comments and criticisms of my own. Criticism of this kind is encouraged by such institutions as the American Psychological Association, which in its publication manual (2001) advocates that in review articles, which assess studies that have been published, the author “identifies relations, contradictions, gaps, and inconsistencies” (p. 7). My *Trabajo de Investigación*, therefore, not only made an original and useful contribution to research on language anxiety, but also was a rich source of data and ideas for the present thesis.

My experience and ideas arising from my years of teaching and from my initial research, as well as my concern in finding out more about anxiety and its potential affective and intellectual influences on my language students, together with the perspectives, insights, and suggestions thrown up as a result of investigations into language anxiety conducted by many authors, have shaped the research that is the object of this thesis.

In the first Part, the Review of the Selected and Empirical Literature, I have described specifically selected reports that have provided background information,

suggested methodological procedures, supplied scales and measures, and shed light upon aspects of my own, then future, research project. I have surveyed works about language anxiety and its links with the four skills, with the learning of vocabulary, and with learner characteristics, and have recounted authors' suggestions for reducing anxiety in the language classroom. The Review of the Selected and Empirical Literature differs in form and in focus from the *Trabajo de Investigación*. In the *Trabajo*, descriptions of articles were arranged simply in order of publication date, and each one was described following the same structure as the article itself: aims, participants, materials, procedures, results, with my comments, as mentioned above. In the Review of the Selected and Empirical Literature, however, my own aims have shaped the structure of this part of the thesis: I have first outlined broad perspectives on general anxiety and on academic anxiety, and have then continued focusing more precisely on aspects of language anxiety that I would be dealing with in depth in the second Part of the thesis.

In the second Part, *Anxiety in Learning English as a Foreign Language: Its Associations with Student Variables, with Overall Proficiency, and with Performance on an Oral Test. An Empirical Study*, I have studied empirically three major strands, (a) the relationships among anxiety in language achievement in general and in the speaking skill in particular, (b) student characteristics that might have a bearing on these relationships, and (c) the assessment of these relationships both quantitatively through tests and scales, and qualitatively through interviews, and then woven them into the fabric of my thesis project.

## Overview of the Thesis

This thesis has two parts. In Part I, I provide a Review of the Selected and Empirical Literature. This part surveys ‘selected’ works on anxiety in the learning of foreign and second languages in the sense that they were chosen to elucidate my research interests, outlined above. As my thesis project is eminently practical in nature, the works described offer mainly ‘empirical’ knowledge about language anxiety in the sense that such knowledge is “obtained by interacting with the real world, observing phenomena, and drawing conclusions from experience” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p. 15). The Review of the Selected and Empirical Literature is designed to inform and guide the reader about facets of language anxiety that are relevant to my thesis project, and it will be seen that the general descriptions lead to more specific aspects that I have made use of in Part II.

The Review of the Selected and Empirical Literature begins with historical perspectives on anxiety in general, and goes on to describe how authors have discerned various types of anxiety in academic contexts, such state anxiety, trait anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety, as well as facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety.

In the language learning arena, there are descriptions of early studies, and of ways in which different researchers have attempted to measure this kind of anxiety. Information is given about a pivotal language anxiety study (Horwitz et al., 1986) and a language anxiety scale that they devised. Potential sources and manifestations of language anxiety, as proposed by numerous authors, are recounted, as well as its associations with language achievement, and specifically with the learning of vocabulary and of the four skills. Connections, as observed in many investigations,

between anxiety and student characteristics are also outlined. Finally, pedagogical implications as suggested by numerous researchers for the reduction of anxiety in the language classroom are surveyed.

At the beginning and/or end of each section of the Review of the Selected and Empirical Literature, I state why the works included are relevant to my research project. The Review is original in that it progresses from general to more specific works, covering topics and procedures that would be necessary to me in my thesis investigation. It is not a passive account of works about language anxiety: I have frequently given my own comments and criticisms about them.

In Part II, I state my specific research objectives, expressed as five research questions, and I give operational definitions of terms used in this Part, limiting their meaning to the scope of my study only.

I describe the participants, and go on to outline the instruments I have used, and to describe the methodological procedure I have followed. Next I describe the variables I used, the research design I pursued, and the data analyses I conducted. I then present results for the five research questions. I discuss these results in their own right and in relation to existing investigations, and I outline the limitations of the study. Teaching implications arising from my results and discussion, and suggestions for further research, conclude the thesis.

Throughout this thesis, I have adopted the style recommended by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, APA, (2001). I have used this manual because it gives clear suggestions for style in studies written about related fields, and the psychological and educational fields, and because APA style has been adopted by several language journals, such as *Language Learning*, and educational journals, such as *The Journal of Educational Research*. While this manual focuses

mainly on works for publication, it also offers some guidelines for dissertations and theses, whose “purposes may dictate variations from the requirements for manuscripts submitted for publication” (p. 322). On occasion, and for very good reasons, I have veered from APA style. For example, APA recommends that when a term, such as a scale that the author intends to abbreviate, first appears, its initials should be given immediately afterwards, and subsequently only referred to in its abbreviated form (p. 104). As this thesis is much longer than a journal article, and consequently contains so many abbreviated terms that appear at intervals throughout the text, I have occasionally repeated terms in their full form as a convenience to readers. Also, although APA recommends that variables should not be capitalised (p. 100), I have capitalized the first letter of variables used in my research to distinguish them from identical terms in their everyday usage: for example ‘Self-assessed level in speaking’ (my variable) as against ‘self-assessed level in speaking’ (everyday usage).

#### Significance of this research

This research makes a worthwhile contribution to the present state of knowledge about anxiety in the learning of a foreign language in that it reports on an inquiry undertaken to assess the influence of language anxiety experienced by Spanish students of English in relation to their performance on an oral test, and to their overall English proficiency, using quantitative measures, such as tests and scales, qualitative means, such as open-ended interviews, and self-report data, supplied on a background questionnaire. It also has significance in the sense that a great number of demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables corresponding to the participants have been examined to discover associations with, and to detect predictors of, their global English

proficiency, their scores on an oral test, and their levels of foreign language classroom anxiety. To my knowledge no inquiry into the interrelationships among anxiety, language achievement, overall and in the speaking skill, and personal variables, has been carried out to date.

### Definitions and Explanations of Terms Used in this Thesis

Throughout Part I, Review of the Selected and Empirical Literature, and in Part II, Anxiety in Learning English as a Foreign Language: Its Associations with Student Variables, with Overall Proficiency, and with Performance on an Oral Test. An Empirical Study, I have used many terms relating to languages, language teaching, language learning, and language anxiety. Here are brief definitions and/or explanations of these terms.

More specific terms relating to my empirical study, the Operational Definitions, will be defined and explained in Part II. In addition, Appendix A contains a glossary of definitions and explanations related to data analyses.

*Foreign language* is defined in the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992) as “[a] language that is not a native language in a country. A foreign language is usually studied either for communication with foreigners who speak the language, or for reading printed materials in the language” (p. 142).

As regards *second language*, the same dictionary gives a definition used in Britain, which is “a language which is not a native language in a country but which is widely used as a medium of communication (e.g., in education and in government) and

which is usually used alongside another language or languages. English is described as a second language in countries such as Fiji, Singapore, and Nigeria.” (Richards et al., 1992, p.143). In the same entry, a distinction is made between this meaning and another definition of *second language*: “In both Britain and North America, the term ‘second language’ would describe a native language in a country as learnt by people living there who have another first language. English in the UK would be called the second language of immigrants and people whose first language is Welsh” (p.143).

Accordingly, the terms *foreign language* and *second language* are used by individual author(s) depending on the context of their study. For example, in Aida’s (1994) study, which tested the construct of *foreign language* anxiety, participants were native- and non-native speakers of English who were studying Japanese at a North American university (that is, a language that was not native to the country in which they were living). By contrast, MacIntyre and Gardner’s (1994a) investigation, which examined cognitive processing in the *second language*, participants were Anglophone students who were studying French at a Canadian university, that is, a language that was also a native language in the country where they were living. The latter use is in accordance with the second definition of *second language* given in the Richards et al. (1992, p. 143) dictionary.

I have employed the common abbreviations *L1* to mean students’ mother tongue, *L2* to mean the (foreign or second) language they are learning, *EFL* to mean ‘English as a Foreign Language,’ *ESL* to mean ‘English as a Second Language,’ and *FL* to mean ‘foreign language’, and *ESP* to mean ‘English for Specific Purposes’.

*English for Specific Purposes* refers to “the role of English in a language course or programme of instruction in which the content and aims of the course are fixed by the specific needs of a particular group of learners” (Richards et al., 1992, p. 125).

“Languages for specific purposes are second or foreign languages used for particular and restricted types of communication (e.g., for medical reports, scientific writing, air traffic control) and which contain lexical, grammatical, and other linguistic features which are different from ordinary language” (p. 204).

*Language competence* is “a person’s knowledge of the language”, while *performance* is “how a person uses this knowledge in producing and understanding sentences” (Richards et al., 1992, p. 269).

*Language proficiency* is “a person’s skill in using a language for a specific purpose .... refer[ring] to the degree of skill with which a person can use a language, such as how well a person can read, write, speak, or understand language” (Richards et al., 1992, p. 204), whereas *language achievement* is “a learners’s proficiency ... as the result of what has been taught or learned after a period of instruction” (p. 197).

A *language test* is defined by Harris and McCann (1994) as “any form of formal assessment in any language area which is administered under conditions which ensure measurement of individual performance in any given area” (p. 93). An *achievement test* is one “which measures how much of a language someone has learned with reference to a particular course of study or programme of instruction” (Richards et al., 1992, p. 3), while a *proficiency test* “is not linked to any particular course of instruction” (p. 4).

The use of the terms *foreign language anxiety* and *second language anxiety* depends on the operational definition of this term used by each author. For example, Horwitz et al.’s (1986) definition of foreign language anxiety as a “distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128), takes in “freezing” in class, “going blank” before exams, and physiological reactions such as shaking and sweating (pp. 128-129). MacIntyre and Gardner’s (1994a) definition of

language anxiety (in this case, second language anxiety) embraces two language skills: “Language anxiety can be defined as the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (p. 284). I frequently employ the shorter term *language anxiety* as synonymous of both ‘foreign language anxiety’ and ‘second language anxiety.’



**PART I.**

**REVIEW OF THE SELECTED AND EMPIRICAL LITERATURE**

## Introduction

In this Review of the Literature I shall survey what numerous researchers have written about anxiety in general, about so-called trait anxiety, state-anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety, as well as about anxieties that are thought to be ‘debilitating’ or ‘facilitating’ in academic situations, and about test anxiety. I report on various ways of measuring anxiety, as proposed by many authors, and on how they have explored its physiological and psychological manifestations. I then consider the development of the notion of foreign language classroom anxiety as a distinct phenomenon from general anxiety, and of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, FLCAS (Horwitz, Cope, & Cope, 1986), going on to outline the elements that these researchers considered to constitute this kind of anxiety. I have then looked at how researchers have assessed the reliability of this scale. As I used the FLCAS scale in my own project, I was interested in highlighting its importance in relation to instruments devised by other researchers in their quest to measure anxiety of different kinds. So I have not only described these studies, but also included sample items from these scales in many instances. Some are items from scales pertaining to research into trait anxiety and state anxiety (Spielberger, 1983), some exemplify queries into academic anxiety (Alpert & Haber, 1960), and others come from earlier language anxiety research (Gardner, Clément, Smythe, & Smythe, 1979), which Horwitz et al. took into account when devising the FLCAS (Horwitz, 1986, p. 560). Some of the cited items are from scales that were based on the FLCAS (Pappamihel, 2002), and others are from instruments about more specific aspects of language anxiety, which were used in conjunction with it (Saito, Garza, & Horwitz, 1999; Sellers, 2000). I have included several scale items that

were unconnected to the FLCAS, but which are of interest because they also demonstrate what specific questions were asked of participants in researchers' attempts to gauge nervousness and apprehension in a variety of classroom and experimental situations (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a; MacIntyre, Noels, & Clément, 1997).

In addition, I have described the debate in the literature as to the 'causes' and 'effects' of language anxiety, and as to its associations with achievement. I have surveyed the relationships of language anxiety as reported in the literature with the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), considered separately, and in conjunction with one another, with vocabulary learning, with language learning styles, and with language learning strategies. I have gone on to examine how researchers have investigated several learner variables, such as gender, age, year of study, and language level, and their links to language anxiety, to oral performance, and to overall foreign language proficiency. In addition, I have recounted many pedagogical implications for its alleviation, as recommended by numerous authors.

### I.1. General Anxiety and Academic Anxiety

From the fields of anthropology, psychology, and education, numerous perspectives on anxiety in general have been put forward, in the majority of cases concerning the notions of fear and threat to the person's physical safety or psychological wellbeing in is/her interactions with the environment. In the nineteenth century, Darwin (1872) thought of anxiety as an emotional reaction that is aroused when an organism feels physically under threat. Referring to Darwin's (1872) theory of evolution, Twenge (2002) affirms that "emotions are adaptive – ... they serve specific purposes for the survival of the individual. Anxiety and fear primarily serve to warn of potential danger and trigger physiological and psychological reactions" (p. 1008). At the beginning of the twentieth century, Freud (1920) thought that anxiety was akin to 'fear' or 'fright':

I avoid entering upon the discussion as to whether our language means the same or distinct things by the word anxiety, fear or fright. I think anxiety is used in connection with a condition regardless of any objective, while fear is essentially directed toward an object. (p. 343)

In later decades, anxiety was seen as a state of "apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object" (Scovel, 1978, p. 134). Rholes, Riskind, and Neville (1985) submitted that anxiety may originate when physical peril is expected, and while both anxiety and depression may arise following a loss, anxiety on its own appears when a loss is anticipated. May (1977) saw it as "an emotional response to threat to some value that the individual holds essential to his existence as a personality" (p. 205).

Spielberger (1976) made the distinction between anxiety and fear. While fear is caused by a “real objective danger in the environment” (p. 6), the reasons that are behind anxiety may not be known to him/her. Beck and his associates (Beck, 1985; Beck & Emery, 1985) submitted that anxiety is an emotional response originating in a defective perception of danger in the environment. Some research suggests that degrees of anxiety fluctuate in accordance with perceived threat. For example, the hypothesis behind the “overall threat” model of anxiety is that “anxiety increases as environmental threat increases” (Twenge, 2000, p. 1008), whereas other research submits that the anxiety reaction may overshadow actual threat, that is, the “intensity of the emotional reaction is disproportionately greater than the magnitude of the objective danger” (Spielberger, 1976, p. 6).

As regards what constitutes general anxiety, it has been considered to comprise “worry and emotionality” (Morris, Davis, & Hutchings, 1981), in which worry refers to cognitive aspects, “such as negative expectations and cognitive concerns about oneself, the situation at hand, and possible consequences”, and emotionality concerns “one’s perception of the physiological-affective elements of the anxiety experience, that is, indications of autonomic arousal and unpleasant feeling states such as nervousness and tension” (p. 541). In a similar vein, Spielberger (1983) defined it as the “subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (p. 1).

This first section of the Review of the Literature is of interest because it gives a preliminary insight into anxiety in general, before embarking on an examination of how anxiety has been treated in academic research, and in investigations into anxiety in foreign and second languages. The next sections on broad anxiety issues in the academic field (state anxiety, trait anxiety, situation-specific anxiety, facilitating

anxiety, debilitating anxiety, anxiety in testing situations, and manifestations of anxiety) are all relevant to the research I conducted: as will be seen in Part II of this thesis, I explored the situation-specific anxiety experienced by students in the English language classroom, and during an oral test. It will be seen that I also detected possible instances of facilitating anxiety, and observed and recorded manifestations of anxiety in post-oral-test interviews.

### *1.1.2. State Anxiety and Trait Anxiety*

Several kinds of anxiety have been described, two of the most well-known being state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety, on the one hand, is fleeting and not an enduring characteristic of an individual's personality. It is a "transitory state or condition of the organism that varies in intensity and fluctuates over time" (Spielberger, 1966, p. 12). Spielberger (1983) gives as an example of state anxiety the apprehension experienced before taking an examination. Trait anxiety, on the other hand, has been referred to as "a constant condition without a time limitation" (Levitt, 1980, p. 11), and is a stable feature of personality, referring to an "acquired behavioural disposition that predisposes an individual to perceive a wide range of objectively nondangerous circumstances as threatening" (Spielberger, 1966, p. 16).

#### *1.1.2.1. Measurement of State Anxiety and of Trait Anxiety*

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) (Spielberger, 1983) is concerned with the measurement of state anxiety and trait anxiety. It is composed of a State Anxiety subscale and a Trait Anxiety subscale. Test-retest over 60 days and 20 days revealed stability coefficients of .68, and .86, respectively, for the Trait Anxiety scale. Stability

coefficients for the State Anxiety subscale showed coefficients of .16 and .62, over the same time spans (Phillips, 2000, p. 85).

Each subscale of the Inventory has 20 statements, with which subjects express their level of agreement or disagreement by choosing from four options in a Likert-type format.

The four State Anxiety Scale options are *Not at all* (1); *Somewhat* (2); *Moderately so* (3); *Very much so* (4). “*Not at all* (1)” points to the lowest level of state anxiety while “*Very much so* (4)” reflects the highest degree of state anxiety.

Three examples of the State Anxiety subscale (STAI-Y1) items are:

“4. I feel strained.”

“13. I am jittery.”

“19. I feel steady” (Spielberger, 1983, cited in Phillips, 1990, p. 186).

The four Trait Anxiety Scale options are *Almost never* (1); *Sometimes* (2); *Often* (3); *Almost always* (4). The “*Almost never* (1)” response indicates lowest degree of trait anxiety while the “*Almost always* (4)” option signifies the highest degree of trait anxiety. Three items from the Trait Anxiety subscale (STAI-Y2) are as follows:

“22. I feel nervous and restless”

“27. I am ‘cool, calm and collected’”

“32. I lack self-confidence” (Spielberger, 1983, cited in Phillips, 1990, p. 184).

However, the notion of trait anxiety as an all-pervasive anxiety has not met with universal approval. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) point out that several researchers, such as Mischel and Peake (1982) and Endler (1980), have submitted that “traits are meaningless unless they are considered in interactions with situations” (p. 88). The sample items from the State Anxiety Scale, and from the Trait Anxiety Scale (Spielberger, 1983), given above, do not give any indication of context, and demonstrate this lack of interaction (Endler, 1980) of the individual with his/her surroundings. Morris et al. (1981), in their definitions of both state anxiety and trait anxiety, take into

account the importance of ‘situation’: “State anxiety refers to transitory experiences of tension, apprehension, and activation of the autonomic nervous system in certain situations, whereas trait anxiety refers to a personality variable of anxiety proneness, the tendency to experience state anxiety in a variety of situations” (p. 543). Also, some measures of state anxiety have been criticised since, according to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a), in most cases participants in experiments are not asked to give reasons for their emotional states: the experiment itself could cause anxiety, “but this is an assumption” (p. 90).

### *1.1.3. Situation-Specific Anxiety*

These ideas gave rise to the notion of so-called ‘situation-specific’ anxiety. The latter “can be considered to be the probability of becoming anxious in a particular type of situation, such as during tests (labeled as ‘test anxiety’), when solving mathematics problems (‘math anxiety’), or when speaking a second language (‘language anxiety’),” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994b, p. 2). The author Oh (1990) thought of foreign language anxiety as a “situation-specific anxiety [that] students experience in the classroom which is characterized by self-centred thoughts, feelings of inadequacy, fear of failure, and emotional reactions in the language classroom” (p. 56). MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) put forward the idea that situation-specific anxiety “solidifies” (p. 272) in a language learner as result of suffering state anxiety on several occasions.

As regards investigating anxiety in language learning, which is of special interest to us here, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) considered that the situation-specific approach “offers more to the understanding of anxiety because the respondents are queried about various aspects of the situation” (p. 91). Although this approach has the drawback that the anxiety-provoking situation may be thought of in a very general sense

(e.g., shyness), in a more restricted sense (e.g., communication apprehension) or extremely precisely (e.g., stage fright) (examples from MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991a, p. 91), these authors considered that the situation-specific approach to the study of foreign or second language anxiety offers “more meaningful and consistent results” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a, p. 92).

#### *1.1.4. Facilitating Anxiety and Debilitating Anxiety*

Other approaches have distinguished between facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety (Alpert & Haber, 1960; Kleinmann, 1977; Scovel, 1978). Facilitating anxiety, as the name suggests, is thought to be a kind of anxiety that improves learning and performance, whereas debilitating anxiety is associated with poor learning and performance. In very early research which is still influential today, Yerkes and Dodson (1908) proposed a curvilinear association between arousal and performance. In their experiment, these researchers ‘taught’ white mice to enter certain boxes by administering electric shocks at three levels of intensity: weak, medium and strong. The mice ‘learnt’ most efficiently when given the medium-intensity shocks. This was thought to mean that moderate arousal is optimum in learning situations and the Yerkes-Dodson Law has been represented graphically as an inverted ‘U’-shaped curve, on which it can be seen that moderate arousal enhances performance and reaches a peak at the very top. After that, too much arousal begins to hinder performance again. On the curve it is also seen that no anxiety or very little anxiety is detrimental to performance.

Some early research suggested that different quantities of facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety may be present in the same individual at the same time: Alpert and Haber (1960) asserted that “an individual may possess a large amount of both anxieties, or of one but not the other, or of none of either” (p. 213). It has also been proposed that

facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety may function together (Scovel, 1978). This author favours this idea because of its “common sense viewpoint” (p. 138), maintaining that in normal circumstances facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety “work ... in tandem, serving simultaneously to motivate and to warn, as the individual gropes to learn an ever-changing sequence of new facts in the environment” (pp. 138-139). In the area that is the focus of this thesis, the learning of a foreign language, language anxiety has usually been thought of as a “debilitating” phenomenon (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 129) that must be overcome in order for learners to take full advantage of foreign language instruction.

#### *1.1.4.1. Measurement of Facilitating Anxiety and of Debilitating Anxiety*

Alpert and Haber (1960) conducted a pioneering study which proved to be extremely useful in academic anxiety research, for it not only helped establish the concepts debilitating anxiety and of facilitating anxiety, it also provided other researchers with two scales for measurement of both constructs.

This investigated test anxiety and involved three groups of male students ( $n$ 's = 93, 92, and 98) of “introductory psychology students” and “freshmen” (p. 207). The study offered the Achievement Anxiety Test (AAT) which consisted of two scales: a nine-item Facilitating Anxiety Scale “based on a prototype of the item – ‘Anxiety helps me to do better during examinations and tests’”, and a Debilitating Anxiety Scale of 10 items “based on a prototype of the item – ‘Anxiety interferes with my performance during examinations and tests’” (Alpert & Haber, 1960, p. 213). Test-retest reliability coefficients measured over a period of 10 weeks were .83 for the Facilitating Anxiety Scale, and .87 for the Debilitating Anxiety Scale, and .75 and .76, respectively, over a

gap of eight months (Alpert & Haber, 1960, p. 213). Participants were asked to express the extent of their agreement with each item, by selecting one out of five options.

Two items from the Facilitating Anxiety Scale, with their corresponding anchors, are:

“3. Nervousness while taking a test helps me do better. It never helps - It often helps.”

“9. The more important the exam or test, the better I seem to do. This is true of me - This is not true of me” (Alpert & Haber, 1960, pp. 213-214).

Two items from the Debilitating Anxiety Scale, with their corresponding anchors, are:

“1. Nervousness while taking an exam or test hinders me from doing well. Always - Never.”

“4. The more important the examination, the less well I seem to do. Always – Never” (Alpert & Haber, 1960, p. 214).

Multiple correlations using both the Facilitating Anxiety Scale and the Debilitating Anxiety Scale were “significantly better predictors” (p. 214) of academic performance (as measured by grade point average) than each scale on its own. The authors concluded that “the incorporation of items designed to measure facilitating anxiety into a scale which already effectively measures debilitating anxiety can significantly increase the prediction of academic performance scores” (p. 215).

#### *1.1.5. Anxiety in Testing Situations*

Anxiety in testing situations, such as that seen in Alpert and Haber’s study (1960) mentioned in the previous section, is a facet of anxiety that has also been a focus of investigation. Sarason (1978) defined test anxiety as the “tendency to view with alarm the consequences of inadequate performance in an evaluative situation” (p. 214).

In early research, anxiety in testing situations was thought to be related to “drive” or “emotional responsiveness” (Phillips, 1990, p. 9). Mandler and Sarason (1952), who studied the effects of anxiety in an intelligence test, assumed that “learned drives” were functions of test characteristics such as materials and instructions, that these drives involved the need to succeed and to complete the task, and that “learned anxiety drive[s]” (p. 166) were the result of experiences of tests in the past. These researchers asserted that such reactions were manifested as “feelings of inadequacy, helplessness, heightened somatic reaction, anticipations of punishment or loss of status and esteem, and implicit attempts at leaving the test situation” (p. 166). During preliminary testing, the low-anxiety group fared better, but as learning trials progressed, the “anxiety drive of the high anxiety group tended to improve performance scores” (p. 173).

For some researchers test anxiety has been considered a trait anxiety. Hancock (2001), reviewing approaches to test anxiety in relevant research, pointed out that this kind of anxiety has been considered as a trait, a “relatively stable personality characteristic that prompts an individual to react to threatening situations with sometimes debilitating, psychological, physiological, and behavioral responses” (p. 284), and that connections have been found between test anxiety and unsatisfactory performance. Some research has indicated directly that “test anxiety routinely causes poor performance” (Hembree, 1988, cited in Hancock, 2001, p. 284).

Other research reported in Hancock’s overview (2001), proposed that test anxiety was detrimental to performance, and lack of it was beneficial to performance. Sarason, Mandler, and Craighill (1952) (cited in Alpert and Haber, 1960, p. 212) hypothesised that “[w]hen a stimulus situation contains elements which specifically arouse test or achievement anxiety, this increase in anxiety drive will lead to poorer

performance in individuals who have test-irrelevant [incompatible or interfering] responses in their response repertory. For individuals without such response tendencies, ... these stimulus elements will raise their general drive level and result in improved performance (p. 561).”

In some testing situations, learners’ awareness of an extremely evaluative or competitive atmosphere has been thought to have an adverse influence on performance. Hancock (2001), exploring the influences of test anxiety and of teachers’ testing methods on performance and motivation in learners who were taking a research course, found that highly test-anxious students were “significantly more sensitive to environments in which competition [was] emphasised and teacher control [was] evident” (p. 288) than were more test-relaxed students. His findings indicated that all students, whether or not they were test-anxious, performed more unsatisfactorily “under conditions of high evaluative threat” (p. 288).

Time limits in a test also seem to arouse anxiety in some students. Hill and Eaton (1977), discussed in Woolfolk (1995, p. 357), found that when no time limit was set on a mathematics test, highly-anxious students solved problems as rapidly and as correctly as their more relaxed counterparts. But when a time limit was imposed, highly anxious students made about three times as many mistakes, took about twice as long to solve each question, and were seen to cheat about twice as many times as less apprehensive learners.

In language learning, anxiety has also been considered to interfere with different points of the learning and performance and/or testing process. Tobias (1986) submitted that anxiety would be a hindrance at three stages: (a) at the input stage, (b) at the processing stage, and (c) at the output stage. At the intake or input stage, anxiety would be likely to hamper the individual’s taking in of new material, through interference by

distraction and lack of attentiveness. At the processing stage, anxiety would tend to be disadvantageous to memory, through encumbering efficient ordering and storage of material. At the output stage, anxiety would not permit the satisfactory recovery of the studied material, as observed, for example, in “test scores, verbal production, or the qualities of free speech” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a, p. 287).

Anxious language students are often not able to show all that they have studied for a test because they forget grammatical material which must be combined at the same time (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 126). Apprehensive learners are prone to make “persistent ‘careless’ errors in spelling or syntax” (p. 126), and realise after tests and exams that they really did know the answer to certain questions, but could not answer them at the time because of feeling anxious. Even knowing that s/he is making avoidable mistakes might make a student’s anxiety “escalate” (p. 126). As Naveh-Benjamin, McKeachie, & Lin (1987) assert, anxious learners may have studied for a test, but frequently “freeze and forget” during the test itself (Woolfolk, 1995, p. 357).

#### *1.1.6. Manifestations of General Anxiety and of Academic Anxiety*

Although many people would claim to be able to recognise manifestations of anxiety in others instinctively, researchers have attempted to categorise precisely what these are. I was especially interested in research on this aspect of anxiety in learning contexts, as I had frequently observed what I had imagined to be such manifestations in students during oral exams (for example, trembling and perspiring). As I intended to carry out an oral test in my thesis study, I felt that it was important to review theories and findings proposed by other researchers.

Leary (1982) submitted that three main kinds of behaviour arise from anxiety which occurs in social situations: “1) arousal-mediated responses; 2) disaffiliative

behavior; and 3) image-protection behaviour” (cited in Young, 1991, p. 429) The first are shown when individuals “squirm in their seats, fidget, play with their hair, clothes or other manipulable objects, stutter and stammer as they talk, and generally appear jittery and nervous” (Leary, 1982, p. 110). Disaffiliative behaviours are seen in “any actions that reduce social interactions” and restrict taking part in conversations. Image-protection behaviour is exemplified by “smiling and nodding frequently, by seldom interrupting others” (Young, 1991, p. 429).

Mandler and Sarason (1952), in an investigation of anxiety responses in a test situation, asked students to self-report subjective feelings and sensations during the test. Students described reactions such as “uneasiness, accelerated heartbeat, perspiration, emotional interference, and ‘worry’” (p. 167), while the researchers themselves rated anxious behaviour in the participants on a five-point scale “according to five criteria of overt anxiety manifestation (perspiration, excessive movement, inappropriate laughter and exclamations, questioning of instructions, hand movement)” (pp. 168-169).

Von Wörde (2003) gave some examples of “physical” and “internal and functional” manifestations of anxiety in foreign language students. Some “physical” reactions were “headaches”, “clammy hands, cold fingers”, “shaking, sweating”, “pounding heart” and “foot tapping, desk drumming”. Some learner comments were: “I clamp up, I get very tense and I start balling my fists”, “my stomach gets in knots”, “I get all red”, “I get really tired”, and “I kind of turtle up and hide from the teacher” (pp. 4-5). “Internal” and “functional” responses to language anxiety in von Wörde’s (2003) participants were illustrated in the following statement by one student: “I just completely blank out and everything is like a jumble in my head” and by another who said that “the time bomb was ticking in here” and that she was “petrified in that class, just totally petrified” (p. 5). Some students “reacted by losing patience or becoming

angry” and some felt that they had to “look ahead in the book.” One participant said that she realized that other students were anxious because when “people start flipping through the book, they don’t know” (von Wörde, 2003, p. 5).

## I.2. Anxiety in Language Learning

This section of the Review of the Literature stresses how necessary it was to find specific and reliable ways of measuring language anxiety, and surveys some very valuable research (Gardner, 1985; Gardner, Clément, Smythe, & Smythe, 1979) which attempted to measure anxiety in the second language. Ways of assessing language anxiety quantitatively, typically through the use of scales, and qualitatively, typically through interviews, conducted by many researchers, paved the way for a large part of my procedure, described in Part II, in which both of these means of anxiety evaluation were employed.

### *I.2.1. Early Studies*

For many decades teachers and researchers have been aware that language learning can be a distressing experience for individuals. Stengal (1939), discussed in Arnold and Brown (1999, p. 21), used the term “language shock” to describe the apprehension experienced by learners that the words and expressions they use in the foreign language do not properly convey what they want to say, and that others might laugh at them. In words that seem to be precursors of more recent descriptions of foreign language anxiety, Stengal asserted that “use of a new language may cause a sense of shame which results from feelings of insufficiency” (1939, p. 211).

In later decades, research into the relationships between anxiety and language learning results found links, but not straightforward ones. In Wittenborn, Larsen, and Mogil’s (1945) investigation, university students of French and Spanish were asked to

answer a 70-item questionnaire about their study habits, answering Yes or No, in which two items were about anxiety. Item 4 was about anxiety experienced in language examinations: “When writing examination [*sic*], I get so nervous that I cannot do my best” (p. 452), and item 5 was about anxiety felt when studying: “I often get tense and nervous when I study” (p. 452). Correlational analysis showed that the latter item was not significantly connected to language performance as measured by grades A, B, C, D, or E, but the former item was significantly related to the grades obtained by students in French classes: 46% of first semester students, 37% of third semester students, and 30% of fourth semester students said that they experienced nervousness during tests. However, no statistically significant correlations were found between nervousness and tests in the second-semester students of French, and none were encountered between nervousness and taking tests, or between nervousness and studying, in students of Spanish.

Chastain (1975), in an investigation into affective and ability variables in relation to achievement in French, German, and Spanish at elementary levels, explored test anxiety, trait anxiety, introversion as against extroversion, and creativity, and reported inconsistent results. Although correlations between test anxiety and performance as measured by final exam score were “high across languages” (p. 160), only with performance in Spanish was a statistically significant and positive correlation found ( $p < .34$ ). He encountered a “strong negative correlation” (p. 155) between test anxiety and scores in French that had been taught through the audio-lingual method ( $p < -.48$ ), but no statistically significant connection to grades in French that had been taught in the traditional way. The author speculated that something to do with the audio-lingual French class might have increased test anxiety and given rise to this negative effect. He also posited that facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety might have had an

influence on outcomes, a certain amount of anxiety constituting “a plus” while “too much anxiety can produce negative results” (p. 160).

In a later investigation into anxiety which made use of a modified and translated Alpert and Haber’s (1960) Achievement Anxiety Test, Kleinmann (1977) compared a Spanish-or-Portuguese-speaking group with an Arabic-speaking group of learners of English. He posited that each group would tend to avoid certain English grammatical structures that were lacking in their mother tongue, and speculated that students who had higher levels of facilitating anxiety would utilize these difficult structures. These hypotheses were borne out because such students did indeed often use these structures: infinitive complements and direct object pronouns were often produced by native Spanish and Portuguese speakers with high levels of facilitating anxiety, and the passive voice was frequently employed by Arabic speakers (though not the present progressive), who similarly showed high facilitating anxiety scores. These intriguing results appear to confirm that anxiety in language learning is “not a monolithic and entirely negative phenomenon” (Donley, 1997, p. 34).

In Scovel’s (1978) review of anxiety in language learning, he gave some other instances of the “mixed and confusing results” (p. 132) encountered in the literature. For example, he referred to “incomplete correlations” (p. 132), such as those found in the work of Tucker, Hamayan, and Genesee (1976), who reported links between anxiety and one French test, but not with any other language achievement measures. Scovel went on to talk about the “complete correlations” (p. 132) reported in other studies, in that coherent connections were encountered between a student’s anxiety level and language achievement, but pointed out that these findings clashed with those observed in other learners or in other languages. For example, Backman (1976) reported that the

two poorest achievers in English L2 were the most anxious and the least anxious students in her sample.

Scovel (1987) suggested that it might be profitable to explore further Alpert and Haber's (1960) twofold approach of debilitating and facilitating anxiety. He thought it might provide "an attractive path down which future research on the effects of anxiety on foreign language acquisition might proceed" (Scovel, 1987, p. 138).

In spite of the potential attractiveness of this dichotomy, however, studies in later years have tended to concentrate on anxiety's debilitating effects (Aida, 1994; Cheng, 1994; 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000 Phillips, 1992), as we shall see in later sections. Indeed, one author (Horwitz, 1990) has asserted that in language learning, there is no such thing as facilitating anxiety, and that all anxiety in this setting will probably be debilitating because language learning is such a multifarious and psychologically intricate phenomenon. She submitted that this kind of "situation-specific anxiety", described by herself and her associates (Horwitz et al., 1986), was "responsible for students' negative emotional reactions to language learning" (Horwitz, 2001, p. 114). I was very interested to see in my own research if anxiety would be seen to have any bearing on language results, and if so, if it would be associated exclusively with poorer outcomes, or if some signs of facilitating anxiety might appear.

Incoherent results seen in early research may have been due to the "fairly simplistic approach" (Skehan, 1989, p. 116) of using measures taken from general psychology, such as the Sarason Test Anxiety Scale (Sarason, 1961) or the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale (1952), and applying them in language learning situations, as did Chastain (1975, p. 154). These measures did not show "consistently significant

correlations” (Skehan, 1989, p. 116) between anxiety and language learning achievement.

In view of this confusion, Scovel (1978) recommended that researchers should have a clear idea about the kind of anxiety they were investigating, such as debilitating anxiety, facilitating anxiety, test anxiety, and so on, and about how these might relate to the “learner variables that intervene: intrinsic/extrinsic factors [and] the affective/cognitive variables” (p. 140).

### *1.2.2. The Measurement of Anxiety in Language Learning*

In an attempt to measure this “complex multidimensional phenomenon” (Young, 1991, p. 434) of language anxiety within the multifaceted context of the language learning experience, researchers have attempted to measure language anxiety in several ways.

#### *1.2.2.1. The Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (AMBT)*

The influential socio-educational model of second-language learning (Gardner, 1985; Gardner, Clément, Smythe, & Smythe, 1979) was devised to describe characteristics that differentiate individuals from one another in their ways of learning a language. Anxiety forms part of this model. The model consists of (a) Integrativeness, or the “individual’s willingness and interest in social interaction with members of other groups” (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993b, p. 159) (b) Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation, or the learner’s thoughts and feelings about several different aspects of instruction, such as the teacher or textbooks, (c) Motivation, or the “combination of the learner’s attitudes, aspirations and effort” (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993b, p. 159), and (d) Situational (or Language) Anxiety, that is, the “apprehension experienced by the

individual in the language class or any situation in which the language is used” (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993b, p. 159). In the battery of measures designed to assess these aspects of language learning that make up the socio-educational model (the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery, AMTB, Gardner, 1985), scales of French Class Anxiety and French Use Anxiety are also used.

#### *1.2.2.2. The French Class Anxiety Scale*

The French Class Anxiety Scale (FCA) ( $\alpha = .88$ , Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997, p. 348) has ten items which evaluate anxiety experienced in the French classroom. These items were taken from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (Gardner, 1985; Gardner, Clément, Smythe, & Smythe, 1979). It is assessed using a 7-point Likert scale. This scale has five positively- and five negatively-keyed statements ranging from strong disagreement (- 3) to strong agreement (+ 3). A high score purports to represent a high level of anxiety felt by an individual when required to speak French in class. Four sample items follow.

Positively worded:

“33. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in our French class.”

“75. I get nervous and confused when I’m speaking in my French class.”

Negatively worded:

“44. I don’t usually get anxious when I have to respond to a question in my French class.”

“85. I don’t understand why other students feel nervous about using French in class” (Gardner et al., 1997, p. 360).

### *1.2.2.3. The French Use Anxiety Scale*

The French Use Anxiety Scale (FUA) ( $\alpha = .88$ , Gardner et al., 1997, p. 348) also uses a 7-point Likert scale, and again has five positively- and five negatively-keyed statements with which participants express their strong disagreement (- 3) to strong agreement (+3). These items were also taken from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (Gardner, 1985; Gardner, Clément, Smythe, & Smythe, 1979). A high score supposedly reflects a high level of anxiety felt by an individual when called upon to use French.

Two positively-worded items are:

“48. It would bother me if I had to speak French on the telephone.”

“94. I feel anxious if someone asks me something in French.”

Two negatively-worded items are

“2. When called upon to use my French, I feel very much at ease.”

“80. I would feel calm and sure of myself if I had to order a meal in French”

(Gardner et al. 1997, p. 360).

It will be seen in the Instruments section that items from these two scales (devised originally in 1979) were “made generic” (Horwitz, 1986, p. 560) and incorporated into the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986), which I used in my research.

### *1.2.2.4. The Scale of Language Class Discomfort*

Ely (1986) developed this scale as a part of a larger questionnaire about Language Class Risktaking, Language Class Sociability, and Language Class Discomfort in university learners of Spanish. The Language Class Discomfort scale was devised in an attempt to measure “awkwardness or discomfort” felt by learners in the

language classroom using “items [that were] as moderate and low-key as possible” (Ely, 1986, p. 10). Its reliability coefficient is .79 (Ely, 1986, p. 16). Although the word “anxious” is not used in any of its five items, these are reminiscent of the French Use Anxiety Scale and the French Class Anxiety Scale, described above. All items refer to the speaking skill. Here are two Language Class Discomfort items:

“1. I don’t feel very relaxed when I speak Spanish in class.”

“5. I sometimes feel awkward speaking Spanish” (Ely, 1986, p. 10).

I was interested in this scale because it focused on speaking. However, I did not use it as I wished to investigate anxiety from wider perspectives, not only from the point of view of a single skill.

#### *1.2.2.5. Other Ways of Assessing Anxiety in the Second and Foreign Language*

While most language anxiety studies have used quantitative measures (Horwitz et al., 1986; Gardner et al., 1997; Cheng, et al., 1999; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000; Cheng, 2002), in an attempt to isolate and evaluate anxiety variables through scales and questionnaires, some have used more qualitative techniques, such as diary studies, journal investigations, or interviews.

Bailey (1983) used the diary entries of 11 students to examine language anxiety, on which the “Competitive Second Language Learner (2LL)” model (p. 97) is based. This model is headed by the suggestion that the “[l]earner perceives self on a continuum of success when compared to other 2LL’s (or with expectations)”, that “unsuccessful self-image” leads to anxiety (either debilitating or facilitating), and that “successful self-image” leads to “learning enhancement.” While facilitating anxiety leads to learning enhancement as well, debilitating anxiety leads to a situation in which language learning is “impaired or abandoned” (Bailey, 1983, p. 97).

Price (1991) carried out an interview study about classroom language anxiety with 10 highly anxious graduate and post graduate students of “several lower-level classes” (p. 102) of French. They had been recruited through “informal questionnaires” (p. 102), through the researcher’s acquaintance with former students of hers who had appeared to be language anxious, and through referral from other instructors. The first part of each one-to-one interview was open-ended, and the second part was based on six questions, which asked the interviewees about their feelings in language classes, about what they found most uncomfortable, if they could imagine why they felt so stressed in those classes, and about how their teachers had contributed to their nervousness.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed and the researcher analysed them by “identifying common threads in the interviews” (p. 103). Anxious students reported that when speaking in the language class they “sighed, fidgeted, laughed nervously, and told the interviewer repeatedly how ‘horrible’ it had been, how ‘awful’ they had felt, how much they had ‘hated’ this or that class” (p. 103). One graduate student of French, Anne, told the researcher that she was “hysterical” the night before her French exam, and on the way to the exam she started laughing, explaining, “You laugh because you’re afraid you’ll cry” (p. 104). Beth, another graduate student, told of her “language phobia”, of how the more her teachers made her repeat phrases in an attempt to make her pronounce French without a Texas accent, “the more frightened I became!”, of how giving an oral presentation was “an absolute nightmare”, and of how she would “rather be in a prison camp than speak a foreign language” (p. 104).

Price’s participants said that their “greatest source of anxiety was having to speak the target language in front of their peers” (p. 105), but that they were also embarrassed about making pronunciation mistakes, and upset about not being able to “communicate effectively” (p. 105). One student lamented that “My French is not good.

It's not really fluent enough to carry on anything meaningful", and felt "extremely uncomfortable speaking" and "like I'm stupid" (p. 105). Another student considered that "I should be able to do this and I can't do it. Try as I might, I can't get a coherent sentence out of my mouth. I wouldn't be surprised if my teacher thinks I'm a total dingbat" (p. 105). Highly anxious students who were high achievers in other subjects were concerned about the "discrepancy between effort and results", and that they felt "less in control" than in other classes (p. 105).

Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001) conducted an investigation about what they called language "tension" at a French-immersion school, using "naturalistic techniques" (p. 265), such as "individual and group interviews (semi-structured and open ended), observations (in and outside of classes), participant-teaching, impromptu casual interactions, analysis of documents (student papers and journals, school brochures) and of unobtrusive informational residues" (p. 265). Data were collected using notes, charts, diagrams, audio- and video-tapes, and during the seven weeks of the summer course in question, researchers held meetings every day to talk about their findings and decide on future directions of investigation.

Quantitative-only means of data collection and qualitative methods of obtaining information about language anxiety used in isolation have been criticised for garnering the individual's thoughts and attitudes without sufficient thoroughness. In addition, quantitative-only methods were not favoured by Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001) on the grounds that the "collection of discrete data ... cannot yield holistic theories" (p. 261). Qualitative procedures, such as interviews, have also met with some criticism. Oller (1981), referred to in Peacock (1998), questioned the validity of such data, because they are "likely to be influenced by self flattery, and/or a desire to be socially acceptable, and/or a desire to be consistent with their own previous statements"

(Peacock, 1998, p. 11). On the other hand, interviews have been considered a suitable complement to results garnered from scale and test scores because they act as “back-up data designed to illuminate and explain results obtained from quantitative data” (Peacock, 1998, p. 12).

Some studies have used a combination of qualitative and quantitative means of data collection. For example, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) based their Chilean study on the reactions of four high-anxious students of English and four low-anxious students to their videotaped oral interviews. These students were identified in the first instance on the basis of their scores on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (see section I.3), then they were given individual interviews to find “instances of perfectionism” (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002, p. 562), such as “Unusually high personal standards and procrastination,” “Fear of evaluation”, and “Concern over errors” (pp. 566-567).

Phillips (1992) employed both quantitative and qualitative ways of evaluating students’ anxiety: through an anxiety questionnaire (the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, Horwitz et al., 1986, see section I.3) and performance scores on an oral exam, and through interviews, respectively.

Pappamihiel (2002), in an investigation into anxiety in two classroom contexts (English as a second language classes, and mainstream classes), combined the use of a scale (the English Language Anxiety Scale, ELAS with “focus group” (p. 335) discussions in which her participants talked about their thoughts and feelings in the two types of classrooms. Pappamihiel explained that focus groups have been employed recently “in the social sciences as supplemental data gathering instruments” and she claimed that “[t]he main benefit of focus group data is their ability to uncover information that would not normally come out in a one-to-one interview or would be

difficult to see through observation” because such groups are “often helpful in aiding participants in articulating their feelings and reactions” (p. 335). In her study, groups were homogenous in anxiety levels (high anxiety), in age range, and in gender.

Reading about different techniques of assessing language anxiety employed by other researchers has lead me to consider that the use of quantitative techniques (such as scales and tests) enhanced by interviews is probably the most balanced and effective means of finding about students’ anxiety when learning a language, in line with Peacock’s (1998) suggestions.

### I.3. The Development of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

It is essential to trace the development and subsequent use of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986), as this instrument has been employed so widely (in its original form, or translated, or adapted) and with such consistent results since it first appeared. As it has been observed to be very reliable (Horwitz, 1986; Aida, 1994; Rodríguez & Abreu, 2003), I was interested in using it in my research.

#### *I.3.1. Background*

Scovel (1978) had considered anxiety “not as a simple, unitary construct, but as a cluster of affective states, influenced by factors which are intrinsic and extrinsic to the foreign language learner” (p. 134). The first study to propose an anxiety construct that was specific to the situation of language learning was Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope’s (1986). These authors called this construct Foreign Language Anxiety, which they submitted was “responsible for students’ negative emotional reactions to language learning” (Horwitz, 2001, p. 114). As ways of measuring anxiety experienced in the language classroom were sparse at that time, Horwitz and her associates designed an instrument for their study, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), as a means of evaluating this particular kind of anxiety, creating in the process a scale that would be used by a multitude of researchers from then on.

*1.3.2. Description of the article “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety” (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986)*

Horwitz et al.’s. (1986) “Foreign language classroom anxiety” is a cornerstone study in language anxiety research, aspects of which, such as a definition of this kind of anxiety, a description of its manifestations, theoretical considerations, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, the researchers’ findings, and suggested pedagogical implications, have been all been deepened and widened in subsequent studies.

In this article, Horwitz and her colleagues asserted that up until that date (1986), research had “neither adequately defined foreign language anxiety nor described its specific effects on foreign language learning” (p. 125). In response to this situation, they reviewed earlier work that had examined the relationship between anxiety in language learning settings, and “found only one instrument specifically designed to measure foreign language anxiety” (p. 126) which was Gardner, Clément, Smythe, and Smythe’s five items designed to measure anxiety in the French classroom, and which was included in their Attitudes and Motivation Battery (1979).

*1.3.2.1. A Definition of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety*

Arising out of discussions with beginner foreign language students about anxiety experiences at the Learning Skills Centre at the University of Texas, Horwitz and her colleagues described the physiological and psychological symptoms of this phenomenon, many of which occur in anxious states in general: “tenseness, trembling, perspiring, palpitations, and sleep disturbances” (p. 129). In language learners, anxiety was also observed in such symptoms as “freezing” in class, “going blank” before

exams, and feeling reticence about entering the classroom (p. 128). The researchers noted how these learners “experience apprehension, worry, even dread. They have difficulty concentrating, become forgetful, sweat, and have palpitations. They exhibit avoidance behavior such as missing class and postponing homework” (p. 126). These observations and discussions led the authors to put forward a definition of foreign language classroom anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128).

#### *1.3.2.2. Theoretical Considerations*

From a theoretical viewpoint, Horwitz and her fellow researchers submitted that as language anxiety implies “performance evaluation” (p. 127), it was worthwhile “draw[ing] parallels between it and three related performance anxieties: 1) communication apprehension; 2) test anxiety; and 3) fear of negative evaluation” (p. 127).

As the name suggests, the first aspect refers to “shyness” experienced when an individual is required to communicate with others, whether in listening (“receiver anxiety”) or speaking (“oral communication anxiety”) (p. 127). In the foreign language classroom especially, a student may be apprehensive about not being able to control what is happening in communicative activities and may feel that others are always evaluating his/her interventions.

The second aspect, test anxiety, arises from a “fear of failure” (p. 127). Students who suffer from this kind of anxiety frequently “put unrealistic demands on themselves and feel that anything less than a perfect test performance is a failure” (p. 128). Horwitz

and her co-workers suggested that oral tests may arouse in students both these types of anxiety (communication apprehension and test anxiety) at the same time.

The third facet, fear of negative evaluation, is considered by Horwitz et al. to be “apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectations that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (p. 128), citing Watson and Friend (1969, p. 448). While fear of negative evaluation is like test anxiety to some extent, it is more far-reaching in that it applies to any “social, evaluative” (p. 128) context in which the individual worries about the possibly unfavourable impression s/he is making on others, such as in the foreign language classroom, where both teacher and peers may appear to be neverendingly assessing her/his performance.

The authors emphasise that foreign language anxiety is not just an aggregate of these three anxieties, but a ‘unique’ anxiety as postulated in their definition given above, utterly different from those that might be experienced in other fields of learning, because of the socio-cultural and linguistic demands imposed on the language learner that are “likely to challenge an individual’s self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic” (p. 128).

#### *1.3.2.3. Measurement of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety*

Importantly for subsequent research, Horwitz and her colleagues developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which contains 33 items to be answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale, from “*strongly agree*” to “*strongly disagree*.” A copy of the FLCAS is included in Appendix B.

It has been shown to have an internal reliability of .93 and test-retest reliability over eight weeks of  $r = .83$ ,  $p = .001$  (Horwitz, 1986, p. 560). The authors claimed that from the results of their study, conducted with 75 university students of Spanish

(beginner level), “students with debilitating anxiety in the foreign language classroom setting can be identified and that they share a number of characteristics in common” (p. 129).

#### *1.3.2.4. Horwitz et al.'s (1986) Results and Conclusions*

Results arising from the administration of the FLCAS indicated that almost half the students were anxious about speaking, and over a third were worried when they could not understand everything the teacher said. Almost two-fifths were sure that other students were more proficient language learners than they were, and well over half were concerned that they could not keep up with the pace of the language lesson. Over two-thirds of students indicated that they felt uneasy about making mistakes, and a tenth of the participants feared being ridiculed by other students when they spoke in the target language.

The authors’ hypotheses that “foreign language anxiety is a distinct set of beliefs, perceptions, and feelings in response to foreign language learning in the classroom and not merely a composite of other anxieties”, and that anxious students feel “uniquely unable to deal with the task of language learning” (p. 130), were given more support by responses to two of the items on the questionnaire: “30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language”, with which 34% of students expressed agreement, and “26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes”, which was endorsed by 38% of the participants. This item was “found to be the single best discriminator of anxiety on the FLCAS as measured by its correlation with the total score” (p. 130).

In their conclusion, the authors stated that foreign language anxiety may invoke a variety of individual reactions: from not speaking in class, sitting at the back of the

classroom in an attempt not to be called on by the teacher, and putting off doing homework. Horwitz and her colleagues encountered a range of responses from delays in starting foreign language study or even switches in university degree courses (in highly anxious students), to a complete lack of apprehension in the foreign language classroom (in students who experienced low or no language anxiety). As speaking is the skill which appeared to be the most threatening to language learners, the researchers submitted that the present communicative classroom environment is a potentially anxiety-arousing one for many students.

### *1.3.3. After the FLCAS*

Since the construct of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety was identified and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was devised by Horwitz and her associates (1986), the FLCAS has been constantly employed by investigators in numerous investigations. Horwitz et al.'s original study involved Anglophone learners of Spanish in their first year at University. In other studies, language anxiety and its relationships to performance have been explored at *different levels of instruction*: beginner, intermediate, and advanced (Saito & Samimy, 1996), with learners who exhibited *different degrees of anxiety*: low-, average-, and high-anxious students (Ganschow, Sparks, Anderson, Javorshy, Skinner, & Patton, 1994), and in the investigation of the *stability of language anxiety* in learners who were studying two languages simultaneously (Rodríguez & Abreu, 2003). Much research into anxiety and the *four skills* has used the FLCAS: in *listening* (Kim, 2000; Elkafaifi, 2005), in *speaking test* situations (Phillips, 1992), in *reading* in the foreign language (Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999) and in *reading in Spanish* (Sellers, 2000), in writing (Cheng, 2002), and in distinguishing elements of anxiety in the *speaking* and the *writing* skills

(Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999). Some researchers have used this scale in investigating *cognitive, affective, personality, and demographic variables* associated with anxiety (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999, 2000). Others have explored anxiety in connection with students' *language learning style* (Bailey, Daley, & Onwuegbuzie, 1999), with *perfectionism* (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002), and with language *errors* (Gregersen, 2003).

Many authors have used the FLCAS in its original form for students of a variety of target languages (Aida, 1994; Bailey et al., 1999; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2000; Onwuegbuzie et al. 2000; Saito et al., 1999; Sellers, 2000), translated into participants' mother tongue (Cheng, 2002; Cheng et al., 1999; Rodríguez & Abreu, 2003), and adapted to suit different needs (Pappamihiel, 2001).

#### *1.3.3.1 The Reliability of the FLCAS*

As the FLCAS has been employed so widely in language anxiety studies (in its original form, or translated, or adapted) I was also interested in using it in my research. It has been observed to be very reliable (Horwitz, 1986; Aida, 1994; Rodríguez & Abreu, 2003), and like other authors (Cheng, 2002; Cheng et al., 1999; Rodríguez & Abreu, 2003), I wished to use a translated version to cater for the mother tongue (Spanish) of my participants.

In the first study in which the FLCAS appeared (Horwitz et al., 1986), the authors asserted that this scale had been shown to have internal reliability, with an alpha coefficient of .93. Test-retest reliability for an eight-week period was  $r = .83, p < .001$ , (p. 129).

There follow two detailed descriptions of studies in which the FLCAS was employed and its high reliability further established: one (Aida, 1994), in which it was

used in its English form with Anglophone students whose target language was Japanese, and another (Rodríguez & Abreu, 2003), in which it was translated into Spanish for Venezuelan students who were studying French and English. These two investigations confirmed my decision to use the FLCAS in my study, which like Rodríguez and Abreu's, would involve Spanish-speaking students of English.

Horwitz et al.'s (1986) construct of foreign language anxiety, which arose through a study involving Anglophone learners of Spanish, was tested in a different language context, that is, with Anglophone students of Japanese (Aida, 1994). The author's main purpose was to explore Horwitz et al.'s construct of foreign language anxiety by scrutinising an adapted FLCAS for students of Japanese, with the aim of discovering whether its structure showed the three aspects of anxiety mentioned in Horwitz et al.'s study (communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation). The investigation evaluated the reliability of the FLCAS, and also explored the links between level of anxiety, learner variables, and students' performance in Japanese. Participants were 96 students of second-year Japanese I at a North American university. On the first day of fall semester, the participants completed the FLCAS, adapted so that the term "foreign language" was given as "Japanese" throughout the scale, and gave their answers about anxiety experienced in the previous year's (Japanese I) course. On the first day of the next semester (spring), the students who had passed on to Japanese II were asked to complete FLCAS once more. Fifty-four did so. In order to obtain test-retest reliability over one semester, the two scores (fall and spring) were correlated. A high and statistically significant correlation was found ( $r = .80, p < .01$ ) "indicating that the FLCAS measures a person's level of anxiety with high accuracy at different times" (p. 159). This led the author to speculate that the FLCAS may measure a person's anxiety as a stable trait over time and not as a state aroused at a particular

moment by a specific situation, that is, it “may tap a person’s persistent trait anxiety” (p. 159).

A factor analysis was carried out to detect an “underlying structure of FLCAS’s thirty-three items” (p. 159). Four factors were produced. The first factor was Speech Anxiety and Fear of Negative Evaluation, which indicated students’ nervousness about speaking in the Japanese classroom and making mistakes in front of others. The second factor was labelled Fear of Failing in Class, and was thought to “show a student’s worry and nervousness about being left behind in the class or failing the class altogether” (p. 159). The author called the third factor Comfortableness in Speaking with Japanese People, and the fourth factor Negative Attitudes Toward the Japanese Class. The FLCAS items were grouped by Aida into the four Factors specified above, as well as Factor Five (Items Not Included in the Factor Solution).

According to Aida, this investigation lent weight to Horwitz et al.’s (1986) foreign language anxiety construct in students of Japanese, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale showing an internal consistency of .94 (students obtaining a mean FLCAS score of 96.7,  $SD = 22.1$ ) (p. 156). She maintained that these results compared favourably to Horwitz’s et al.’s (1991) results, in which an internal consistency of .93 was shown for the FLCAS, and a mean FLCAS score of 94.5 ( $SD = 21.4$ ) was reported (Aida, 1994, pp. 158-159). The author submitted that the results of her study showed that the FLCAS is a reliable instrument whether or not the target language is European-Western, but that they did not support the test anxiety component proposed in Horwitz et al.’s (1986) construct. Perhaps this was due to the fact that she used final grades as a measure of achievement, which may not have been so anxiety-provoking as an oral test, which I intended to include in my study.

An investigation which “indicated that the [Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety] scale exhibited high reliability” was Rodríguez and Abreu’s (2003, p. 165) work, in which the stability of general foreign classroom anxiety across two languages (English and French) was examined.

The research question asked by the authors of this investigation was whether general foreign language anxiety was the same for two languages that were being studied at the same time by college students.

Participants were 110 trainee language teachers who were studying French and English as main subjects at two Venezuelan universities, La Universidad de Zulia (LUZ), and La Universidad de Los Andes (ULA), 72 from the former, and 38 from the latter. Females accounted for 91 participants, and males for 19. They were between the ages of 16 to 40, and none had language difficulties. Students were at various levels in the two languages, and of the 110 participants, 76 (69.09%) were of the same proficiency in both English and French.

The researchers employed two Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scales (Horwitz et al., 1986), translated into Spanish, one for each of the target languages, French and English, and ‘foreign language’ was changed throughout the questionnaires to ‘*Francés*’ and ‘*Inglés*,’ respectively. Each translated scale had a high Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .90 (p. 367). Rodríguez and Abreu also used a demographic questionnaire to obtain data about participants’ “gender, age, language level, and college affiliation” (p. 366).

In class time, students completed the FLCAS versions for French and English, and the background questionnaire. The order of administration of the two FLCAS instruments was counterbalanced.

Comparisons were made using separate paired sample *t*-tests (p. 367) for general foreign language anxiety in all participants (N =110) across French and English, for the two Universities taken together and considered separately. Results showed that there were no statistically significant differences between degrees of anxiety in French and English overall or at each university.

Not all of the participants were at the same level in both languages, so a “restricted data set” (p. 367) from the 76 students whose proficiency was the same in both French and English was examined for stability of language anxiety. The researchers considered that if results were the same for both the full data set and the restricted data set, then “confidence could be taken in the findings” (p. 367).

No statistically significant differences were encountered in general French anxiety and general English anxiety in all participants when the two universities were considered either together or on their own. Nor were statistically significant differences found in the smaller number of participants (n = 76) who were at the same language level in French and in English, either when both institutions were considered together or when taken separately.

In order to explore the construct validity of the FLCAS, links between the anxiety scores for French and for English corresponding to both the complete sample of participants and the smaller sample were assessed by calculating Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. For the 110 students from the Full Sample the overall correlation was  $r = .400$ ,  $p = .001$ , and for the 76 students from the Restricted Sample the overall correlation was  $r = .450$ ,  $p = .001$  (p. 371), that is, associations that were “positive and statistically significant, but moderate in magnitude” (p. 368).

Rodríguez and Abreu found that differences in levels of their participants’ French anxiety and English anxiety “overall, within-institution and within-level[s]” (p.

369) were not statistically significant, and compared these findings to those of Saito et al. (1999), who similarly encountered no significant differences in levels of general anxiety in the participants of their study (who were in three groups, each studying a different foreign language).

Rodríguez and Abreu pointed out that degrees of French anxiety (mean FLCAS scores at both universities for Full Sample: 89.69,  $SD = 20.11$ ) and English anxiety (mean FLCAS scores at both universities for Full Sample: 85.98,  $SD = 21.03$ ) (p. 367) found in their participants were lower than those noted in other investigations, and attributed these lower language anxiety levels to a complicated interplay of “affective, cognitive, and demographic variables” (p. 371). For example, participants in this study were planning to be language teachers, and therefore integrative motivation may have been quite high, leading to lower language anxiety. Also, as these were Venezuelan language learners, the researchers speculated that they may have been more extrovert than those of other cultures.

In spite of the statistically nonsignificant differences between levels of anxiety in French and in English, a slightly higher level of French anxiety was observed. The authors put this down to the fact that the participants had studied French for fewer years, and so were presumably less competent in that language.

Rodríguez and Abreu concluded that their findings made an important contribution to the language anxiety arena “by extending the reliability and validity aspects of the [Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety] scale to new populations, native Spanish-speaking students simultaneously learning two FLs, English and French” (p. 373).

#### I.4. Sources of Language Anxiety

As anxiety in the language classroom is a phenomenon I had observed informally over many years of teaching, and which I would attempt to measure quantitatively and qualitatively in my research project, I was interested to read about other researchers' ideas as to where language anxiety might come from, hence this section about potential sources of language anxiety.

Some researchers have suggested that anxiety might be the result of poor performance. Skehan (1989) commented on an early assertion by Spielberger (1962) about academic achievement that the "influence of anxiety change[d] as a function of ability level" (p. 115), in the sense that anxiety was shown to be beneficial to learners of high ability, but was linked to lower achievement in "low-ability students, and especially average ability students" (p. 115). This led Skehan (1989) to suppose what for him was obvious in the field of language learning, that anxiety "may be partly the *result* of low achievement" (p. 115).

In a study devised to clarify theoretical perspectives on anxiety in the field of language learning, MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) attempted to describe its causes, and suggested the following model: "foreign language anxiety causes poor performance in the foreign language which produces elevations in State anxiety" (p. 272).

Searching for sources of language anxiety, Bailey (1983) took into account learners' perspectives on language anxiety and made use of the diary entries of 11 students.

She reported that learners attributed anxiety to several sources, listed by Skehan (1989) in the following way:

“(a) Comparison of oneself with other students, either for their performance, or for their anxiety levels.

(b) One’s relationship with the teacher, either in relation to one’s perceptions of the teacher’s expectations or one’s need to gain the teacher’s approval.

(c) Tests.

(d) Comparison with oneself, and one’s own personal standards and goals” (Skehan, 1989, p. 116).

Young (1991), in a comprehensive review, made a “careful examination of the language anxiety literature” (p. 426), and offered six possible sources of anxiety in the language classroom: “1) personal and interpersonal anxieties; 2) learner beliefs about language learning; 3) instructor beliefs about language teaching; 4) instructor-learner interactions; 5) classroom procedures; and 6) language testing” (p. 427).

First, regarding personal and interpersonal anxieties, she indicates that these may involve “[l]ow self-esteem and competitiveness” (Young, 1991, p. 427) or be experienced by those who consider themselves as having poor language ability. She cites Leary’s (1982) assertion that expressions such as “audience anxiety, speech anxiety, and communication apprehension, are typically used when people experience social anxiety while performing or speaking before others” (Leary, 1982, p. 102).

Second, as regards student beliefs, anxiety is reported to be aroused through a variety of sources. For example, learners may believe that they must speak with perfect accuracy or accent (Horwitz, 1988), or that they do not have the aptitude needed to be able to learn a foreign language (Price, 1991). Third, as far as teacher beliefs are concerned, Young states that anxiety may be evoked if instructors believe that an authoritarian manner is conducive to improving students’ performance, if they consider that all

students' mistakes should be corrected, and if they "think their role is more like a drill sergeant's than a facilitator's" (1991, p. 428). Fourth, concerning the relationships between teacher and language learner, she gives several suggestions as to how language anxiety may be aroused. She maintains that severe error correction on the part of the teacher may cause anxiety, although she does point out that learners feel that correction of their errors is desirable to a certain extent. Students fear being made to "look ... or sound ... 'dumb'" (p. 429). Fifth, classroom procedures also evoke anxiety in some language students. Young maintains that speaking in front of other students in the classroom is a particularly anxiety-producing activity. She refers to studies such as Koch and Terrell's (1991), in which the majority of students learning a foreign language through the Natural Approach said that they experienced most anxiety when doing "oral presentations in front of the class and oral skits" (p. 429). Sixth, Young also considers language testing to be a source of anxiety. She refers to Madsen, Brown, and Jones (1991), who assert that some learners are apprehensive about certain formats, and are anxious when they find that the test does not evaluate topics or use kinds of items covered in class. She also refers to Daly's (1991) submission that many students feel nervous if tests are "novel, ambiguous, or highly evaluative" (Young, 1991, p. 429).

An interesting line of research into the causes of foreign language anxiety is that which has been carried out by Sparks and Ganschow and their co-workers (Ganschow, Sparks, Anderson, Javorsky, Skinner, & Patton, 1994; Sparks & Ganschow, 1991; Sparks, Ganschow & Javorsky, 2000), who submit that problems in achievement in the foreign language depend on difficulties that students have in their mother tongue. According to them, these foreign language problems are "likely to be based in native language learning and that facility with one's language 'codes' (phonological/orthographic, syntactic, semantic) is likely to play an important causal

role in learning a FL” (Sparks et al. 2000, p. 235). This is the basis of their Linguistic Coding Differences Hypothesis (LCDH), which they use to shed light on the links between foreign language anxiety and foreign language achievement. Ganschow et al. (1994) examined these links in a study of English-speaking college students of introductory Spanish. Their aim was to examine the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety and the original aspect of native oral and written language, and between foreign language classroom anxiety and aptitude in the foreign language in students who were high-anxious, average-anxious, and low-anxious.

In global terms, there were statistically significant differences in the three anxiety groups. In native language skills, highly anxious and average-anxious students obtained significantly lower scores on first language competence, but there was no such finding as far as reading comprehension was concerned. Similarly, both high- and average-anxious students were found to have poorer oral and listening skills than more relaxed learners.

As regards foreign language aptitude, learners with higher levels of anxiety were seen to obtain lower scores than subjects showing low levels of anxiety. Statistically significant and negative correlations between anxiety and grades were encountered in students with high levels of anxiety.

The three anxiety groups (high, average and low) obtained different scores on L2 “oral language (listening and speaking), phonological processing (phonetic analysis, single word recognition)” (p. 49), and foreign language aptitude. Low-anxiety learners were seen to have both better native language competence and foreign language aptitude. Highly-anxious students showed average abilities in the same areas.

The researchers highlighted the finding that it was native and foreign language variables that distinguished high- and low-anxious learners, even though in other ways

(cognitively and in general academic ability) they were similar. They suggested that highly anxious individuals did not have poor language skills, “as their performance on native and FL aptitude measures was well within the average range” (p. 49). Rather, more relaxed students appeared to fare better because their global native language and their foreign language aptitude were between moderate and high range.

Differences were also seen between more anxious and less anxious learners as to phonological exercises. On looking into relationships between phonological performance and grades, Ganschow et al. found that students who scored lower on phonological tasks also tended to have poorer FL outcomes.

In a later study (Gardner et al., 1997), anxiety was seen as a causal component in a “full model of second language learning” (p. 344). The main objective of this study was to evaluate the contributions of a number of individual difference variables in an attempt to establish a model of second language learning influences on how well people learn an L2. It measured the following types of variables: language anxiety, language aptitude, attitudes and motivation, field dependence/independence, language learning strategies, self-confidence, and centred on the “factorial composition” (p. 347) linking these variables. Another aim was to examine the link between each of the variables and achievement measures in L2 (French). A third aim was to “assess the adequacy of fit of a causal model based on the socio-educational model” (p. 347) of second language learning (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993a), which had been adapted to take into account these variables. In this sense this study is noteworthy: the investigators proposed a model, and did not simply use a lot of variables in an unstructured way.

The authors used causal modelling to devise a model that would account for the relationships among the variables, constructing “correlational and causal paths linking connecting seven latent variables: (a) Language Attitudes, (b) Language Aptitude, (c)

Field Independence, (d) Motivation, (e) Learning Strategies, (f) Self-Confidence, and (g) Language Achievement” (p. 353). The model was as follows: “Language Attitudes is seen to cause Motivation, Motivation causes both Self-Confidence and Language Learning Strategies, and Motivation, Language Aptitude and Language Learning Strategies cause Language Achievement.” (p. 353). The Causal Model (p. 354) shows that not only do Motivation and Achievement appear to cause Self-Confidence, but Self-Confidence in its turn appears to be associated with low levels of Language Anxiety (“the sum of three language anxiety measures”, p. 352), and enhances both Self-Confidence (“the sum of three Self-Confidence measures”, p. 352) and Self-Rated Proficiency (“the sum of the four Can Do measures”, p. 352).

Gardner and his associates manifested that depending on how achievement was measured, different processes were involved. Language Anxiety, Self-Confidence and Can Do correlated more strongly with achievement assessed at the same time as the experiment than did measures of Language Aptitude, Motivation or Language Attitudes. When more overall evaluations of achievement were taken into account, the correlations of all these variables with achievement were much more alike. The authors asserted that the proposed model is useful, but that it is not necessarily the only one or the only correct one.

Von Wörde (2003) described possible causes of language anxiety as suggested in interviews with students of French, German, and Spanish. Major sources of anxiety were (a) “Non-comprehension”, (b) “Speaking activities”, (c) “Pedagogical and instructional practices”, (d) “Error correction”, and (e) “Native Speakers” (pp. 3-4).

As regards (a) “Non-comprehension”, some students reported feeling nervous when they could not understand what teachers said through delivery that was too rapid or through their not speaking at all in students’ mother tongue (English). Not being able

to comprehend videoed or taped material also made students feel nervous. Concerning (b) “Speaking activities”, von Wörde’s participants complained of the apprehension they often suffered in oral classroom activities. They were worried about the opinions of peers and of their instructor, and about being asked to speak in class, even if they had had time to prepare their intervention beforehand. One of her students of Spanish expressed the fear that “I don’t want to be the focus of attention so that my errors are put on display” (p. 3). Concerning (c) “Pedagogical and instructional practices”, oral and listening tests were often stated as sources of anxiety. The rapid pace of the lessons and of the work covered in the semester that did not give students time to take in new material was another cause. Being asked to speak “in seating order” (p. 3) was mentioned as very anxiety-inducing, and was strikingly described by one of von Wörde’s participants thus: “I think that builds tension, builds anxiety, just sitting there knowing that in a few minutes you’re about to be called, and it’s almost *execution style*” (von Wörde, 2003, p. 3). Perceived lack of respect for students on the part of the teachers, together with “very intimidating, “apathetic”, “condescending”, and “obnoxious” teacher attitudes, as well as instructors who were “nasty” or “very stern and mean almost and so she scares me” (p. 3) also contributed to some students’ feelings of nervousness in their language classes. As regards (d) “Error correction”, students were worried about being “reprimand[ed]” (p. 3) for making mistakes, and about being corrected before they had had time to finish answering the question, making them unable to concentrate, and concerning (e) “Native speakers”, participants were nervous about the presence of native speakers in the language classroom, feeling that instructors taught “to the higher level, or deferred to the native speakers in some way” (p. 4).

It was extremely useful to read about how other researchers have addressed the perplexing question as to how academic anxiety and language anxiety might arise. As I wished to interview highly anxious students about their how they had felt during their oral test, it would be valuable for me to be able to compare their comments with researchers' findings.

### I.5. Language Anxiety and its Associations with Language Achievement

Since my thesis project was to be about the potential effects of anxiety on my students' language achievement, and about the potential effects of language achievement on anxiety, I wished to survey what other investigators had found out in this regard. I also wanted to see what kind of achievement measures had been used. As I intended to use correlational analysis, amongst others, which does not indicate the direction of cause and effect (Porte, 2002), it was of particular interest to me to discover that in the main other authors talked about a "downward spiral" of effects (Saito & Samimy, 1996, p. 246), "recursive relationships" (Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999, p. 228), or a "vicious circle" of influences (Cheng et al., 1999, p. 437).

Numerous authors referred to in the previous section about sources of language anxiety have suggested that language anxiety might have its origins in numerous aspects of the language learning situation (e.g., unknown material, instructors' methods and attitudes, perceived negative evaluation on the part of peers and teachers, fear of tests). It would seem logical that a poor capacity for learning languages might also be a cause of anxiety. As Horwitz (2001) points out: "It is easy to conceptualize foreign language anxiety as a result of poor language learning ability. A student does poorly in language learning and consequently feels anxious about his/her language class" (p. 118).

However, it may be that anxiety is not only the *result* of poor language ability and achievement, but also that anxiety itself may interfere with existing language ability and therefore be a *cause* of poor language learning and performance. Supporting this view, MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) submitted in their evaluation of Horwitz et al.'s (1986) theory that their own results "tend[ed] to indicate that anxiety leads to deficits in

learning and performance” (p. 271), and more forthrightly, the same authors later (1991b) stated: “language anxiety consistently, negatively affects language learning and production” (p. 302). Researchers have been interested in exploring its relationships with achievement in the foreign or second language. Indeed, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993b) called language anxiety “the best single correlate of achievement” (p. 183).

According to Horwitz (2001), once investigators started using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al. 1986), “findings concerning anxiety and language achievement have been relatively uniform” (p. 114), that is, anxiety has usually been seen to be detrimental to students’ learning and achievement in second and foreign languages. Researchers employing the FLCAS and “other specific measures of second language anxiety have found a consistent moderate negative correlation between the FLCAS and measures of second language achievement (typically final grades)” (Horwitz, 2001, p. 114), other anxiety measures being, for example, the French Class Anxiety Scale (Gardner et al., 1979) the French Use Anxiety Scale (Gardner et al., 1979), the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (Kim, 2000), the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (Saito et al., 1999), the Second Language Writing Anxiety Scale (Daly & Miller, 1975), and the English Language Anxiety Scale (Pappamihel, 2001).

Horwitz (2001) referred to Steinberg and Horwitz’s (1986) warning that final exam marks might be inconsistent, and to their recommendation that investigators should employ “more subtle achievement measures to capture the true effects of anxiety” (Horwitz, 2001, p. 115). Similarly, Gardner and MacIntyre encouraged “including many different measures of second language achievement in studies concerned with affective correlates of achievement” (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993b, p. 182). While some researchers have indeed used a variety of measures (either in the

laboratory or in the classroom) others have employed exam scores or final grades as a measure of achievement.

*1.5.1. Anxiety Studies in Which Final Grades were Used as a Measure of Language Achievement*

Aida (1994), on examining Horwitz et al.'s (1986) construct of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety in second-year students of Japanese, used final course grades in percentages as a measure of language proficiency "primarily because it has been used as a global measure of language proficiency by many researchers" (p. 158). Links between anxiety and language performance as measured by course grade were investigated, Pearson Product Moment correlational analysis yielding a negative and statistically significant result:  $r = -.38, p < .01$  (p. 162). Results of analyses of variance indicated that participants who were more highly anxious were more likely to obtain a "grade B or lower", and that those who were more relaxed were "more likely to get an A" (p. 163). Aida conducted a two by two ANOVA using Japanese course grade as the dependent variable and anxiety at two levels (high and low), and gender, as the independent variables, and discovered that the high-anxiety group fared significantly worse on the exam, high-anxiety students scoring on average 85.6 and the low-anxiety learners scoring on average 89.8. Females were found to obtain significantly higher marks than males:  $F(1,92) = 4.74, p < .05$ , females scoring a mean grade of 89.7, and males, 86.1 (p. 162).

Rodríguez (1995), in an investigation involving 91 Venezuelan trainee teachers of English, utilized correlations between their FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) scores and their final grades "to ascertain the relationship between foreign language anxiety and students' success" (p. 26). For seven groups of learners, he found an overall correlation

of  $-.57^{***}$  ( $*** p < .001$ ) between foreign language anxiety scores and grades (p. 27). Rodríguez also found that learners who had studied English in a Natural Approach environment were “less anxious and more successful” (p. 27) than those who were taught using a more conventional methodology: mean FLCAS scores for the Natural Approach students was 81.97, while that for the Traditional methodology students was 92.67, and mean “Success” scores as measured by final grades for Natural Approach learners was 12.64, while that for the Traditional methodology learners was 10.52 (p. 28).

In a study of Anglophone learners of Japanese at three levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced), Saito and Samimy (1996) used “final course grades (percentage) for the semester as a global measure of performance” (p. 244) for each level. Stepwise regression analysis showed that language anxiety did not predict final grades for beginning students, but it was found to be the “best predictor” (p. 245) of exam marks at intermediate and at advanced levels.

Similarly, Saito et al. (1999), in a study of reading anxiety in three target languages (French, Japanese, and Russian), used end-of-semester grades “as a global measure of performance” (p. 204). These researchers found that “[s]tudents with higher levels of reading anxiety in this study received significantly lower grades than students with lower anxiety levels” (p. 211).

In addition, Cheng (2002), who examined language anxiety in relation to the writing skill, used students’ marks for their end-of-course writing grade as a measure of achievement.

*1.5.2. Anxiety Studies in Which More than One Measure of Language Performance were Used*

In a laboratory setting, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) used several measures in order to assess their participants' performance in French. They wrote a half-page essay about either an anxiety-provoking experience or a 'relaxed' experience when using French, and completed a Can-do scale in which they assessed their own competence in French tasks in the four skills. They also performed tasks that were audio-recorded: Digit Span, or recalling strings of between four and nine numbers (in English and French), and Thing Category Test, or the designating of objects to a particular category (in English and French), for example, "words beginning with the letter "t" or items that belong in a suitcase" (p. 298). The Digit Span test was seen to bring about more anxiety than the Thing Category and the authors claimed that "students who often experience anxiety in the language classroom are at a disadvantage when compared to their more relaxed colleagues" (p. 302).

Phillips (1992), in a study which assessed the influence of language anxiety on outcomes and on students' reactions to a speaking exam, used several achievement measures: French exam marks from the previous semester, informal assessment by the teacher, quantity and quality of 'Communication units' (based on Hunt, 1965, Larsen-Freeman, 1983, and Loban, 1976) in the oral test, oral exam grades, and the average mark of written exams. The results of correlation analyses and analyses of variance indicated that "students who expressed more foreign language anxiety tended to receive lower exam grades than their less anxious classmates" (pp. 17-18).

Ganschow et al. (1994), exploring performance in low-anxiety, average-anxiety, and high-anxiety learners of introductory Spanish, measured foreign language aptitude

(using the Modern Languages Aptitude Test, MLAT, Carroll & Sapon, 1959), and also took into account “overall average of [participants’] FL grades” (p. 45) “over the students’ entire college FL history” (p. 48). As regards the foreign language aptitude measure, highly anxious learners obtained on average significantly lower scores than more relaxed subjects: Highly anxious participants presented a mean score of 103.2 ( $SD = 12.7$ ) on the MLAT; moderately anxious students’ mean score was 109.0 ( $SD = 24.5$ ), and low-anxiety subjects showed an average score of 117.4 ( $SD = 11.3$ ) (p. 47). Statistically significant and negative correlations between anxiety and the MLAT, and between anxiety and average marks in the foreign language were encountered:  $r = -.43$ ,  $p < .008$ , and  $r = -.36$ ,  $p < .03$ , respectively (p. 48). The authors asserted that the statistically significant and negative correlation between the average exam marks and anxiety was not so pronounced as that found in Horwitz’s (1986) investigation (“ $r = -.49$ ,  $p < .003$ ,  $N = 35$ , for beginning Spanish classes and  $r = -.54$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $N = 32$ , for beginning French classes”, p. 48), claiming that this may have been due to the fact that in the present study, foreign language grades for the whole of a student’s college career were taken into account, rather than the results of one exam as in Horwitz’s case.

Gardner et al. (1997), in their attempt to offer a complete model of language learning, in which anxiety played a role, took into account not only global course grades, but also performance in language tests taken at the time of the experiment. Measures of French achievement were: French Achievement Test (a “100-item multiple choice test”, p. 349); Cloze Test (completing 25 gaps in a text); Thing Category Test (subjects made a list of “as many items as possible belonging to three given categories, for example, ‘fruit’”, p. 349); Theme Test (essay on a set topic); Grades in French; Spelling Clues (purporting to measure a learner’s “phonetic coding ability”, p. 349); Words in Sentences (supposed to evaluate “grammatical sensitivity”,

p. 349); Paired Associates (to assess “rote memory ability”, p. 349, for vocabulary items). Tests taken during the experiment aroused more anxiety than course exams.

In their attempt to discover which cognitive, affective, personality, and demographic variables best predicted achievement in the foreign language, Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000) used “course grades” which were arrived at “by averaging scores from such items as examinations, quizzes, dictations, oral interviews, homework, composition, and participation” (p. 13). Language anxiety (after academic achievement) was the variable which was observed to correlate most significantly with foreign language achievement. The correlation between foreign language achievement and academic achievement was positive:  $r = .37^{***}$ , and the correlation between foreign language achievement and language anxiety was negative:  $r = -.33^{***}$  ( $^{***}p < .001$ , p. 9). In the multiple regression analysis conducted by these researchers, academic achievement was found to be the best predictor of foreign language achievement, accounting for 11.5% of the variance, while foreign language anxiety was the “next best predictor, explain[ing] 10.5% of the variance” (p. 10).

Having surveyed works on anxiety in which a single or multiple ways of measuring language achievement were used, I opted for the latter procedure. It seemed more reliable to judge students’ achievement in several ways and at several points in time, and not assessing it using one measure only on one particular occasion, especially in view of Horwitz et al.’s (1986) remark that highly anxious students often “go ... blank” (p. 128) before tests: it would surely be fairer on the students to evaluate them in several ways at different times. So I took into account my participants’ performance in English at pre-University level (usually the ‘*Selectividad*’ exam), and in addition I applied an international proficiency test at the beginning of the study. I used my participants’ ‘final’ grades (the average of five written exams), in the sense that they

coincided with the end of my study, that is, the end of the ‘*cuatrimestre*’, and also grades and performance criteria on an oral test.

*1.5.2.1. Language Anxiety, Self-Perceptions about Achievement, and Expectations of Success in Language Learning*

I wished to examine not only my students’ actual linguistic achievement, but also their estimations of their own language achievement and their expectations about how they would fare in exams and tests. This is because anxiety has been seen to be associated not only with students’ actual achievement as assessed by grades, tests, and/or other measures, but also with their self-perceptions of achievement and expectations of success in the learning of the foreign or second language. So I surveyed works in which self-perceptions and their potential relationships with achievement were taken into account.

Horwitz (1986) found that correlations between FLCAS scores and students’ actual foreign language exam marks were similar to those encountered between FLCAS scores and their expectations of marks (p. 561). In order to counteract anticipated poor results on tests, anxious language students might study too much. Horwitz et al. (1986) gave as an example of this tendency the case of a learner of Spanish who studied eight hours every day and yet did badly on her exam (p. 127).

In a study involving Anglophone students of French, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993b) discovered that there were higher correlations between French Class Anxiety (FCAS) and self-assessed proficiency (“Can do Self-Ratings”) on three skills (Speak, Understand, and Read) than between French Class Anxiety and actual grade (an “Objective measure”) (p. 180). Correlations between FCAS and “Can do” ratings for Speak, Under[stand], and Read were  $-.44^{**}$ ,  $-.46^{**}$ , and  $-.48^{**}$ , respectively ( $**p <$

.01), while the correlation between FCAS and Grade was  $-.41^{**}$  ( $**p < .01$ , p. 180). The authors speculated that this occurred because “quite likely such measures [i.e., students’ self-ratings] of anxiety reflect concern over perceptions of inadequacy” (p. 185).

### *1.5.3. Language Anxiety: a ‘Cause’ or an ‘Effect’ of Language Achievement?*

As a teacher observing at first hand students’ unease, nervousness, and indeed distress in many language-learning situations, I wished to find out from other investigators if these reactions might be attributable to poor language ability, or conversely, whether poor language ability might be responsible for these reactions, as mentioned at the beginning of this section.

Many writings about language anxiety suggest that it is difficult to ascertain whether anxiety is a cause or an effect of poor foreign language and second language learning and achievement, although (Horwitz, 2001) points out that when using the FLCAS, investigators have found a “consistent moderate negative correlation” (p. 115) between this scale and performance.

Researchers into language anxiety who have used correlational procedures have been unable to confirm the directionality of cause and effect. For example, Aida (1994), who used both correlation and analyses of variance in a study involving learners of Japanese, discovered that students who were more highly anxious tended to receive lower grades ( $r = -.38$ ,  $p < .01$ , p. 162), but maintained that “due to the correlational nature of this study, the results of the ANOVA do not prove that a cause-effect relationship exists between anxiety and achievement in Japanese” (p. 164)

Other researchers (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a), summarising their survey of anxiety studies in relation to ways of evaluating language proficiency, with different

populations and from various theoretical viewpoints, wrote that “it has been shown that anxiety negatively effects [sic] performance in the second language” (p. 102), but later in the same article they asserted that the “most satisfactory solution” (p. 109) to the problem of cause and effect is Levitt’s (1980) model of reciprocal causation. They further explained causation between language anxiety and achievement in the following way:

After several language experiences with the second language context, the student forms attitudes that are specific to the situation, that is, emotions and attitudes about learning a new language. If these experiences are negative, foreign language anxiety may begin to develop. As negative experiences persist, foreign language anxiety may become a regular occurrence and the student begins to expect to be nervous and to perform poorly. This foreign language anxiety is based on negative expectations that lead to worry and emotionality. This leads to cognitive interference from self-derogatory cognition that produces performance deficits. Poor performance and negative emotional reactions reinforce the expectations of anxiety and failure, further anxiety being a reaction to this perceived threat. (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a, p. 110)

#### *1.5.3.1. A ‘Vicious Circle’ in the Relationships Between Language Anxiety and Achievement*

It was especially interesting to discover that several researchers have embraced MacIntyre and Gardner’s (1994a, p. 110) position, cited in the previous paragraph, maintaining that there is a recursive effect or a ‘vicious circle’ of influences between language anxiety and achievement in the foreign language and in the second language.

Saito and Samimy (1996), in their examination of Horwitz et al.'s (1986) construct of language anxiety in Japanese involving learners at three levels of instruction (beginner, intermediate, and advanced), found that highly anxious students “tend[ed] to overstudy” (p. 246), as did Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 127), but that frequently this extra time spent studying did not pay dividends as regards performance, resulting in a “downward spiral of ever more effort for diminishing results” (p. 246).

MacIntyre et al. (1997), in a study about language learners' self-perceptions of achievement, submitted that more highly-anxious students are prone to underestimate their linguistic abilities, and that as these students fail to see that they are making progress in language learning, they might be “more reluctant to speak” (p. 278), thus damaging their potential performance through lack of practice, and starting a vicious circle of deficits in which language anxiety and poorer competence seem to fuel each other.

In an exploration into factors associated with foreign language anxiety (Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999), high anxiety was related to expectations of poorer course grades, lower perceived self-worth and lower perceived scholastic competence. These negative expectations were to some extent based on fact, but anxiety seemed to lead to expectations that were even more negative, leading in turn to decreased effort and poor motivation. The notion of a ‘vicious circle’ was again expressed in the possibility of a ‘see-saw’ effect seen in the “recursive relationship” between anxiety and self-perceptions (p. 228).

The idea of a “vicious circle” of learning problems centring around self-confidence and language anxiety also came to light in a study by Cheng et al. (1999, p. 437), in which the authors attempted to tease out different elements of anxiety in speaking and in writing. In their estimation, students with poor self-confidence are likely to feel little

assurance about their capability to learn another language. These low expectations as regards L2 success will give rise to anxiety, which will be likely to encumber their performance, leading to feelings of even greater insecurity.

## I.6. Investigations into Language Anxiety in Relation to the Four Skills, and to Vocabulary

This section about anxiety and the learning of the four language skills and of vocabulary is of importance because my empirical study is based on the language anxiety experienced in students who were taking an English course which focused on the four skills and on a specific vocabulary area (that related to the world of work), and whose ‘*examen parcial*’ (partial exam) would test both the four skills and vocabulary. There follows a review of some inquiries which have dealt with aspects of anxiety that are very specific to the language learning and teaching experience, that is, in the so-called four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), and in vocabulary.

### *I.6.1. Language Anxiety in the Listening Skill*

Quite a lot of attention has been paid to the anxiety suffered by many learners when listening to the foreign or second language. Krashen (1976) theorised that listening or the extracting meaning from messages in L2 was the “primary process in the development of a second language” (Horwitz et al. 1986, p. 127), and postulated that anxiety formed an “affective filter” (Krashen, 1980) that interfered with an individual’s capacity to receive and process oral messages successfully. Indeed, one definition of language anxiety given by two of the foremost researchers in this field (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a) involves not only speaking, but also listening: “Language anxiety can be defined as the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (p. 284).

In Horwitz et al.'s (1986) pivotal study, counsellors at the Learning Skills Centre at the University of Texas reported that many students were anxious when listening to the L2, and had “difficulties in discriminating the sounds and structures of a target language message” (p. 126). One student said that he heard “only a loud buzz” (p. 126) when his instructor was speaking, and anxious students also told of problems with comprehending the content of L2 messages and with understanding their teachers in “extended target language utterances” (p. 126).

One of the components of foreign language anxiety, as proposed by the same authors (Horwitz et al., 1986), is “communication apprehension”, that is, a “type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people” (p. 127). A manifestation of communication apprehension is “difficulty ... in listening to or learning a spoken message (receiver anxiety)” (p. 127).

In the same study, the authors reported that in answering the FLCAS, fewer students claimed to be anxious about listening than about speaking, but even so, the proportion was quite considerable. Over one third (35%) of the participants expressed their fear of not being able to “understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language” (item 4), and over a quarter (27%) said they were nervous when they did not “understand every word” uttered by the teacher (item 29) (Horwitz et al., 1986, pp. 129-130).

Vogely (1998) carried out a descriptive study involving Anglophone university students of Spanish, centring exclusively on what she called “listening comprehension anxiety” (p. 67). She aimed to report classroom practices that aroused foreign language listening comprehension (LC) anxiety in students, and to offer solutions that might alleviate listening anxiety as proposed by students. On a questionnaire, students wrote whether or not they experienced anxiety when listening in language class, what things

made them feel anxious during listening exercises, and what they thought helped reduce listening anxiety.

With regard to student responses about sources of anxiety, four principal categories emerged: “(a) LC anxiety associated with characteristics of FL [foreign language] input; (b) LC anxiety associated with processing-related aspects of FL; (c) LC anxiety associated with instructional factors; and (d) LC anxiety associated with attributes of the teacher or learner” (p. 70).

As far as features of input were concerned, the speed of delivery was the most frequently reported cause of LC anxiety, followed by bad diction, variety of accents, and teachers who spoke too quietly. As to level of difficulty, exercises that were too complex, unknown vocabulary, difficult syntax and unfamiliar topics were other sources of LC anxiety. Students were anxious if they did not know what was required of them in the listening activity or why. Some students claimed that they needed the help of some visual aid to help with the listening task. Students reported feeling anxious if they could only listen to texts twice before having to respond. This feeling was particularly prevalent in listening tests. This study was notable because it focused on students’ comments given freely on a questionnaire. In this way many perceived sources of anxiety in classroom activities and tests came to light that the author might not have encountered if she had devised a questionnaire from her own perspective.

The following study was noteworthy because it combined both qualitative techniques of data collection about listening anxiety (as in the previous report by Vogely, 1998), and quantitatively through scales. In her investigation conducted in order to explore the relationship between listening comprehension and anxiety in 238 Korean university students of English, Kim (2000) designed an instrument for measuring foreign language listening anxiety, the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety

Scale (FLLAS), consisting of 33 items, each with five Likert-type responses (from 1 “*strongly disagree*” to 5 “*strongly agree*”). There was a possible range of scores that was identical to that of the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986): 33 to 165. The FLLAS had a reliability coefficient of .93 (p. 64). Three sample items from this scale are:

“9. During English listening tests, I get nervous and confused when I don’t understand every word.

20. I would rather not have to listen to people speak English at all.

21. It’s difficult for me to listen to English when there is even a little bit of background noise” (Kim, 2000, pp. 198-199).

The mean score for the FLLAS was 107.62 (p. 79). There was a statistically significant and negative correlation between proficiency in English language listening (as measured by a TOEFL examination) and listening anxiety:  $r = -.364^{**}$  ( $**p < .01$ , p. 113). Principal components analysis produced two factors: “1) Tension and worry over English listening, and 2) Lack of confidence in listening” (p. 141). Multiple stepwise regression results showed that the “*Lack of confidence in listening* component [of the FLLAS] was the most significant predictor of listening proficiency level” (p. 143).

Responses to open-ended questions and in interviews in the same study revealed that learners were nervous about the following: (a) the listening text (“speed, pronunciation, intonation, acoustic conditions, length of a listening text, level of vocabulary”, p. 143), (b) the interlocutors (gender or number of speakers, previous knowledge, learning style of the listener), and (c) the process of listening (“the effectiveness or choice of listening strategies”, p. 143). Kim also found that learners were “sensitive to both the type of listening passages and kinds of tasks” (p. 151). Anxiety was aroused by listening to authentic texts such as a news bulletin, and by such related features as “background noise, hesitations, turn-taking, false starts, or irregular pauses which occur in natural speech” (p 151), the author speculating that this was

because participants (who were taking English as a compulsory or elective subject as part of their humanities or science degree courses, p. 57) were not exposed to authentic listening passages until they reached higher levels. Dictation and identifying details of listening tasks also caused tension. Most participants reported that “sheer delivery speed” (p. 152) made them feel nervous, and believed that they should look for opportunities to listen themselves and that teachers should orientate them in order to help them “learn ... listening skills” (p. 152).

The next work also examined listening anxiety from a quantitative viewpoint, using two scales, and also taking into account some student variables, such as gender. Elkhafaifi (2005), in an investigation about listening anxiety involving 233 North American university learners of Arabic, used a 20-item listening anxiety scale, which was different from Kim’s (2000), but also called the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS), and which was based on Saito et al.’s Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (1999, p. 211). Elkhafaifi employed this scale, as well as the FLCAS, General Grade, Listening Grade, and several learner variables, in order to ascertain whether listening anxiety was distinct from general language anxiety, whether learning anxiety and listening anxiety were related to general language performance, and to listening achievement in the foreign language. Elkhafaifi encountered a statistically significant and positive association between general language anxiety and listening anxiety ( $r = .66^{**}$ ), indicating that “students with higher levels of FL anxiety tended to have higher levels of listening anxiety and vice versa” (Elkhafaifi, 2005, p. 211). Both listening anxiety and classroom anxiety correlated significantly and negatively with General Grade and with Listening Grade. Pearson correlation results for FLLAS and General Grade, and for FLLAS and Listening Grade were  $r = -.65^{**}$ , and  $r = -.70^{**}$ , respectively ( $**p < .01$ ). Correlation results for FLCAS and General Grade,

and for FLCAS and Listening Grade were  $r = -.54^{**}$ , and  $r = -.53^{**}$ , respectively ( $**p < .01$ , p. 212).

Elkhafaifi submitted that there was a “reasonable amount of overlap” (p. 214) between the two anxiety measures, as they shared about 44% of the variance, but about 56% of the variance was not shared. This led him to assert that listening anxiety was a distinct phenomenon from general foreign language anxiety. In addition, he contrasted his findings concerning differences in general anxiety as regards gender (females in the present study being found to be more apprehensive than males in general anxiety) with Aida’s (1994) results, in which no such differences were found. Elkhafaifi pointed out that the dissipation of Arabic anxiety (in general and in listening) observed in his higher-level participants was in line with MacIntyre and Gardner’s (1991a) results, but not with Saito and Samimy’s (1996) findings.

### *1.6.2. Language Anxiety in the Speaking Skill*

For many years I have been particularly concerned to observe students’ apprehension during oral activities and especially during oral tests, so I was very interested to read about how other researchers had delved into this issue. The literature suggests that the speaking skill is extremely anxiety-provoking in many language students and that it is often to be seen to arouse more anxiety than the other skills. Indeed, Daly (1991, cited in von Wörde, 2003) reported that in some individuals “fear of giving a speech in public exceeded such phobias as fear of snakes, elevators, and heights” (p. 3). Anxiety reactions suffered by many students when speaking or when being asked to speak by the teacher in the foreign language classroom include “distortion of sounds, inability to reproduce the intonation and rhythm of the language, ‘freezing up’ when called on to perform, and forgetting words or phrases just learned or simply refusing to

speak and remaining silent” (Young, 1991, p. 430). The same author cites an anonymous student’s lamentation on speaking in the foreign language in the classroom: “I dread going to Spanish class. My teacher is kind of nice and it can be fun, but I hate it when the teacher calls on me to speak. I freeze up and can’t think of what to say or how to say it. And my pronunciation is terrible. Sometimes I think people don’t even understand what I’m saying” (Young, 1990, p. 539).

Horwitz et al. (1986) found that in counselling sessions at the Learning Skills Centre at the University of Texas students said that they had most problems in the listening and the speaking skills, with “[d]ifficulty in speaking in class [being] probably the most frequently cited concern of the anxious foreign language students” (p. 126). Learners said that they did not feel too apprehensive during drills or about speaking if they had time to plan their spoken interventions, but would “freeze” (p. 126) if they had to speak spontaneously. In this study, almost half the participants (49%) agreed with FLCAS item 9 (“I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class”), a third (33%) concurred with item 27 (“I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class”), over a quarter (28%) expressed agreement with item 24 (“I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students”), and almost a half (47%) disagreed with item 18 (“I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class”) (p. 129).

Classroom activities and the learning/teaching environment seem to bear directly on students’ anxiety and on their performance in speaking. The majority of Young’s (1990) university-level and high-school learners of Spanish indicated that they felt less uncomfortable in speaking activities when they came to class “prepared”, and when they were “not the only person answering a question” (p. 544). Most would prefer to offer responses orally themselves “instead of being called on to give an answer” (p.

544). The majority of students said that they would be less nervous about oral exams if they had “more practice speaking in class”, and most expressed a wish to have their errors corrected (p. 544). When participative classroom activities were ordered according to comfort/nervousness felt by students (Moderately Relaxed, Neither Anxious Nor Relaxed, Moderately Anxious) four out of five Moderately Anxious activities involved the speaking skill: “Present a prepared dialog in front of the class. Make an oral presentation or skit in front of the class. Speak in front of the class. Role play a situation spontaneously in front of the class” (p. 547). Koch and Terrell (1991) found that Natural Approach activities (which paradoxically are “designed to minimize stress”, Arnold & Brown, 1999, p. 6), such as role-plays and charades, aroused a great deal of anxiety in their students.

In addition, anxiety has been reported to influence not only grammatical precision but also interpretive ability. In Steinberg and Horwitz’s (1986) investigation, reported in MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a), involving “induced anxiety” (p. 107), Spanish-speaking learners of English were asked to describe pictures. Half of the participants were welcomed sympathetically by the interviewer in a comfortable environment (in an attempt to put them at their ease), while the other half were received coldly in an uncomfortable setting with a video camera filming them (in an attempt to arouse nervousness and apprehension). The researchers measured the amounts of “denotive content” and “interpretive content” (p. 107) in participants’ descriptions and found that those in the anxiety-inducement group employed significantly less interpretive language than did the participants who had not undergone anxiety-inducement. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) considered that these findings “suggest[ed] a reluctance on the part of anxious students to express personally relevant information in a foreign language conversation” (p. 107).

Hortwitz et al. (1986) noted that students who are apprehensive about making mistakes in front of others “seem to feel constantly tested and to perceive every correction as a failure” (p. 130). The same researchers recounted how anxious language students frequently “forget” what they “know” in a test or in a speaking activity (p. 126). Indeed, speaking tests seem to be particularly anxiety-provoking, as they probably arouse the three constituents of language anxiety, as proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986), communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety, all at the same time. As MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) point out: “Foreign language tests, given orally, likely evoke test anxiety as well as communication apprehension” (p. 105).

The next article, by Young (1986), is worthy of note because Pearson correlations were used to explore relationships between language anxiety and oral performance. As we have seen, this type of analytical technique does not allow us to talk about cause and effect, but the author subsequently carried out partial correlations in order to find out if indeed language anxiety was influencing poorer oral results. The study involved 60, presumably Anglophone, university students whose main subject was French, German, or Spanish. Participants were given an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), and two months later 32 of these participants were administered a “dictation test” employed to evaluate “subjects’ global language proficiency” (p. 441). After both the interview and the dictation, students’ completed four anxiety measures: the State Anxiety Inventory (SAI, Spielberger, 1983), the Cognitive Interference Questionnaire (CIQ, Wine, 1980), a Self-Report of Anxiety (SRA) measure, which used a scale of 1-7, 1 indicating “no anxiety” and 7 indicating “high anxiety” (p. 442), devised especially for this investigation, and the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale of Reactions (FLASR), which included some items from Horwitz’s (1985) Scale of Reactions to Foreign Language Class, and some items created especially for this study.

Young encountered negative and statistically significant Pearson Correlation Coefficients between the Oral Proficiency Interview and three out of the four anxiety measures: for the SAI, it was  $r = -.32, p = .01$ , for the SRA it was  $r = -.32, p = .01$ , and for the FLASR it was  $r = -.38, p = .01$  (p. 443). When partial correlations were carried out controlling for ability scores, however, correlations ceased to be significant, leading Young to assert that “once the effect of an individual’s language proficiency was accounted for, oral performance would no longer be expected to decrease as anxiety increased” (p. 443), and that “ability, not anxiety, [was] the more important variable affecting OPI scores” (p. 443). She attributed this result to the fact that the examination was unofficial, and so the participants were “not terribly anxious” (p. 443), and she called for this study to be replicated within the setting of an official exam. If anxiety were still seen to be significantly and negatively correlated with oral performance in such circumstances, Young believed that “this could be due to *test anxiety* and not necessarily to anxiety from speaking in a foreign language” (p. 443). She also speculated that individuals with poorer language proficiency would experience higher levels of anxiety, and urged more research to be carried out into the “interactive, cause/effect aspects of the anxiety/proficiency relationship” (p. 443).

Like Young (1986), Phillips (1990, 1992) also attempted to assess the influence of anxiety on students’ performance in an oral test, but went further than Young. She not only carried out correlations between oral exam grades and language anxiety but also evaluated eight criteria pertaining to the oral exam, and tried to find out if aspects of language ability (and not just anxiety) might be influencing poorer grades, by means of partial correlations. In addition, she conducted analyses of variance to discover if there were significant differences in mean oral exam grades in three anxiety groups (of low, of moderate, and of high anxiety). Finally, she conducted one-to-one interviews to

find out about highly anxious students' reactions to the oral exam. Her two research questions were "What effect does anxiety have on students' oral exam performance as measured by the test scores and several performance variables related to accuracy and amount of comprehensible speech?" (pp. 15-16), and "What do highly anxious students say about the experience of taking an oral exam in a foreign language?" (p. 16).

Phillips's 44 Anglophone participants were studying French as a required subject, with ages ranging from 17 to 21. Thirty-five were women, and nine were men. A four-skills methodology was employed in class and ample time was dedicated to "communicative practice of the type required for the oral exam, e.g., role-play and open-ended speech acts" (1992, p. 16).

On the first day of class a questionnaire was administered in order to identify students who experienced "high anxiety levels during oral class work and oral testing" (p. 23). This questionnaire had been given in a previous study of Phillips's (1990, p. 213). On the basis of responses given on this questionnaire, and taking into account "grades received during the previous semester's French class, placement test scores, or the professor's subjective evaluation" (p. 23), six students (three-high ability, and three low-ability) were selected for interviews about anxiety experienced in oral activities.

During the third week of class, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986) was administered. Towards the end of the semester, the teacher examined a list of all the participating students, and "rank-order[ed] them without referring to their grades according to her evaluation of their global language competence in the four skill areas" (p. 22). Phillips pointed out that "ties were allowed" (p. 22), and she ordered her 44 participants into eighteen levels.

During the eleventh week of the semester, oral exams were held individually between the professor and each student. The exam was "designed to be communicative

and open-ended” (p. 16), and was in two parts. In the first part the student was invited to “talk freely” (p. 16) about a cultural topic, the teacher giving prompts if necessary. The second part was a role-play between the student and teacher, in which the student was “expected to lead the conversation as much as possible” (p. 16). This was devised to elicit certain L2 structures. All the exams were recorded on audio-tape.

Immediately after their oral exam, the six selected highly anxious students were asked to stay behind and talk about their “feelings and thoughts experienced *as they took the exam*” (p. 17). These think-alouds were also recorded and later transcribed.

Oral exam scores were noted. Tapescripts of the oral exams were typed and an analysis of eight performance criteria pertaining to each exam was made, following theories and procedures by Hunt (1965), by Larsen-Freeman (1983), and by Loban (1976). These were “1) percent of total words in communication units (CUs)”, a communication unit being “basically an independent clause with all its modifiers”, and “2) average length of CUs” (p. 16), the first aimed at measuring quantity, and the second purporting to gauge the quality of oral production, the author speculating that highly apprehensive students would not utter so many CUs as their more relaxed peers. Other variables were “3) percent of *error-free* CUs” and “4) percent of words in correct CUs” (p. 17). All other extraneous words and parts of words were considered a “maze” (p. 17), that is, unconnected or superfluous language or words in L1 (based on Loban, 1976). The following two variables, reflecting students’ lack of assurance in L2, were measured by “5) percent of total words in mazes” and by “6) average length of mazes” (p. 17). Two final criteria were assessed in the analysis of each transcribed exam: “7) number of target structures”, and “8) number of dependent clauses produced by the students” (p. 17), in line with the author’s speculation that anxious learners would produce fewer complicated grammatical structures.

Correlation results between Oral Exam Grades and FLCAS scores showed a statistically significant and negative association:  $r = -.40, p < .01$  (p. 18), suggesting that students who exhibited higher levels of language anxiety performed more poorly in their oral exam than did their more relaxed counterparts. When partial correlations were carried out, controlling for students' Written Exam Average, for Teacher Ranking, and for Written Exam Average and Teacher Ranking taken together, the correlation between the Oral Exam Grade and FLCAS no longer reached statistical significance except in the case of Written Exam Average:  $r = -.28, p < .04$  (p. 18).

Correlational analyses conducted between FLCAS scores and the eight Performance Criteria variables showed four negative and statistically significant correlations: for Average length of Communication Unit:  $r = -.34, p < .02$ ; for Percent of total words in Communication Units:  $r = -.38, p < .01$ ; for Number of dependent clauses used:  $r = -.38, p < .01$ ; and for Number of target structures used:  $r = -.39, p < .01$ , “confirm[ing] that students with higher language anxiety tended to say less, tended to produce shorter CUs, and to use fewer dependent clauses and target structures than low anxiety students” (p. 18).

Partial correlations conducted on these four statistically significant correlations controlling for Written Exam Average, for Teacher Ranking, and for Written Exam Average and Teacher Ranking taken together, showed that three of them remained significant when Written Exam Average was eliminated: Percent of total words in Communication Units ( $r = -.30, p < .03$ ), Number of dependent clauses used ( $r = -.30, p < .03$ ), and Number of target structures used ( $r = -.32, p < .02$ ), leading Phillips to submit that “language anxiety was related to the three performance variables for this oral test while ability contributed significantly to all performance criteria” (p. 18).

An analysis of variance involving students grouped at three levels of anxiety (high, moderate, and low), showed significant differences among groups for mean scores on two of the eight performance variables. For number of dependent clauses, there was a significant difference between the high and low anxiety groups ( $F = 3.37$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = .04$ ), and for average number of words per CU, there was a significant difference “between students in low and moderate anxiety groups and between students in low and high anxiety groups” (p. 18) ( $F = 4.76$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .02$ ). Phillips asserted that the low-anxious students tended to produce a significantly greater amount of dependent clauses and significantly more extensive communication units than those in the other two groups (moderate and high anxiety).

Results of the interviews held after the oral exam bore out that both high- and low-ability anxious students had found the oral exam to be a “very unpleasant experience” (pp. 18-19), even though the teacher had attempted to make students feel relaxed, and topics and structures had been amply practised before the exam. Anxious students of both abilities used words like “blank,” “panicky,” “nervous” and “intimidated” to describe their feelings (p. 19). One high ability student even broke down while answering the first exam question, and recording had to be suspended while she composed herself. She was “reluctant” to listen to the recording of the exam, and merely talked about her feelings: she had felt so nervous because she “couldn’t remember how to say things”, and she could not stop thinking that she was a “failure” (p. 19). Even so, she received a very high mark (90) on the test.

The author speculated that the reasons for the “modest negative correlations” (p. 20) encountered between language anxiety and students’ performance on the oral exam may have been, for instance, that the FLCAS did not specifically evaluate anxiety associated with the exam, that the reliability of the exam was not assured, and because

of the “unknown internal consistency for this administration of the FLCAS” (p. 20). Phillips could have tested for the reliability of the FLCAS as it was administered in her study, and more faith could have been placed thereby in her findings.

I was very interested in examining language anxiety and its potential influence on outcomes in an oral test in my students, and so I found Phillips’s work to be very useful. First, her research gave me several ideas for part of the procedure of my study, such as detecting highly anxious students by means of their comments on a questionnaire (Phillips, 1990) and not only through FLCAS scores. Second, Phillips’s work provided me with an instrument, that is, her oral exam in French, that I could translate and use in the oral test I planned to give my students (1992, p. 26). Third, she offered a method for assessing eight performance criteria belonging to that oral test, based on Hunt’s (1965), Larsen-Freeman’s (1983), and Loban’s (1976) ideas and procedures (Phillips, 1990, pp. 94-96, 199-207). The oral exams, with teacher’s prompts for the questions about culture, and with student’s cues with teacher protocol for the role-play (Phillips, 1992, p. 26) are presented in Appendix C.

In an interview study, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) compared language anxiety in the oral skill to perfectionism, taking into account that perfectionists have excessively ambitious performance objectives and are very self-critical, and that in second or foreign language learning such demands can foster language anxiety.

Citing Brophy (1999), these authors described several characteristics of perfectionists that were similar to features of anxious learners:

- “[1] performance standards that are impossibly high and unnecessarily rigid;
- [2] motivation more from fear of failure than from pursuit of success;
- [3] measurement of one’s own worth entirely in terms of productivity and accomplishment;

[4] all-or-nothing evaluations that label anything other than perfection as a failure;

[5] difficulty in taking credit or pleasure, even when success is achieved, because such achievement is merely what is expected;

[6] procrastination on getting started on work that will be judged; and

[7] long delays in completing assignments, or repeatedly starting over on assignments, because the work must be perfect from the beginning and continue to be perfect as one goes along” (Brophy, 1991, p.1).

Gregersen and Horwitz’s purpose was to “identify instances of perfectionism” (p. 564) in anxious language learners, and to ascertain whether such indications of perfectionism were less likely to occur in low-anxious language students. The study also examined students’ responses to their oral interviews, which were recorded on video.

Eight students were chosen from a group of 78 second-year Spanish-speaking students of English language at a Chilean university to take part in the study: four high-anxious students and four low-anxious students, selected on the basis of their Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986) scores.

The investigation was carried out in two stages. The first stage was a videotaped individual interview in English, about ordinary everyday topics such as family, holidays, and hobbies. After about a week, the second stage took place in which students viewed the recordings and, in their mother-tongue (Spanish), gave their reactions to their interviews. Transcribed interviews were analysed for comments illustrating perfectionism and non-perfectionism, according to Brophy’s (1999) characterization: “reactions to personal performance standards, procrastination, emotional responses to evaluation, and error-consciousness” (p. 565).

It was found that highly anxious students were reticent about discussing their interviews and often steered the conversation towards more general topics such as how they postponed assignments, and tended to avoid talking about their oral performance

on the recording. One highly competent, though very anxious, participant's comments reflected her unfeasible demands upon herself and her dissatisfaction with her (extremely good) performance, when she reiterated, "I believe that if I study a little more..." (p. 566). Low-anxious participants were willing to talk about how they fared in the interview, admitting that they had made mistakes but were less stringent with themselves, apparently satisfied with feeling calm and unconcerned about being hindered by their lack of knowledge. One low-anxious student commented, "Sure, I had some gaps when I tried to think of the right word in English and respond, but in the end I felt relaxed." Another said: "It was like I had difficulty in finding words, and this slowed me down, but it wasn't stressful" (p. 567). In contrast to their high-anxious counterparts, low-anxious participants did not mention "either procrastination or work avoidance" (p. 567).

The four highly-anxious participants were critical of their own mistakes and compared their performances unfavourably with those of fellow-students, and one student acknowledged peers' ability to stay relaxed even in the face of language problems. Speaking in front of many people was a source of apprehension for one highly-anxious student. Low-anxious students did not mention "perceived evaluation by others" or "looking foolish" in front of other people (p. 567).

Worry about making mistakes figured strongly among comments by highly-anxious students: they tried to steer clear of errors and tended to exaggerate their importance, whereas low-anxious participants were not upset by them. Both high- and low-anxious students were similar in that they recognised their errors, but their emotional reactions were different, the former students being concerned about mistakes ("I have problems with verbs, and I have yet to improve my vocabulary", p. 567), the latter students accepting them cheerfully ("I had some grammatical errors, but small

ones. I was fine. I am quite fluent and spontaneous”, p. 567). Some of the high-anxious participants attributed their mistakes to feeling nervous, while low-anxious students never gave this as a reason for their mistakes. In line with other research (MacIntyre et al., 1997), anxious participants in this study “tended to overestimate the number and seriousness of their errors” (p. 568), while low-anxious students took them lightly.

The investigators asserted that results showed that language anxiety and perfectionism are similar in some ways. All the subjects (both high- and low-anxiety) were proficient language learners, but exhibited different responses to their video-recorded interviews.

### *1.6.3. Language Anxiety in the Reading Skill*

Some researchers have looked into the question of whether anxiety in the reading skill is a separate kind of anxiety from more general language anxiety, and have been interested in exploring anxiety in reading in a variety of languages.

Saito et al. (1999), who examined anxiety in the reading skill in relation to three foreign languages, asked the following research questions:

- “1. Does FL reading anxiety exist as a phenomenon distinguishable from general FL anxiety?
2. Do the levels of FL reading anxiety and general FL anxiety vary according to the specific target language?
3. Do learner perceptions of the difficulty of their particular target language relate to their levels of FL reading anxiety?” (p. 202).

Participants in this study were 383 first-semester students enrolled in courses of French (192 students), Japanese (114 students) and Russian (77 students) at a North American University, whose mother tongue was presumably English. A higher percentage of students who were studying French were taking it as a compulsory subject

than those who were studying the other two languages: French, 62%; Japanese, 24%; Russian, 41%.

Instruments used were the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986), and an instrument developed especially to measure foreign language reading anxiety: the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale, FLRAS (20 items, 5-point Likert-scale). It presented an internal consistency of .86 (p. 204). Three sample items are:

“4. I feel intimidated whenever I see a whole page of (French, Russian, Japanese) in front of me.

10. By the time you get past the funny letters and symbols in (French, Russian, Japanese), it’s hard to remember what you’re reading about.

13. I feel confident when I am reading in (French, Russian, Japanese)” (Saito et al., 1999, pp. 205-206).

End-of-term marks were used as a “global measure of performance” (p. 204).

As to research question 1, students who had higher levels of foreign language anxiety were also more reading-anxious. A Pearson correlational analysis that was conducted between FLCAS scores and FLRAS scores showed a correlation of .64,  $p < .01$  (p. 207), Saito et al. pointing out that 59% of the variance was not shared by the two types of anxiety, “a finding that support[ed] the differentiation of the two constructs (discriminant validity)” (p. 211). Also, participants who were more reading-anxious did significantly more poorly in their final exams.

Regarding research question 2, in the participants of this study, general foreign language anxiety was not associated with the language being studied, whereas reading anxiety was related to the target language. Learners of Japanese (a noncognate language) were the most anxious readers, followed by learners of French (a cognate language), then learners of Russian (a semicognate language). The authors speculated as to why Russian did not provoke such high levels of anxiety as French: one reason may

be that the system of Cyrillic symbols is “phonetically dependable” (p. 213). They also suggested that learners of Japanese, who tended not to be concerned by the target culture in comparison with learners of the other two languages, may have taken a “conscious decision” (p. 213) to learn that language and were prepared for difficulties posed by the culture and by the writing system. As regards general feelings of anxiety about reading in the target language, students of French and Russian were more self-assured.

As far as research question 3 is concerned, after considering students’ sensitivities to problems posed by reading in the three target languages (French was seen as fairly easy, Russian came next, then Japanese), the researchers assigned the participants to three groups, depending on how difficult they thought reading to be in the language they were studying. Reading anxiety became more acute in accordance with perceived difficulty in reading in the target language.

The authors reported some student expressions about reading difficulties in the foreign language, based on their FLRAS responses. Many reading-anxious students “[felt] overwhelmed when confronted with a FL text” (p. 214). Anxious students often felt bewildered when they could not comprehend every word of a reading text and were very concerned about reading about cultural aspects which were unknown to them. Such students tended to translate every word when approaching a text and many felt anxious when they came across unknown grammatical structures. Reading anxiety seemed to be connected to the target language and associated with the different writing systems: French (cognate), Russian (semicognate), and Japanese (noncognate).

Saito et al. asserted that it is difficult to say whether foreign language reading anxiety is “the cause or effect” (p. 215) of students’ reading problems, but stated that in this investigation, anxiety seemed to stem from reading, not vice versa. Anxiety seemed

to be a “mediating variable that intervenes at some point between the decoding of a text and the actual processing of textual meaning” (Saito et al., 1999, p. 215), the authors suggesting that counselling students in advance about anxiety may help relieve it. They also said that the fact that students of French displayed highest levels of general language anxiety might be related to their language learning history. These learners may have had less favourable results in the past, considering that the majority of them were still studying it as a compulsory subject. They may have been more poorly motivated than learners of Russian or Japanese, which are generally considered as more difficult languages.

While the previous study examined reading anxiety in three foreign languages, a later investigation (Sellers, 2000) concentrated on one foreign language only, Spanish.

Sellers’s research questions were:

- “1. Does reading anxiety exist as a phenomenon distinguishable from general foreign language anxiety?
2. Do highly anxious readers remember more or less content of the reading passage than their less-anxious classmates?
3. Are highly anxious readers more likely to recall certain types of information than are less-anxious readers?
4. Do highly anxious readers experience more time in ‘off-task’ preoccupations than less-anxious readers?” (Sellers, 2000, p. 513).

Participants were 89 Anglophone university students of Spanish at two levels: Level 1 consisted of 53 students taking a third semester course (having had an average of 54 university-level hours of Spanish study); Level 2 contained 36 students who were taking advanced-level speaking in Spanish (having had an average of 216 university-level hours of Spanish study).

In class time students answered the Reading Anxiety Scale, RAS, (based on Zbornik & Wallbrown’s, 1991, instrument), a 21-item scale, designed to evaluate how

anxious learners felt when reading Spanish, and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1991), the 33-item scale which refers to language anxiety in general. For both scales, participants indicated the degree to which they agreed/disagreed with certain statements, on a 5-point Likert format. Three RAS items are as follows:

“7. I start to panic when I am asked to read a text orally in my Spanish class.

12. Looking at books in Spanish makes me upset and/or nervous.

16. I enjoy reading in Spanish even though I may not understand everything I read” (Sellers, 2000, p. 521).

Then participants read a text called “*Extinción masiva*” and completed a Cognitive Interference Questionnaire (Sarason, 1978), which indicated what kinds of thoughts they had while reading, as well as those that undermined attention to the reading of the text. They went on to complete two comprehension measures: a “free written recall protocol” (p. 514) in L1 about the text, and 10 multiple-choice questions. They also filled in a background questionnaire about their academic history.

The reading text was divided into a “pausal units hierarchy” (p. 514), in each which phrase, which would normally have a pause at the beginning and at the end of it when read at normal speed, was assigned to three categories according to their importance to the message of the text: “high-level units” for essential ideas; “mid-level units” for complementary ideas; and “low-level units” for material of lesser consequence that could be left out (p. 514). The text contained 47 pausal units: 18 high-level, 16 mid-level, and 13 low-level units.

Using the anxiety scores for the RAS and the FLCAS, students were placed in three anxiety categories: “hi-anxiety”, “mid-anxiety” and lo-anxiety” (p. 514). Each participant had (a) the multiple-choice score (MC), (b) the number of “high-level” units

they recollected from the text (“High”), (c) the number of “mid-level” units they remembered (“Mid”), (d) the number of “low-level” pieces of information remembered (“Low”), and (e) the total number of units remembered (“Total”) (p. 515).

As regards the first research question, results of an intercorrelational analysis of the RAS and the FLCAS data suggested that students with high levels of reading anxiety also had high levels of foreign language anxiety. The two measures shared about 49% of the variance. As about 51% was not shared, Sellers asserted that “Spanish reading anxiety [is] a phenomenon related to but distinct from general foreign language anxiety (p. 515).

As far as the second research question was concerned, subjects remembered few pausal units of all categories from the reading passage, with students who were highly anxious remembering less content than those who were more relaxed. Anxiety was not seen to interfere significantly with multiple-choice answers, although more advanced students scored more highly on this test.

As to the third research question, participants who were highly reading-anxious tended to recollect fewer high-level pausal units, while “foreign language classroom anxiety was not related systematically to the number of high-level units recalled” (pp. 516-517). No statistically significant influence of reading anxiety was seen on the retrieval of mid-level pausal units, but general anxiety was associated with poorer recall of units of this kind. The recollection of low-level units was not influenced by either kind of anxiety.

The author’s speculation that students suffering from greater anxiety would recollect fewer essential details from a reading text was supported.

Concerning the final research question, results of the ANOVA analyses evaluating the association between levels of anxiety and “number of off-task thoughts”

(Sellers, 2000, p. 517) during the reading task, indicated that highly anxious readers suffered more “cognitive interference” (p. 517) than less anxious readers, and were more preoccupied by irrelevant thoughts and less able to centre their attention on the task, which led to inferior understanding of the text.

The author warned that care should be taken when drawing conclusions from these results. The RAS was an adaptation of an instrument intended in the first place for children reading in L1. Also the theme of the reading text was probably known to the students, and so the possible anxiety-arousing capacity of unfamiliar texts did not come into play in this investigation. No time-limit was given for the reading of the passage. As timing was not included as a distinct variable, its possible effects could not be taken into account.

#### *1.6.4. Language Anxiety in the Writing Skill*

Some researchers have undertaken the task of looking for links between language anxiety and the writing skill.

Cheng’s (2002) study into language anxiety and the skill of writing had two objectives: to explore associations between L2 writing anxiety and various individual differences, and to ascertain whether L2 anxiety was related to other kinds of anxiety, above all, writing anxiety in the mother tongue.

Cheng’s 165 participants were studying English as a main subject at a university in Taiwan, at three year levels (freshmen, sophomores, and juniors) amongst whom no statistically significant differences were found in L1 writing anxiety, L2 writing anxiety, L1 speaking anxiety and foreign language classroom anxiety. Their responses were combined at each of the three levels.

Instruments used were the FLCAS, developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), and translated into Chinese for this study, the Second Language Writing Apprehension Test, SLWAT, adapted from the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test, WAT, (1975), consisting of 29 items which ask about an individual's feelings of apprehension when s/he writes in L2, the Chinese Speaking Anxiety Scale, SCAS, and the Chinese Writing Anxiety Scale, CWAS, both created especially for this investigation, and each containing 6 items. All these anxiety instruments were to be answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale, from "*strongly agree*" to "*strongly disagree*." A Background Information Questionnaire elicited demographic data ("age, gender, grade level, amount of extracurricular contact with English ..., and motivation and perceptions about English writing", p. 649, and self-assessed level in English writing). Students also gave their end-of-term English writing course grade.

As regards learner differences, four factors emerged. Factor 1 was called English Writing Motivation/Attitude. Factor 2 was designated Extracurricular Effort to Learn English. Factor 3 received the name Confidence in English Writing, and Factor 4, English Writing Achievement (p. 651).

In stepwise regression analysis, all these factors contributed significantly to predict L2 writing anxiety. Confidence in English was the "best predictor" (p. 651), followed by English Writing Motivation/Attitude and Extracurricular Effort to learn English as next best predictors.

Anxiety in L2 writing appeared to be quite strongly correlated to L2 speaking anxiety, but no statistically significant correlation was found between English writing anxiety and Chinese writing anxiety. There appeared to be a much stronger relationship between anxieties experienced in different modes of communication in one language than across different languages. Language anxiety in writing in the first language did

not seem to be linked to anxiety in writing in the second language, the author submitting that the “nonsignificant, low correlation between L1 and L2 writing anxiety ( $r = .07$ ), suggest[ed] that these two anxiety constructs are different from each other” (p. 653).

#### *1.6.5. Language Anxiety in Two or More Skills*

While the studies in the previous section have centred on language anxiety and its links with a single skill, several investigations have looked into relationships among anxiety and two or more skills.

In a study conducted by Sparks and Ganschow (1991), learners who were less anxious were found to obtain significantly higher scores in *speaking* and in *writing* in the foreign language and also in the Modern Language Aptitude Test.

Another investigation (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b) highlighted a very interesting manifestation of anxiety in relation to *listening* and *speaking*. These researchers assigned their 39 participants (from “five intact classes”, p. 298, of community college and university French students) at random to two groups, and asked one group to write about an experience in using the target language in which they had felt “very nervous and apprehensive”, and asked the other group to write about an experience in using the target language in which they had felt “very relaxed and confident” (p. 298). Analysis of essay content showed that in essays about ‘anxious’ L2 occurrences, students spoke almost solely about the speaking skill, but that when recalling ‘relaxed’ experiences when employing French, students wrote about both speaking and listening. The authors claimed that the focused essay written by each student altered his/her perception of their L2 competence: students who wrote about relaxed French use experiences exhibited more positive self-assessment, while those who wrote anxiety essays assessed themselves as having poorer linguistic ability.

MacIntyre and Gardner made the point that students “taught to emphasise their own successful experiences in the second language would come to perceive themselves as more proficient language learners” (1991b, p. 303).

Cheng et al. (1999) aimed to examine second language classroom anxiety and second language writing anxiety, in the context of English as a foreign language in Taiwan. They attempted to link these two anxiety constructs with achievement in *speaking* and in *writing* in the foreign language.

Participants were 433 Taiwanese students whose main subject was English, from four Taiwan universities. They were taking speaking and writing classes at the same time. They were mostly women (more than five times as many females took part as men) and were all from undergraduate levels.

The investigators made use of the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986), translated into Chinese, in which the word “English” was used instead of “foreign language.” The Second Language Writing Apprehension Test, SLWAT, (Daly & Miller, 1975), was translated into Chinese and adapted to include items about concern over making mistakes, and over written work being assessed by the teacher and by other people. For both the FLCAS and the SLWAT, students gave responses on 5-point, Likert-type scales. A background questionnaire was also administered. Final course grades, which took into account “homework, projects, and quizzes, and ... mid-term and final exams” (p. 423), were used as achievement measures.

The researchers reported statistically significant and negative associations for second language classroom anxiety and for second language writing anxiety, with second language speaking and with second language writing achievement. Overall FLCAS scores exhibited the following correlations with Speaking course grade and with Writing course grade:  $-.28^{***}$ , and  $-.25^{***}$ , respectively. Overall SLWAT scores

showed the following correlations with Speaking course grade and with Writing course grade:  $-.14^{**}$ , and  $-.27^{***}$ , respectively ( $^{**}p < .01$ .  $^{***}p < .001$ , p. 431).

The authors recommended care when attempting to explain the moderate correlations encountered between language anxiety and performance scores because there is very little variation in the latter in Taiwan: Grades are represented by numbers (e.g., 70-79 is a B) (p. 431). Also the reliability and the validity of the final grades were in question as teachers did not use “consistent and explicit grading criteria” (p. 435).

Stepwise multiple regression analysis revealed that General English Classroom Performance Anxiety was found to be “the best predictor of English speaking course grades, and accounted for 4.84% of the variance” (p. 432). Low Self-Confidence in Speaking English was the next best predictor. None of the writing scale sub-components was a statistically significant predictor of English speaking scores.

Cheng et al. claimed that their study demonstrated the “relative independence” (p. 435) of the two anxiety constructs (second language classroom anxiety and second language writing anxiety), and argued that aspects of the two anxieties “may affect different people differently” (p. 436). Low self-confidence was seen as an aspect of both speaking and writing anxieties, and the authors posited that learners with low self-confidence might underestimate their capacity to learn the L2 and have negative expectations about it, and might therefore feel anxious when faced with foreign language tasks. Learners’ beliefs about their proficiency in English speaking and writing correlated more highly with their FLCAS and SLWAT scores than with their actual final grades (“ $r = -.53$  and  $-.55$  vs.  $r = -.28$  and  $-.27$ ”, p. 436).

The authors were of the opinion that the FLCAS, conceived as a general classroom anxiety scale, seemed to be linked more closely to speaking in the second language, whereas the SLWAT seemed to be more “skill-specific” (writing) (p. 438)

Ganschow et al. (1994), in a study involving *listening, speaking, and reading*, suggested that not very well-developed reading skills in students' mother tongue might exert a harmful influence on listening and speaking, which in turn might lead to poorer outcomes in the foreign language. They posited that less accomplished L1 readers tended not to read as much as skilled readers, thereby having less contact with vocabulary, grammar and general knowledge. This lack of reading experience would lead to inferior oral and listening skills, which are vital in learning a foreign language. Low-anxious and average-anxious students tended to present better speaking and listening skills than high-anxious students, but no statistically significant differences were encountered in reading amongst students of different anxiety levels. The authors suggested that FL anxiety might be linked to problems in using the phonological code of that foreign language, and that these shortcomings might negatively impinge on students' listening and speaking skills. Poor performance could lead to less motivation and to more anxiety, leading to more FL learning problems.

The purpose of MacIntyre and Gardner's (1994a) study was to explore the effects of language anxiety on three stages of learning, based on Tobias's (1986) model: Input, Processing, and Output, not only on performance, which could be considered as output. To this end, specific tasks in *listening, reading, speaking, and writing*, were developed, some of which followed students' progress through more than one stage. In addition new scales were also designed to assess student anxiety at each of the three stages.

Participants were 97 Anglophone students enrolled in a first-year French as a second language course at a Canadian university (73 females and 24 males).

The three scales specially devised to examine the three learning stages were Input Anxiety (concerned with anxiety experienced when taking in new material in L2);

Processing Anxiety (concerned with anxiety experienced when “learning and thinking”, p. 289, in L2); Output Anxiety (concerned with anxiety experienced in production, i.e., speaking or writing, in L2). To evaluate the validity of the new instruments, students completed other measures: French Class Anxiety (Gardner, 1985), French Use Anxiety (Gardner, 1985) and an 8-item, shortened form of the original 33-item FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986). The positive and statistically significant correlations between the new and existing scales led the authors to suggest that students who were anxious in one context would be anxious in other contexts, and those who were anxious at one language learning stage would be so at other stages.

Students’ grades were used as a measure of their language proficiency. Scores were obtained for the Input stage, i.e., on tasks that required “rapid, simple repetition (without comprehension)” (p. 291). These were Word Span, or repeating strings of words in the correct order; Digit Span, or writing audio-recorded digits in English and in French in the correct order; T-scope, or identifying words on a computer screen as English or French, in which the number of correctly identified words represented the Score and the time taken was the Latency.

At the Processing stage, students completed a French Achievement measure, which was a 100-item, multiple-choice test (not considered output as no French was produced); a Paragraph Translation into English, which was a 15-line passage from Rilke (1937), similarly not considered an output task as no French was produced; Paired Associates, in which students were presented with pairs of English-French nouns. They were required to study them and then recall the French noun from its English prompt. The Test Time (latency) was recorded and considered as Processing; the Score (accuracy) was counted and considered as Output. (This task, therefore, spanned the Processing and the Output stages).

At the Output stage, measures were Thing Category, or writing as many French words as possible belonging to a certain category; Cloze Test, or completing a paragraph in French with 25 blanks; an audio-recorded Self-Description, limited to one minute in French and one minute in English.

Students completed the anxiety scales in groups, and carried out the tasks individually. Significant negative scores were observed between grades and the Input, Processing, and Output anxiety scales.

Of the three Input tasks, Word Span correlated significantly and negatively (-.26\*) with Input Anxiety, suggesting that anxious students had problems taking in discrete vocabulary items into their short term memory, and that this may explain why anxious students have difficulty in understanding long sentences and why fewer statements reach the Processing stage. Neither the English Digit Span nor the French Digit Span was significantly associated with any of the three anxiety measures. There was a small positive and statistically significant correlation between Input Anxiety and French T-Scope Latency (.20\*), making the researchers speculate that anxious students took a slightly longer time to recognise a word as French but were just as accurate in their judgements.

As regards the Processing Stage, the accuracy of the Paragraph Translation was significantly and negatively associated with Processing Anxiety (-.51\*\*). With Paired Associates, anxious students were seen to take more time studying or processing the words of the first part of the task and came away with lower scores than their less-anxious peers. In the second part of the task neither Processing Anxiety nor Output anxiety correlated significantly with time taken or scores. The authors concluded that the extra time taken at the Processing stage had paid dividends to the more highly-anxious students.

At the Output stage, negative and statistically significant correlations were encountered between Output anxiety and performance. Thing Category scores on the French version of the test were associated negatively with Output anxiety (-.24\*), but not the English version, leading the authors to suggest that the correlation between Output anxiety and retrieval of items was limited to L2. There was higher negative and statistically significant correlation between Output anxiety and the Cloze Test (-.49\*\*), reflecting perhaps the greater difficulty of this task. The final Output task, oral self-descriptions, also revealed negative and statistically significant correlations between Output anxiety and the self-description in French: French Description Length ( $r = -.36$ ,  $p < .01$ ), French Accent ( $r = -.42$ ,  $p < .01$ ), French Fluency ( $r = -.41$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and French Sentence Complexity ( $r = -.50$ ,  $p < .01$ ) (p. 295), meaning that the more anxious participants produced a smaller amount of French, and spoke French with less fluency, with less complexity, and with less of a French accent. MacIntyre and Gardner speculated that the more anxious students may have been slower at remembering vocabulary items on this timed test, and may have had fewer vocabulary resources in any case, as anxiety may have interfered with their previous vocabulary learning, and that they may have avoided describing themselves with more complex linguistic structures. In English descriptions, anxious students were also observed to make sentences of lower complexity than did more relaxed learners.

The researchers concluded that language anxiety is more closely associated with measures of achievement in L2 than with those in L1 and that global performance measures are negatively linked to language anxiety. This study supported the notion that extra time and effort can compensate for the negative effects of anxiety, and that this can also be said for testing situations. McIntyre and Gardner pointed out that the study highlighted the “interdependency” (p. 298) of the learning stages on one another, that

language anxiety influences the three stages, and that its “effects appear cumulative” (p. 298). They also recommended that more than only the output stage should be researched, as well as the links among all of the language learning stages. MacIntyre and Grandner’s study helped me to bear in mind that language performance, which I would be attempting to measure in my participants, is in a strict sense ‘output’, and is likely to be influenced by input and processing.

In a study designed to examine the accuracy of learners’ perceptions about their second language proficiency in the four skills (*listening, speaking, reading, and writing*), and about the role played by language anxiety in creating bias in these evaluations, MacIntyre et al. (1997) speculated that there would be a moderate correlation between “perceived and actual L2 competence” (p. 270), and that there would be a negative correlation between the latter and language anxiety. Their research questions were:

- “1. What are the correlations among language anxiety, perceived competence, and actual competence (the latter defined by the amount and quality of output)?
2. Are biases in self-perception of competence related to language anxiety?” (MacIntyre et al., 1997, p. 274).

Thirty-seven Anglophone university students of French gave an assessment of their own competence in French speaking, comprehension, reading and writing, which indicated moderate self-assessed levels of ability on the four skills. Students were tested individually and told that they “could choose not to answer any questions if they wished” (p. 272), and were given a Language Anxiety Scale: 19 items from a combined French use anxiety and French class anxiety scale ( $\alpha = .92$ ), from MacIntyre and Gardner’s (1988) study, and then the Can-do Scale (Clark, 1981): 26 items, plus seven additional items, in L2 speaking, L2 reading, L2 writing, and L2 comprehension. The tasks for each Can-do item made use of “authentic materials” at a “wide range of

difficulty” (p. 272). Instructions and answers were in English, except in the items referring to the speaking and writing skills, in which participants responded in French. See Table 1 for sample Can-do items and corresponding task instructions. The reliability of the 32-item scale was  $\alpha = .98$ . For subskill items it was: L2 speaking, 10 items:  $\alpha = .93$ ; L2 reading, 5 items:  $\alpha = .86$ ; L2 writing, 8 items:  $\alpha = .93$ ; L2 comprehension, 9 items:  $\alpha = .94$  (p. 271).

Table 1.

*Examples of Can-do Items with Corresponding Instructions for the Experimental Tasks*

Can-do item	Instructions for experimental task
(Listening) 6. Understand French movies without subtitles.	6. This video tape has an excerpt from a French movie ( <i>Cyrano de Bergerac</i> ), without subtitles. What is happening in the movie?
(Speaking) 16. Give directions in the street.	16. Give directions from this room to the (nearby shopping centre) to somebody who speaks only French.
(Reading) 17. Understand cooking directions, such as those in a recipe.	17. Here is a recipe for a French dish. Explain in English what you need to do to make it.
(Writing) 26. Write an advertisement to sell a bicycle.	26. Write an advertisement to sell the bicycle pictured below (photo obtained from a national catalogue).

*Note.* MacIntyre, P. D., Noels, K.A., & Clément, R. (1997, pp. 286-287).

A bilingual judge evaluated the speaking tasks, taking into account “fluency ..., complexity ... accent ... elaboration ... grammar” and “colloquial expressions” (p. 273). A different bilingual judge assessed the writing tasks, rating “grammaticality, sentence complexity, extent of elaboration, and similarity to a Francophone” (p. 272). Another judge assessed reading, counting properly translated ideas, including natural qualities of language and not translating word for word, and also evaluated understanding, by the “number of ideas correctly identified” (p. 273).

As to research question 1, students who “produced more output tended to produce better output” (p. 274), and those who were more competent were likely to

consider themselves as more competent. This led the authors to believe that subjective proficiency was strongly connected to actual proficiency.

All the language anxiety correlations were negative. The more anxious a student was, the fewer and the poorer his/her ideas tended to be, as well the lower his/her self-assessed proficiency. These links were observed across tasks in all four skills, “indicating a robust relationship between language anxiety and measures of language achievement” (MacIntyre et al. 1997, p. 275). Statistically significant and negative correlations between Language Anxiety and actual proficiency in terms of Ideas Expressed (IE) for the four skills were as follows: Speaking:  $r = -.57$ ; Writing:  $r = -.54$ ; Reading:  $r = -.59$ ; Comprehension:  $r = -.54$  (p. 275). In addition, statistically significant and negative correlations between Language Anxiety and Self-Rated Proficiency (SP) for the four skills were as follows: Speaking:  $r = -.60$ ; Writing:  $r = -.59$ ; Reading:  $r = -.52$ ; Comprehension:  $r = -.55$  (p. 275).

As regards question 2, multiple regression analyses were carried out, “using actual competence ... to predict perceived competence” (pp. 275-276). Results backed up the notion that more anxious students were prone to undervalue their language competence, while less anxious learners were likely to overrate theirs. The reading task was the only one that did not reveal statistically significant differences between high- and low-anxiety students.

Language anxiety was negatively associated with the amount and quality of performance in all four kinds of tasks. In addition it also had negative correlations “with both actual and perceived proficiency in the L2” (p. 278). It appeared that “‘self-enhancement’ occur[ed] in less anxious students and ‘self-derogation’ in more anxious students” (MacIntyre et al., 1997, p. 278). The authors attempted to explain how high levels of language anxiety persist: they speculated that very anxious students do not

realise that their proficiency is as high as a “more objective analysis measures reveals it to be” (p. 278), giving rise to anxiety, which probably makes the students less inclined to speak. The authors contended that such learners become unable to “reassess their competence”, and initiate a “vicious cycle” (p. 278) of decreased communication and increased language anxiety.

The authors went on to maintain that a positive bias of one’s linguistic competence, while not completely accurate, might motivate a student to expend more effort to communicate which may well nurture language development.

MacIntyre and his colleagues posited that speaking, writing, and comprehension are more “public and ego-involving activities” (p. 279), and therefore more threatening in that the individual might feel that s/he has no control over what other people are thinking. However, reading was considered more “private” (p. 279), permitting the learner to clear up any doubts unhurriedly on his/her own, without having to reveal that s/he is having problems with the task. The authors submitted that this more correct assessment when evaluating one’s reading skill may be explained by the “ability to save face” (p. 280) that is not present when carrying out activities in other skills.

This investigation into language anxiety and students’ assessment of their proficiency in the four skills was particularly helpful to me, in that I saw that anxiety might well influence these evaluations, so I included in three of my research questions correlations between anxiety and students’ overall estimation of their English language proficiency, and in the four skills separately.

#### *1.6.6. Language Anxiety and Vocabulary Learning*

I thought it worthwhile to find out if other researchers had found links between anxiety and vocabulary learning, particularly as participants in my study were dealing

with the specialised vocabulary belonging to their field (the world of work). MacIntyre and Gardner (1994b) conducted such an investigation but with general vocabulary. The researchers set out to examine the effects of anxiety on the three phases of learning (input stage, processing stage, and output stage), as proposed by Tobias (1986). One variable (anxiety) was manipulated to explore its effects on another variable (vocabulary learning) in a laboratory setting, in order to test the authors' hypothesis that anxiety would hinder the learning and production of vocabulary.

Subjects were 72 university students of first-year French, whose mother-tongue was English. They were divided into four groups at random. All groups carried out the same tasks. One group (control) was not video-recorded at any stage of the experiment. The other three groups were filmed either as from the beginning of the input stage, or as from the beginning of the processing stage, or as from the beginning of the output stage, with the intention of evoking anxiety. These three groups were called "input group," "processing group," and "output group," respectively (p. 9), according to the point of the experiment at which the video was switched on and started recording them. For each group, once filming began, the recorder was not switched off until all tasks were over.

Materials were a Learning Program, which was a computer task consisting of three stages in which students learned "paired associates" (p. 5) of words. At the Input stage students were shown 19 French nouns for 1.5 seconds each in random order; students were then shown 38 nouns, including the 19 shown previously, and were required to recognise the ones seen at the beginning. The number of correct answers gave the Input score, and recognition time (latency) was measured.

At the Processing stage the same 19 French words were seen on screen, this time with their English translations, that is, "paired associates" (p. 5), in random order for 2.5 seconds each; again participants were required to identify the original 19 pairs from 38

pairs subsequently shown. The number of correct answers gave the Processing score, and the time taken (latency) to recognise each pair was measured.

At the Output stage students were subjected to four trials, in each of which they typed in the French equivalents prompted by the 19 nouns in English, shown for 10 seconds each on the screen. No time limit was set for writing answers. The number of correct answers given in the four trials made up the Output score.

State Anxiety Measures were ‘anxometers’ (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991c), a kind of ‘thermometer’ on which students self-assessed their levels of anxiety on a scale from 0-16 (computerised version), or 0-10 (paper version), at the beginning of each stage.

Intervening Performance Tasks were given between the three learning stages, “in order to introduce a delay between the vocabulary learning program and later use of the new vocabulary” (p. 6). They were Digit Span, i.e., remembering lists of numbers in their correct order in L1 and L2, considered by the authors as suitable for the input stage as the numbers were “not given meaning in the experiment” (p. 6); Thing Category test, in which students were required to give vocabulary items pertaining to a certain category (three categories in L1 and three in L2), considered suitable for the output stage; Self-Description in which students described themselves for one minute in English and in French, and were judged in terms of “*accent*”, “*fluency*”, “*sentence complexity*” and “*depth*” (p. 7); Vocabulary Recall task, in which previously learned vocabulary items were elicited by questions in French which appeared on the computer screen. Students were given 20 seconds in which to respond orally; responses were audio-recorded. One example of a question posed to elicit one of the 19 items was given:

“Question: *Quand je veux me brosser les cheveux, qu’est-ce que j’utilise?*  
‘When I want to brush my hair, what do I use?’

Answer: *Un peigne.*  
‘A comb.’” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994b, p. 7)

Results revealed that in all four groups (control, input, processing, and output), responding in French aroused more anxiety than carrying out other learning tasks. Anxiety levels also rose immediately after the video was switched on in the input, processing, and output groups. In the control group, (who were not videoed at all), no statistically significant variations in mean anxiety levels were observed in the learning tasks, although they did rise in the Vocabulary Recall task. The control group fared better than the other groups on this task.

At the Input stage, the group who was exposed to anxiety inducement (the input group) through video-recording was expected to exhibit and did exhibit lower learning scores than the groups who were not being videoed (the control, processing, and output groups). At the Processing stage, the two groups who were subjected to video-recording (input and processing groups) obtained lower learning scores than the two groups who were not (control and output groups), as expected. Similarly, at the Output stage, when all three experimental groups were exposed to anxiety arousal, learning scores were poorer in all but the control group, as the authors had anticipated. At all stages the recognition of pairs of words was seen to be most hindered in the group in which the video had most recently been switched on and therefore in which anxiety had been most recently evoked. The four groups were observed to take a similar time to do the learning tasks.

Tasks in English (L1) were seen to evoke less anxiety than those in French (L2), and anxiety increased starting from Thing Category, to Digit Span and to Self-Description. Subjects appeared “eventually [to be] able to cope with the state anxiety aroused by the camera” (p. 15). The control group, not exposed to anxiety arousal,

exhibited best learning performance on all tasks. Tasks involving communication tasks provoked more nervousness than those involving learning. Anxiety arousal was also detrimental to Vocabulary Recall in those groups who were exposed to video recording.

This study was particularly noteworthy because it showed clearly how anxiety levels increased coinciding with anxiety inducement in the three experimental groups, and how more anxiety was observed during output tasks. Even though in my study I would not set out to induce anxiety deliberately, I would bear in mind that during output tasks, such as a speaking test, students might well exhibit increased levels of anxiety.

## I.7. Learner Variables and Their Associations with Language Anxiety and with Language Achievement

Some studies about anxiety have looked into its associations with language learner variables, such as age, gender, their visits to the target language country, language level, year of study, learning styles, learning strategies, expected grades, and actual grades, in an attempt to link these features of the student with anxiety itself and with achievement in the foreign or second language. In many cases authors did indeed encounter significant connections. In order to enrich my understanding of language anxiety and of language performance and achievement in my own participants, I thought it would be of value to examine numerous characteristics pertaining to them. This section describes language anxiety research in which demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables were explored.

### *I.7.1. Age*

Some inquirers have explored whether a learner's age might have anything to do with his/her anxiety and with achievement when learning a foreign or second language. Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999), who looked for associations between learner variables and language anxiety, found that in their 210 participants, whose ages ranged from 18 to 71 (mean = 22.7, *SD* = 6.5), there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between anxiety and age: .20\*\* (\*\**p* < .01) (p. 225). In the multiple regression analysis, age contributed to 4% of the prediction of foreign language anxiety (pp. 226-227). This would indicate that in this investigation, the older the student, the higher his/her language anxiety was likely to be.

In a later study, the same researchers (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000), in their examination of cognitive, affective, personality, and demographic variables in relation to achievement in the second language, referred to Lieberman's (1984) and Newport's (1986) findings that the "ability to acquire mastery of the fine points of language, such as phonology and morphology, as well as the capacity to speak a second language without an accent, deteriorates severely with age" (p. 6). Ages in this study ranged again from 18 to 71 years ( $M = 22.5$ ,  $SD = 6.4$ ), but no statistically significant correlations between age and achievement were found.

### *1.7.2. Gender*

Possible differences between female and male participants as regards anxiety levels and in achievement have been examined in some language anxiety studies. Some research (Chang, 1997; Daly, Kreiser, & Rogharr, 1994; Felson & Trudeau, 1991) has suggested that female students often have higher levels of anxiety than males in academic settings. In the field of language learning, Padilla, Cervantes, Maldonado, and García (1988) reported that female students were more likely to be more apprehensive than male learners. Cheng (2002), who investigated English writing anxiety in Taiwanese learners, discovered that females were significantly more anxious than males ( $M = 85.67$ , for females, and  $M = 77.41$ , for males) (p. 651).

In other research (Aida, 1994), however, no statistically significant associations between language anxiety in learning Japanese and gender were observed, although mean FLCAS scores were slightly lower for females, males scoring an average of 97.4 on the FLCAS, and females scoring 95.6 (p. 158). Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999), who also looked into possible relationships between anxiety and gender in their participants, found no statistically significant correlations. Similarly, results of a Belgian study of

university students (Dewaele, 2002), indicated that gender did not correlate significantly with communicative anxiety in either French as a foreign language or in English as a foreign language:  $r = -.69$ , and  $r = -1.02$  [*sic*], for communicative anxiety in French, and for communicative anxiety in English, respectively (p. 31).

Elkhafaifi (2005) found that females and males exhibited different levels of anxiety depending on the kind of anxiety experienced: female students presented significantly higher levels of general Arabic language anxiety levels than males (mean score for females was 90.05, as against that for males: 81.68, p. 213), but no statistically significant differences were seen between sexes in Arabic listening anxiety ( $M = 53.62$  for females, as against  $M = 47.83$  for males, p. 213).

In the secondary school setting, Pappamihiel (2001; 2002) encountered differences in anxiety between Mexican females and males in education in the United States as they moved from the English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classroom to the mainstream classroom, females experiencing significantly more anxiety in the mainstream situation.

The purpose of Pappamihiel's (2001) investigation was to examine language anxiety in Mexican adolescent girls, extending other studies that had reported that females more than males suffer from worry and anxiety in various academic settings. In this study it was found that females suffered more tension in "peer-interactional" (p. 31) circumstances than in academic situations.

Participants were 178 students (91 boys and 87 girls) at a middle school in the United States. They had lived in the United States for an average of 2.47 years. Their level of English was intermediate. All students attended ESL classes and some mainstream classes.

In class, participants completed an English Language Anxiety Scale (ELAS), with 47 Likert-type items, which elicited information about students' English language anxiety in two milieux: English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom and the mainstream classroom. It was based on the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986), and each item was given in English and Spanish. Two sample items from the ELAS are:

“14. In regular classes I can't express my true feelings in English and this makes me feel uncomfortable.

*En clases regulares, hay veces que no puedo expresar mis verdaderos sentimientos in [sic] inglés y esto me incomoda.*

16. In ESL classes, I get nervous and confused when I'm speaking English.

*En clases de ESL, me siento nervioso(a) y lleno(a) de confusión cuando estoy hablando inglés”* (Pappamihel, 2002b, p. 353. Copyright 2002 by the National Council of Teachers of English. Reprinted with permission).

The ELAS was tested for validity and internal consistency reliability. A paired *t*-test was used to evaluate differences between the ESL and the mainstream classrooms. Analysis of covariance was utilized to explore differences among variables, and factor analysis was employed to determine indicators of anxiety in the two classroom settings. Students found to be very anxious took part in discussions in which they talked about their feelings to using L2 in both contexts.

Statistically significant differences were observed in degrees of anxiety between the ESL and the mainstream classrooms, and a statistically significant difference as regards gender was found with the ELAS. Female students scored a mean of nearly 10 points higher than males on the ELAS as regards anxiety in the mainstream, but not the ESL, classroom.

According to the author, the English language anxiety experienced by females in the mainstream classroom was related to “social performance” (p. 34), and was “a type of performance anxiety more related to interactions with peers” (p. 33), whereas in the ESL classroom it was “more related to academic anxiety and worries about

achievement” (p. 33). Pappamihiel speculated that in the latter setting female students’ warmer rapport with teachers might compensate for language achievement anxiety. She also posited that in the mainstream classroom, female students “do not have any adequate coping strategy” (p. 34) to deal with the peer-related anxiety prevalent there. Also, in mainstream classes, females may come into contact with different social groups, including Chicanas (of Mexican ancestry, but born in the USA), and lose the contact and the emotional backing of students in their previous ESL classrooms where they could also speak in their mother tongue if needed.

As regards language achievement, Aida (1994) reported that females received significantly higher grades than males in Japanese in the final exam, females scoring an average of 89.7%, as against an average mark of 86.1% for males (p. 162), as noted above in section I.5.1. There was a trend in highly anxious students of both sexes to obtain lower exam scores than more relaxed students. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000) encountered a statistically significant correlation between gender and foreign language achievement in Anglophone students of four foreign languages (French, Spanish, German, and Japanese), as measured by course grades:  $.16^*$  ( $*p < .05$ , p. 9), indicating that in their investigation “low foreign-language achievers tended to be men” (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000, p. 9), and concurring with Oxford and Ehrman’s (1993) hypothesis that this result might have been due to superior strategy use in females.

### *1.7.3. Visits to the Target Language Country*

Researchers have sometimes been interested to know whether their participants had visited the target language country and if so, whether these visits were associated with levels of anxiety. It might seem logical to suppose that students who have visited the country whose language they are studying will suffer from lower levels of language

anxiety, in line with Schumann's (1977) belief that "social distance" between students learning an L2 and members of that target language group would be reduced by "lengthy residence" (p. 138) in the target language geographical zone, but this has not always been seen to be the case.

Aida's (1994) participants (Anglophone students of Japanese) who had visited Japan did indeed exhibit lower anxiety levels: average FLCAS scores for those who had visited Japan was 92.5, while the average score for those who had not was 98.1 (p. 163).

Saito and Samimy (1996), in a study centring on Anglophone learners of Japanese at three levels, beginning, intermediate, and advanced, found that only in students at intermediate level was there a positive and statistically significant correlation between language class anxiety and time spent in Japan:  $r = .360, p = .01$  (p. 246). The researchers posited that at this level, students who had visited Japan may have found that they had lost their "initial advantage" (p. 247), or as more formal teaching was given, students who had only learned Japanese casually in the country may have suffered higher levels of anxiety.

Onwuegbuzie et al.'s (1999) subjects, who were each studying one of four foreign languages, presented a statistically significant and negative correlation between language anxiety and number of foreign countries visited:  $-0.19^{**}$  ( $**p < .01$ ) (p. 225), suggesting that the fewer foreign countries students had visited, the higher their anxiety levels tended to be. In the Selected Multiple Regression Model (p. 226), the number of foreign countries visited was found to be a predictor of foreign language anxiety, accounting for 5% of the variance. In a later investigation conducted by the same authors (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000), the number of visits made to target language countries did not seem to have any bearing on foreign language achievement.

#### *1.7.4. Status of Foreign Language Course: Required, Elective, or Major*

There is some evidence that the status of a foreign or second language course ('required' or 'compulsory': whether students are obliged to study the language; 'elective' or 'optional': whether students may choose to study the language or not; 'major': whether it is the principal subject in their degree studies) may have some bearing on anxiety levels.

Aida's (1994) participants were 96 students of second-year Japanese, whom she classified into three groups: 41 required students, 44 elective students, and 11 students majoring in Japanese. An ANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in anxiety levels when the three groups of students were taken as a whole, but when the majoring group was excluded from the analysis, the group who were studying Japanese as a 'required' subject was found to have a significantly higher mean level of anxiety as measured by the FLCAS (99.6) than those who had 'elected' to study this language (93.1) (p. 163).

Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) examined possible links between the status (required or elective) of the four foreign language subjects studied by their participants and language anxiety, and found no statistically significant link between them ( $r = .06$ ) (p. 225). The same investigators explored possible associations between language achievement and the status of the foreign language subject, and did not encounter any statistically significant correlation ( $r = -.11$ ) (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000, p. 9).

Elkahafaifi (2005) searched for instances of general language anxiety and of listening anxiety in students of Arabic, but noted no significant differences in either kind of anxiety in students who were studying this language either as a major, as an optional, or as a compulsory subject (p. 213).

### *1.7.5. Language Level, and Year of Study*

Some writers have looked into how students' language level, and their year of study might be associated with anxiety experiences. It might seem logical to suppose that as students progress through language levels (presumably achieving higher proficiency), their anxiety levels would decrease. Skehan (1989) thought that students at higher levels might enjoy a "wider repertoire of behaviours" which would help them to deal with anxiety in language learning contexts "more flexibly" (p. 116). Yet this is not always seen to be the case.

Saito and Samimy (1996), who investigated language anxiety in students of Japanese at three different levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced) reported that advanced students were the most language-anxious, intermediate learners were the least, and beginners fell between the two. The researchers speculated that course material may have explained this trend. Intermediate learners were now familiar with classroom activities, which were similar to beginning-level ones, and so these learners were more relaxed. At advanced level the focus turned away from speaking and towards translation, reading and writing. This lack of oral practice may have been responsible for making advanced students feel less sure of themselves when speaking.

As regards achievement, these researchers submitted that anxiety did not predict achievement as measured by final grades in beginning students, but it did in intermediate and in advanced learners. They posited that the reason for this may have been that at early levels, language anxiety had not had time to form, citing MacIntyre and Gardner (1989, p. 110) who reported similar findings, "During the first few experiences in the foreign language, anxiety plays a negligible role in proficiency" (p. 245).

Onwuegbuzie et al.'s (1999) subjects, who were studying foreign languages at three different levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced), observed an almost linear rise in anxiety as year of study advanced (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors). The investigators observed that "with exception of sophomores [that is, students in their second year], language anxiety appeared to increase linearly as a function of year of study" (p. 227).

Cheng (2002), who explored anxiety in the writing skill in Taiwanese students of English, noted a different tendency. In this study there were no statistically significant differences in writing anxiety as levels of proficiency advanced, but students' anxiety did increase with year of study, freshmen (first year) claiming to be least anxious and juniors (third year) to be the most anxious about writing in English.

Inconsistent results as regards anxiety and language level were reported by Rodríguez and Abreu (2003), who explored stability in anxiety across target languages (French and English) in trainee teachers at two Venezuelan universities. At the *Universidad de Zulia*, students were observed to become more language-anxious as they advanced through levels, whereas at the *Universidad de Los Andes*, levels of anxiety tended to attenuate as learners passed from one level to another. The authors suggested that these mixed results were perhaps due to "classroom activities and ... instructors' personal characteristics and behaviors" (p. 371).

Elkhafaifi (2005) observed that learners of Arabic who were in the third year of study had significantly lower levels of general language anxiety and of listening anxiety than students in the first and second years. He found statistically significant and negative correlations between listening anxiety and Year in School, and listening anxiety and Years [that the participant had] Studied Arabic:  $r = -.13^{**}$ , and  $r = -.19^{**}$ , respectively, and also between general language classroom anxiety and Year in School,

and general language classroom anxiety and Years [that the participant had] Studied Arabic:  $r = -.15^*$ , and  $r = -.22^{**}$ , respectively ( $*p < .05$ .  $**p < .01$ ) (p. 212).

*1.7.6. Language Anxiety and its Associations with Learning Styles,  
and with Learning Strategies*

*Learning styles* are “unintentional or automatic individual characteristics” (Bailey et al., 1999, p. 65) that give orientation to learning and are specific to the content of the material being studied. Bailey and his co-workers posited that learning styles would probably moderate foreign language anxiety, and to that end they investigated language anxiety in 146 Anglophone students of Spanish and French in connection with 20 style types from the Productivity Environmental Preference Survey (PEPS) (Dunn, Dunn, & Price, 1991). This survey examines a person’s preferences in 20 different modalities which are concerned with how adults prefer “to function, to learn, to concentrate and to perform” (p. 67) during study or work. These are “noise; light; temperature; design; motivation, persistence; responsibility; structure; peer orientation; authority orientation; multiple perceptual preferences; auditory; visual; tactile; kinesthetic; intake; evening/morning; late morning; afternoon; and mobility” (p. 67).

Setwise multiple regression analysis was employed to “identify a combination of learning style modalities that predicted foreign language anxiety” (p. 67), the authors stressing that “predict” did not imply cause (pp. 67-68). Only two modalities were associated in a statistically significant way to the prediction of anxiety in the foreign language classroom: responsibility and peer-orientation, each explaining 3% of the variance. This would suggest that students who were not responsible in finishing their work and who favoured studying alone were more likely to be language-anxious.

The authors maintained that the results did not reflect the notion of a global association between learning styles and language anxiety, and that the relationship between them “resist[ed] simple correlational analyses” (p. 69). Also, according to Bailey et al., as styles are thought to be traits of the individual, while foreign language anxiety “has been proven to be a form of situation-specific anxiety” (p. 69), the two may not have correlated satisfactorily. The researchers recommended that an instrument be developed to measure learning styles more specifically in connection to language anxiety.

*Learning strategies* are “actions chosen by students that are intended to facilitate learning” (Bailey et al., 1999, p. 65). MacIntyre and Noels (1996) conducted a study involving 138 Anglophone university students of Spanish and Italian, in an attempt to identify social-psychological variables that would predict the use of strategies in language learning. Both of their aims included how language anxiety might influence the use of learning strategies. In addition, language anxiety is an element of the two models examined in the study: (a) MacIntyre’s (1994) model, which “proposed that social-psychological variables play a key role in the use of language learning strategies” (p. 374), and (b) Gardner’s (1985) model of language learning motivation, in which anxiety was put forward as a principal component.

The investigators’ first objective was to “test [MacIntyre’s, 1994] social-psychological model of strategy use” (p. 376), which proposed that psychological variables are of crucial importance in the use of language learning strategies, or “steps taken [by the learner] to facilitate the acquisition, storage and retrieval, and use of information (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989)” (p. 373).

The second purpose of the investigation also had an important language anxiety component: the authors aimed to explore the associations between strategy-use scores

and Gardner's (1985) model of integrative motivation, composed of "positivity of the attitudes towards the learning situation" (ALS), integrativeness, and motivation, together with anxiety "considered [as] a fourth primary affective influence on language learning" (p. 376).

Both instruments used in the study contained items related to language anxiety. The first instrument was the 50-item ESL/EFL version of the Strategies Inventory for Language Learning, SILL (Oxford, 1990). Seven-point Likert-type responses were elicited for each strategy. The responses concerned (1) Frequency of use, (2) Knowledge, (3) Effectiveness, (4) Anxiety, and (5) Difficulty (pp. 376-377). The second instrument was a short version of the Attitudes and Motivation Test Battery, AMTB, (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993b), used to measure the following variables with single-item indicators: (6) Attitudes toward the Learning Situation (2 items), (7) Motivation (3 items), (8) Integrativeness (3 items), (9) Language Anxiety (2 items) (p. 377).

The learning strategies that students in this study employed most often were "pay attention to L2 speakers", "look for similar words in L1," and "use synonyms." The three least frequently employed strategies included "write feelings in a diary," "give self-rewards," and "physically act out words" (pp. 378, 380). The first two of these obtained the "lowest ratings of knowledge, effectiveness, and anxiety" (p. 380).

As far as testing the strategy-use model was concerned, this was supported in general, or "the use of approximately three out of four strategies is predicted by a combination of knowledge, effectiveness, and either difficulty or anxiety" (p. 380).

A positive and statistically significant correlation was found between anxiety and the Strategy Model Element: ".22#". "# - .05" (p. 382, where "#" presumably

means \*), but no statistically significant correlation was observed between affective variables and Frequency of Use for Each Type of Strategy.

The authors speculated that students who were alert to strategies and their usefulness, and who felt that they were not problematic to use, might become more motivated to learn L2. The use of strategies could lead to “sense of mastery over the learning process” (p. 383) which in turn might help attenuate anxiety. Language anxiety was seen to have less influence on language learning strategies than other variables, but “moderately strong correlations were observed between language anxiety and the ratings of overall strategy difficulty and the use of social strategies” (p. 383). The three highest mean anxiety ratings are for “start L2 conversations” (4.76), “encourage myself to speak when afraid” (4.54), and “look for conversations” (4.46) (p. 379). Gardner and Noels submitted that this tendency was line with anxious students’ “cognitive resources” (p. 383) being averted from language learning tasks by anxiety (Eysenck, 1979) and that this would mean that for this kind of student, employing strategies would be more complicated. As regards the links between anxiety and social strategies, these appeared to be congruent with anxious learners’ communication apprehension and fear of loss of esteem by others.

#### *1.7.7. Language Anxiety and Multiple Learner Variables*

I wished to examine many characteristics of my participants in connection with language anxiety because I wanted to advance the field in this sense, so I found the following study to be of special value, as the authors (Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999) investigated a multitude of learner variables (26 demographic, cognitive, personality, and affective characteristics) in relation to language anxiety.

In their rationale for this study, the authors affirmed the crucial need to recognise the phenomenon of foreign language anxiety in students because of its potentially harmful influences on learning, so that activities can be designed to cater for their needs in the affective domain.

The stated purposes of the investigation were to explore variables related to L2 anxiety, both those that had received attention in other studies and those that had not. Demographic variables were investigated, e.g., age and gender, together with self-perception variables, e.g., perceived scholastic competence, and “measures of constructs that are manifestations of self-perceptions (i.e., social interdependence and study habits)” (p. 221). The study also aimed to discover whether anxiety decreased as students’ linguistic level increased.

The participants were 210 university students at a North American university, studying four different foreign languages (French, Spanish, German and Japanese) at beginning, intermediate and advanced levels. Students were aged between 18 and 71. Females accounted for 66.7% of the sample, and the mother tongue of 95.7% of the participants was English. Freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors studied languages at the three levels, were enrolled in 43 different degree courses, and 59.8% were studying English as a compulsory component of their course. Most students had studied a foreign language at high school, and about a third at college. Over half the students had never visited a foreign country and about a quarter had non-native English speakers in their family. Subjects expected to obtain foreign language grades from 68 to 100. Students took part in the investigation voluntarily.

The instruments used in the study were the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, the Self-Perception Profile for College Students, the Social

Interdependence Scale, the Academic Locus of Control Scale, the Study Habits Inventory, and the Background Demographic Form (pp. 222-223).

In the data analysis, Pearson product-moment correlations were employed to assess associations between foreign language anxiety and the independent variables under study: gender, age, academic achievement, semester course load, status of foreign language course, visiting foreign countries, high school foreign languages, college foreign languages, foreign language proficiency of family, expected final foreign language course average, perceived creativity, perceived intellectual ability, perceived scholastic competence, perceived job competence, perceived appearance, perceived social acceptance, perceived level of humour, perceived self-worth, cooperativeness, value placed on cooperative learning, competitiveness, value placed on competitive learning, individualism, value placed on individualistic learning, academic locus of control, and study habits. Of these, two correlated significantly and positively with foreign language anxiety: Age (.20\*\*), and Individualism (.13\*). Twelve variables correlated significantly and negatively: Visiting foreign countries, as noted in section I.7.3. (-.19\*\*), High school foreign languages (-.21\*\*), Expected final foreign language course average (-.45\*\*\*), Perceived creativity (-.14\*), Perceived intellectual ability (-.36\*\*\*), Perceived scholastic competence (-.39\*\*\*), Perceived job competence (-.26\*\*\*), Perceived appearance (-.25\*\*\*), Perceived social acceptance (-.21\*\*), Perceived level of humor (-.21\*\*), Perceived self-worth (-.26\*\*), Cooperativeness (-.14\*), Value placed on competitive learning (-.19\*\*) (\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ ) (pp. 225-226).

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to detect the best predictors of foreign language anxiety. These were found to be Age, Academic achievement (surprisingly, the latter variable had not been seen to be significantly associated with

foreign language anxiety in the previous correlational analyses), Visiting foreign countries, High school foreign languages, Expected final foreign language course average, Perceived scholastic competence, and Perceived self-worth. They contributed significantly to the prediction of foreign language anxiety,  $F(7, 202) = 19.23, p < .0001$ , and accounted for 40 % of the variance (pp. 226-227). On the basis of this analysis, the authors proposed that there was a tendency for highly language-anxious students to “have at least one of these characteristics: “older, high academic achievers, had never visited a foreign country, had low expectations of their overall average for their current language course, or had a negative perception of their self-worth” (p. 227).

Analysis of variance was carried out to ascertain whether foreign language anxiety varied with number of years of study, and with language level. It was found that foreign language anxiety seemed to intensify depending on year of study, but no differences in anxiety were seen depending on their level (beginning, intermediate or advanced students).

In the discussion, seven variables were mentioned as statistically significant predictors of foreign language anxiety, three of them being related to self-perception: students' expectations of their achievement on the language course, perceived self-worth, and perceived scholastic competence. A vicious circle was seen to occur: high anxiety “cause[s] students to lower their course expectations, perceived self-worth, and perceived scholastic competence” (p. 228). These negative expectations were partly based on fact, but anxiety seemed to lead to ever more negative expectations, which in turn eroded effort and motivation, and therefore, achievement. Other findings were that the easier a student perceived language learning to be, the less anxious they were, and that negative beliefs about skills in foreign language may have come about through poor native language skills.

The authors suggested that self-worth and foreign language anxiety may be related: learning a foreign language may be seen as ego-threatening and those with lower levels of self-esteem would suffer more. On the other hand, students with high perceived intellectual ability and high perceived scholastic competence were less anxious. Older students were more language-anxious, due perhaps to the decline of faculties involving pronunciation that accompanies ageing, and to the importance that these students lay on precision.

Lower levels of anxiety were found in students who had visited foreign countries, as was also shown in Aida's (1994) results, noted in section I.7.3., perhaps due to an increased sense of the importance of learning a foreign language. Higher levels of anxiety were experienced by those who had not studied languages at high school, leading to the recommendation that languages be introduced as early as possible at school.

An explanation for the positive relationship found between high achievement and foreign language anxiety was offered: high academic achievers may have felt that asking for help constituted failure, and so tended not to do so, thereby heightening their anxiety levels. Also, this could be an example of facilitating anxiety acting in foreign language achievement. Nevertheless, 60% of the variance in foreign language anxiety was not accounted for and more research was urged.

This section which has dealt with learner variables explored in relation to language anxiety is of note because in my research project I would be interested in examining the possible influences of numerous student characteristics on overall language achievement, on oral performance, and on language anxiety.

### I.8. Teaching Implications for the Alleviation of Language Anxiety

As one of my main concerns when teaching has always been to achieve and maintain a classroom atmosphere that is not conducive to anxiety, I wished to read about other authors have written in this regard. Over recent decades, investigators have consistently observed a negative link between foreign and second language anxiety, and different aspects of language achievement (Aida, 1994; Backman, 1974; Chastain, 1975; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Horwitz et al., 1986; Kim, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 1997; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1994a, 1994b; Pappamihiel, 2001; Phillips, 1992; Saito et al., 1999; Sellers, 2000; Young, 1986), and in consequence, several researchers have offered suggestions and recommendations to language teachers with a view to helping them reduce anxiety in their students. This section provides an overview of teaching implications suggested by numerous authors whose studies were devoted to general classroom language anxiety, to anxiety and its links to personality variables, to anxiety at different learning levels, to anxiety in the four skills, to aspects of anxiety in students' style and in learning strategies, and to anxiety in relation to language achievement.

Community Language Learning, the Natural Approach, and Suggestopedia are three well-known methods which have been created with the aim of reducing anxiety and enhancing learning in language students.

In Community Language Learning (CLL), developed by Curran (1976), learning takes place in small or large groups, although the "desirable size" for conversation groups is under ten (Koba, Ogawa, & Wilkinson, 2000, p. 1). CLL groups are the 'community' (Richards et al., 1992, pp. 66-67), and the CLL method aims to nurture trust between learner and instructor, and among peers, in an atmosphere of security in

which students “shar[e] their feelings, anxieties, frustrations or demands” (Koba et al., 2000, p. 2). In a study in which CLL was used with Japanese students of English, classroom activities included (a) “conversation circle”, in which the students sat in a ring and talked about “whatever they want[ed]” in their own language; conversations were translated by a counsellor into English and then repeated by the students; (b) transcription of the conversations; (c) a “human computer” activity, described by Samimy (1989), and cited in Koba et al. (2000, p. 2) as “based on the best aspects of human and machine ... an excellent combination of the depersonalised quality of a machine with the sensitivity of a human and a native speaker’s linguistic competence” (Samimy, p. 1989, p. 171), in which students could “control ... start and stop” the ‘computer’ (presumably the teacher), who illustrated aspects of pronunciation, and (d) card games (Koba et al., 2000, p. 2).

The Natural Approach, developed by Terrell (1977), also encourages group learning, as occurs in CLL, and stresses natural communication rather than grammatical structures. Comprehensible input is presented in the target language, and students start to speak when they feel ready. Learners’ errors are treated leniently, and the acquisition of rules rather than formal learning is promoted. Some activities are based on the Total Physical Response method (Asher, 1977), and typical techniques include mime, gesture, and roleplays. In spite of its attractiveness and apparent potential for lowering anxiety, Koch and Terrell (1991) observed that some Natural Approach activities, such as roleplays and charades, actually increased levels of anxiety in students, as has been pointed out earlier in this Review, in the subsection about language anxiety and the speaking skill.

In Suggestopedia, developed by Lozanov (1979), “music, visual images and relaxation exercises” (Richards et al., 1992, p. 365) are employed to make students feel

more secure. In “concert” sessions (Lozanov, 1979, p. 272), students work to the accompaniment of music, which is thought to enhance memory for vocabulary and the speedy retention of information. A typical Suggestopedia lesson is described in Richards (1996):

- “1. Relax (including role play and interactive tasks)
2. Context (‘map out’ situation and features of focus text)
3. Peripheral Text (meaningful interactions with accompanying translations available)
4. Active concert – (reflective reinforcement with active cognition)
5. Passive concert – (material repeated in ‘meditative’ mode to reinforce subconscious memory)” (p. 2).

Music played at approximately 80 beats per minute is thought to be particularly effective, and Baroque music is “especially recommended” (Richards, 1996, p. 2). However, this recommendation is based on opinion, as Richards’s study was not an empirical one.

Several years after Lozanov’s proposal, Rauscher, Shaw, and Ky (1993), reported that students who performed “three sets of standard IQ spatial reasoning tasks” did significantly better after listening to a piece of baroque music (Mozart’s Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major, K448) than students who performed the task after listening to a “relaxation tape” (p. 611), or to silence. This study sparked interest in the so-called ‘Mozart effect’, which has been claimed to have preventative and therapeutic benefits in many areas of physical and mental wellbeing, such as “improv[ing] memory, awareness, ... listening and attention deficit disorders, [and] reducing depression and anxiety” (What is the Mozart effect? The Mozart Effect Resource Center, retrieved October 23, 2005, from <http://www.mozarteffect.com/learn/read/html>).

Horwitz et al. (1986), at the end of their milestone study on foreign language classroom anxiety, suggested that teachers help anxious language learners deal with anxiety-arousing situations, and that they make the teaching setting less stressful, by such measures as taking care with methods of correction. Teachers should recognise that foreign language anxiety exists, and remember that very anxious students may seem to be unready or apathetic. Suggested techniques to lower anxiety in students were “relaxation exercises, advice on effective language learning strategies, behavioral contracting, and journal keeping” (p. 131). The authors also recommended that some particularly serious cases may need help from experts in the field. Horwitz and her colleagues also advised teachers to take heed of classroom atmosphere in order to discover where anxiety might be coming from, and to initiate “support systems” (p. 131) to assist anxious students.

Aida (1994) examined Horwitz et al.’s (1986) construct of foreign language anxiety in students of Japanese, and recommended that teachers nurture a “friendly, supportive atmosphere” (p. 164) to allay students’ fears about making mistakes in front of others in class, and that they help them develop “effective study and learning strategies” (p. 164). The author also submitted that learners would appreciate teachers who were able to identify anxious students and who attempted to take steps to alleviate their nervousness.

Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999), who delved into numerous personal variables in association with language anxiety, suggested recognising students’ anxiety reactions as “legitimate” (p. 232) and offering rewarding experiences to lessen anxiety, as well as attempting to lower students’ affective filter. Teachers should outline course objectives regularly, and reinforce students’ self-esteem through warmth and understanding. Also, they should help students realise that through making mistakes learners achieve more

competence, and talk to learners about anxiety, “encouraging them to seek help when needed” (p. 233). Moreover, these authors recommended introducing the teaching of foreign languages as early as possible at school. Older learners should be subjected to less demanding time-limits and tests should be written prudently, giving students opportunities to carry out similar practice tests beforehand, and testing different skills separately. Teachers should attempt to distract students’ thoughts from personal preoccupations, and ask them to keep diaries. Instructors should also attend language teaching conferences to keep up with research in this area.

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b), who investigated language class anxiety by examining essays that students had written about relaxed or anxiety-provoking experiences in using French, made the point that students “taught to emphasise their own successful experiences in the second languages would come to perceive themselves as more proficient language learners” (p. 303).

Pappamihiel (2001), who described English language anxiety in Mexican girls on moving from the EFL classroom into the mainstream, claimed that the highly-anxious female students in her study needed help to cope when communicating with students in mainstream classes, where they were “afraid of being laughed at or socially rejected” (p. 35). Pappamihiel recommended that teachers monitor such students carefully to distinguish between those who needed help and those who simply were not working. A way of helping anxious students get over their reluctance to communicate with others was to organise “safer group work” (p. 35). Also teachers could raise the awareness of native students and of Chicanos of the “harm that teasing could cause” (p. 35).

Ganschow et al. (1994) looked into differences in language performance among college language learners who were at three anxiety levels: high, average, and low.

They recommended that a learner who is both highly anxious and has FL learning problems should be given a “psychoeducational evaluation” (p. 51), both in oral and written native language and in foreign language abilities. Students who are very anxious but with sound language skills may need assistance in an “anxiety support group” (p. 51). According to these authors, learners who are highly anxious and who have “subtle or overt” language difficulties (p. 51) may be aided by measures such as tests with no time-limits, test adaptations (oral rather than written, for example), some tolerance of weaknesses in language skills, and overt instruction of sounds and symbols. These investigators also suggested that “subtypes” (p. 52) of anxious language learners might need to be identified: students who are anxious and perform satisfactorily, and students who are anxious and perform unsatisfactorily. The authors recommended that more study be devoted to the latter, especially those who experience difficulties with the “phonological code” (p. 52).

Saito and Samimy (1996), who explored foreign language anxiety in college students of Japanese who were at three proficiency levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced), suggested that a “psychologically secure environment” (p. 247) might be essential before students will take risks in the L2.

#### *1.8.1. Implications for Alleviating Language Anxiety in the Teaching of the Four Skills*

Since my teaching methodology was a four-skills one, it has been especially useful to read about ways proposed by researchers of reducing anxiety in this area.

Vogely (1998), whose study was about sources and solutions of *listening* comprehension anxiety, put forward numerous pedagogical implications for the reduction of this kind of anxiety in the language classroom. She recommended

attempting to “make input comprehensible” (p. 74). In view of the fact that many students in her study were made anxious by their teachers speaking rapidly, this author expressed concern that slowing down delivery would amount to giving students time for “word-for-word translation” (p. 74). She suggested that it is preferable to break down speech into manageable “chunks” (p. 74) while not abandoning other natural features. She also advocated taking advantage of students’ background knowledge, submitting that in a listening exercise, students will be less anxious if they are already familiar with the topic and the kind of tasks that may be required of them. She also maintained that L1 linguistic knowledge has potential for reducing anxiety.

The same author suggested using visual aids in listening activities, pointing out that these do not have to be central to the listening activity to be helpful. They can consist of supplementary material, such as posters and models. She recommended using “clear and concise structured tasks”, giving opportunities for “small successes” (p. 74), and using a step-by-step approach in activities. She suggested building up listening competence cyclically rather than in a linear fashion. These suggestions, I find, are only common sense, but teachers may need to be reminded of them.

Vogely also advocated that teachers be “understanding and sensitive” to learners’ apprehensiveness about foreign language learning in general and to listening comprehension in particular. She urged teachers to remember that the listening skill, unlike reading or writing, requires rapid reception of input and very often an on-the-spot response on the part of the student. To counteract this, the author suggested “creat[ing] a positive, nonthreatening atmosphere within the classroom” while taking into account students’ “beliefs, perceptions, fears, obstacles and anxieties” (p. 75). She suggested that students write their anxieties on the board to show them to other students, in this way allowing students to share their feelings. Finally, Vogely recommended the overt

teaching of listening strategies, and not relying on “osmosis” (Mendelsohn, 1984) for the development of this skill (p. 75). She concluded that when teachers and students turn their attention from listening for precision to “listening for a message”, there would be more incentive to understand and less worry about being “wrong” (p. 75).

Elkhafaifi (2005), who explored *listening* anxiety in students of Arabic, made numerous recommendations for alleviating it, some of which are reminiscent of Vogely’s suggestions (1998). He advocated supplying “input that is quite comprehensible” (p. 215), making sure that learners know what is expected of them in listening activities, instructing them in listening strategies, and, citing Mendelsohn (1995, p. 132) teaching them “how to listen” (p. 215). Teachers should attempt to instil in students that errors do not signify failure, and deflect them from having “unrealistic expectations” about their listening comprehension (p. 215). Instructors should also try to establish a relaxed atmosphere in class, and select listening texts carefully, above all when choosing authentic recordings. Students should be encouraged to talk in class about their apprehension as regards listening, and teachers should provide “positive feedback” (p. 215) to their learners. Elkhafaifi urged teachers to bear in mind that in some learners and instructors of Arabic, “[c]ultural differences in expectations and perceptions ... may also unintentionally create tensions and anxiety” (p. 216), and that some classroom procedures might cause nervousness in certain populations of learners. To offset this, teachers should build a “supportive and friendly environment” (p. 217).

As noted above, both Vogely (1998) and Elkhafaifi (2005) suggest that listening anxiety can be attenuated by the teaching of strategies, and both researchers refer to Mendelsohn (1984, 1995), who proposed several of these. Chen (2005) cites several of

Mendelsohn's "principles" that should be borne in mind when devising a listening course:

- “1. attend to awareness and consciousness-raising,
2. use pre-listening activities,
3. focus the listening,
4. provide guided activities,
5. practice with real data,
6. use what had been comprehended” (Chen, 2005, p. 2).

Gregersen and Horwitz, whose (2002) study was about perfectionism in language learning, focusing on anxious and non-anxious students' reactions to their performance when *speaking*, speculated that measures designed to help perfectionist learners may also aid high-anxious students. They cited some of Brophy's (1999, p. 2) recommendations for teachers, such as (a) creating a warm atmosphere in the classroom, (b) helping students see that making errors is not unusual in language learning, (c) projecting themselves as a caring teacher who wants to nurture learning, not as a powerful figure bent on assessing students' interventions, (d) fostering changes for the better rather than demanding flawlessness, (e) pointing out to learners how perfectionism can be detrimental to their progress, (f) giving assurances that they will receive any assistance they may require, and (g) providing that assistance. The authors also made two recommendations of their own: teachers should help students “control their emotional state” (p. 569) when speaking in L2, for example, by asking them to picture themselves as calm when they make an error. Also students should be encouraged to keep talking even when they are making mistakes: “continuation should be given precedence over errors” (p. 570).

Phillips (1992) set down several implications for *speaking* activities and for *oral testing*, such as (a) nurturing a “relaxed atmosphere” (p. 20) to enable students to focus on communication rather than on negative feelings about themselves. She recommended (b) discussing anxiety with students to help them see that they are not the only ones who are afflicted in this way. In addition, in order to defuse some of the tension felt by some students in oral exams, she advised the teacher (c) to let learners know that s/he is aware that often they are concerned about “*appearing* anxious” (p. 20). The teacher should (d) help learners to build “realistic expectations” (p. 20) about correctness when speaking, about the time it takes to learn a language, and about how normal it is to make mistakes. Teachers were advised (e) to give specific guidance in coping with anxiety in learning and in tests. As regards types of tests, the Phillips maintained that (f) cooperative exams tend to lower competitiveness. She gave the recommendation that (g) evaluations in pairs and groups may help dispel nervousness, and that (h) sufficient practice tests should be carried out.

In Saito et al.’s (1999) study about *reading* anxiety, the authors agreed with two of Horwitz et al.’s (1986) main proposals: “(a) help students cope with the anxiety-producing situation, and (b) make the learning context less stressful” (p. 216). They advocated helping students to recognise that reading anxiety exists and to anticipate it. Teachers could adopt ways of reducing anxiety such as instructing learners in “deep-breathing and positive self-talk”, and in reading strategies from beginning levels. Teachers should make sure that learners have reasonable expectations as regards what they should be able to understand, without the need to translate every word. They should be careful when selecting texts, and think twice about asking students to read out loud. Some special recommendations were given as regards reading non-cognate languages. Teachers should recognise the unique properties of the language, and select

authentic texts with care. They should discuss the learning and reading process with students, make sure objectives are reachable, and teach learning and reading strategies.

Sellers (2000), who also explored anxiety and the *reading* skill, focusing on reading comprehension in Spanish as a foreign language, recommended that even beginners be exposed to some authentic texts, and that these should be used with all learners in such a way as to lower tension.

Cheng (2002), who investigated factors associated with foreign language *writing* anxiety, advised teachers to acknowledge that learners' perceptions of their competence rather than their actual competence "play a much more important role in their experience of L2 writing anxiety" (p. 652). If students erred in their assessment of their English writing competence, becoming prey to anxiety as a result of this inaccurate evaluation, teachers should help put right these mistaken estimations, and also help their students take on board their mistakes and failures without detriment to their self-confidence. Further, teachers were urged to create an environment in which students would be able to write in English without awkwardness and in which "encouragement and positive feedback" were given (p. 653).

Cheng et al. (1999) attempted to distinguish *writing* and *speaking* elements of language anxiety. In view of the apparent "consistent association between low self-confidence and anxiety", these authors recommended nurturing a "nonthreatening and supportive" (p. 437) classroom atmosphere in order to enhance self-confidence in learners.

MacIntyre et al. (1997), who studied the role of anxiety students' ratings of their own second language proficiency in the four skills, *listening*, *speaking*, *reading*, and *writing*, urged teachers not to lose sight of the fact that some learners might undervalue their language competence, or be pessimistic about their future language prospects,

which might result in them exerting themselves less. These researchers also claimed that motivation can be enhanced by helping students evaluate their competence constructively, and proposed that teachers encourage learners to focus their attention on the current language activity.

*1.8.2. Implications for Alleviating Language Anxiety in Relation to Learning Style, to Learning Strategies, and to Vocabulary Learning*

Bailey et al. (1999) investigated relationships between language anxiety and students' *learning style*. These researchers made some recommendations to teachers as regards responsibility and peer-orientation, which had both been found to correlate significantly and negatively with language anxiety. For "irresponsible" students, they advised setting "short-term simple assignments" (p. 70), giving choices in accordance with learners' interests, using "student-developed goals and procedures" (p. 70), inviting students to keep diaries, urging them to seek help, stressing the importance of coming to class prepared for the lesson, and giving graded activities and quizzes, especially ones that can be self-corrected before class. In this study, "peer-orientated" (p. 71) learners who preferred to work in groups appeared to be less anxious, so the authors recommended setting up group activities in the language classroom, while recognising that for some, working in small groups might arouse anxiety. They recommended that the teacher acknowledge this preference on the part of some students, and that they should sometimes be permitted to work alone, "perhaps in a computer-based environment" (p. 72).

MacIntyre and Noels (1996) who used social-psychological variables to predict the use of *language learning strategies*, recommended that language teachers train their students in the use of learning strategies, "instill[ing] in the student the perception that

s/he knows the strategy well” (p. 383). They should also show students when to use it most appropriately, guide students so that employing strategies is easier, and take into account “students’ level of motivation, their attitudes towards the language community and the language course” (p. 384), as well as their language anxiety. The authors recommended that teachers encourage students to write about their language learning experiences in a diary, because of its helpfulness and because it is “one of the least anxiety-provoking strategies” (p. 384). They also suggested designing “individualised strategy training programs” (p. 384) after evaluating learners’ attitudes, motivation, and language anxiety.

MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), who examined links between language anxiety and three stages of *vocabulary learning* (input, processing, and output stages), supported the notion that devoting more time and effort to tasks can make up for the harmful effects of anxiety, and that this can also be said for testing situations.

As we have seen, pedagogical implications aimed at reducing language anxiety and ameliorating performance, range from the very general, such as nurturing a supportive atmosphere in class, and giving positive feedback to students, to the very specific, such as teaching symbols to improve pronunciation, and asking learners to write lists of their worries on the board. Recommendations span techniques and activities for inside the classroom (the majority), such as more secure group work, and for outside, such as diary keeping. Future investigations will surely offer teachers other solutions with the objective of lowering levels of anxiety in language learners.

As most works surveyed on this Review of the Literature have pointed towards the deleterious effects of language anxiety on language achievement and performance, and as numerous authors have suggested ways in which language anxiety might be reduced, basing their recommendations on the results of their studies, I was interested in

recounting and commenting on their advice, and previewing possible teaching recommendations that might arise from my own findings.

### Conclusion

Having outlined my general objectives and described the background to my research, having given an overview of this thesis and stated its significance, and having surveyed the literature about language anxiety that is relevant to my research interests, I am now in a position to go on to describe the project that is the object of this doctoral thesis, that is, language anxiety in learning English as a foreign language: its associations with participant variables, with overall proficiency, and with performance on an oral test.



**PART II.**

**ANXIETY IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE:  
ITS ASSOCIATIONS WITH STUDENT VARIABLES,  
WITH OVERALL PROFICIENCY,  
AND WITH PERFORMANCE ON AN ORAL TEST.  
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY**

## II.1. Research questions

I have posed five research questions in this doctoral thesis. They are:

Research Question 1. What associations are there between foreign language anxiety and university students' performance on an English language oral test as evaluated by grades and by several criteria variables concerning accuracy and communicative qualities (Hunt, 1965; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Loban, 1976; Phillips, 1990, 1992)?

Research Question 2. What demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics are associated with and best predict participants' global proficiency of English, as measured by the Quick Placement Test (Oxford University Press & University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2001)?

Research Question 3. What demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics are associated with and best predict participants' oral test results?

Research Question 4. What demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics are associated with and best predict participants' levels of foreign language anxiety, as measured by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986)?

Research Question 5. How do highly anxious participants describe their thoughts and feelings as they took an oral test in English?

## II.2. Operational Definitions

In the Introduction, numerous definitions and explanations of terms used ubiquitously in language anxiety investigations were given. This section offers ‘operational definitions’, that is, how terms were used specifically within the strict limitations of the context in this thesis.

**Students.** This refers only to the students enrolled in the English for Specific Purposes subject at the *Facultad de Ciencias de Trabajo* of the University of Granada who became the participants in this study.

**Foreign language.** In the present research, this refers to English.

**Global English proficiency.** This refers only to students’ overall skill in English as measured by the Quick Placement Test (Oxford University Press & University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2001), described fully in the Instruments section.

**Oral performance.** This refers only to the ability demonstrated by the participants in their speaking test (based on Phillips, 1992), taken as part of the ‘*examen parcial*’ (partial exam) for the English for Specific Purposes subject at the *Facultad de Ciencias de Trabajo* in February, 2005. The contents and administration of this test are described in detail in Instruments section, and Procedure section, respectively.

**Communication units** (based on Hunt, 1965; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Loban, 1976; Phillips, 1990, 1992). This refers exclusively to independent clauses in English with all their modifiers, which may be correct or not, produced by students in their oral test.

**Maze** (based on Loban, 1976; Phillips, 1990, 1992). This refers only to one or more words that were incorrect, extraneous, repetitive, or in Spanish, spoken by students in their oral test.

**Written test.** This refers only to the test of (a) listening, (b) dictation, (c) reading, (d) composition, and (e) communication, grammar, and vocabulary, taken as part of the ‘*examen parcial*’ (partial exam) for the English for Specific Purposes subject at the *Facultad de Ciencias de Trabajo* in January, 2005. The listening, dictation, and reading components, as well as some of the questions for the communication, grammar, and vocabulary part, were taken from Naunton (2000a, 2000b, 2000c), and all components of the test are described extensively in the Instruments section.

**Language anxiety.** This refers only to the feelings of apprehension and discomfort experienced by the participants of this study when learning English, as measured by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986), in Spanish translation, details of which are recounted in the Instruments section.

**Demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics.** These were gleaned with reference only to the demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective data provided by the students themselves on the Background Questionnaire (Stephenson & Hewitt, 2006), which is described in detail in the Instruments section.

**Interviews.** These refer exclusively to the one-to-one interviews held with six highly-anxious students immediately after their oral test, in which they talked about their reactions to it. Interview questions are given in the Instruments section.

**English for Specific Purposes.** This refers only to the English for Specific Purposes subject that focused on English for business and the world of work, imparted at the *Facultad de Ciencias de Trabajo* of the University of Granada, which was based on the *Head for Business* course (Naunton, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c) course, described by the

author as a course “for learners with little or no experience of the world of business .... provid[ing] pre-work students with the specialist language knowledge and professional communication skills they will need in their jobs” (2000b, p. 4).

**Intermediate level.** This refers only to the level of English established in the English for Specific Purposes subject taught at the *Facultad de Ciencias de Trabajo*, based on the *Head for Business* (Naunton, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c) course, which, as submitted by the author, is “an intermediate-level integrated skills course” (2000b, p. 4).

**Variables.** The variables selected and defined in this thesis are related to this research project only. They were measured by the scales, tests, and questionnaires as described in the Instruments section, administered as laid out in the Procedures section, and analysed as recounted in the Data Analysis section. The variables are not based on any other linguistic abilities, or on any demographic, academic, cognitive, or affective characteristics of the participants outside the scope of this research.

## II.3.Method

### *II.3.1.Participants*

Forty students in total participated in the study, selected out of an original total of 73 (number of students given on official exam results, *Actas*, in June 2005). Twenty-eight (70%) were women, and 12 (30%) were men. Ages in October 2004 when the study started ranged from 18.84 years to 25.58 years, students' average age being 21.27 years ( $SD = 1.76$ ). Of the 40 participants, 29 (72.5%) were in their second year, and 11 (27.5%) were in their third year. Grade point average for their University degree course up to the beginning of the study ranged from 0.46 to 3.50 (the highest possible grade being 4.00), with an average grade of 1.44. All participants were Spanish except for one who was gave his nationality as *hispano-argentino* (Spanish-Argentinian). The mother tongue of 39 (97.5%) participants was Spanish, and of one (2.5%) participant it was Portuguese.

Participants were all enrolled in the *Diplomatura de Relaciones Laborales* (Diploma in Labour Relations) degree course at the *Facultad de Ciencias del Trabajo* (Faculty of Work Sciences) at the University of Granada, Spain, during the academic year 2004-2005. This *Relaciones Laborales* university diploma course lasts for three years, after which students may opt to continue studying for another two years to obtain the *Ciencias del Trabajo* honours degree (*Licenciatura en Ciencias del Trabajo*).

All participants were taking English for Specific Purposes (*Inglés para Fines Específicos*). This is an elective *Libre Configuración* subject, and students do a 'parcial' exam in February and a final exam in June. Details about Libre Configuración subjects in general, about this subject in particular, and about other subjects taken

during the first, second, and third years of the *Diplomatura de Relaciones Laborales* diploma course are given in Appendix D. Enrolment data for this *Diplomatura* at the *Ciencias del Trabajo* Faculty for the academic year 2004-2005 are presented in Appendix E.

### *II.3.2. Instruments*

In this study several instruments were used. These are described in more detail below and were:

- (a) an anxiety instrument (the Spanish version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, FLCAS, Horwitz et al., 1986)
- (b) an oral performance instrument (the Oral test, based on Phillips, 1992)
- (c) eight Oral performance criteria (based on Hunt, 1965; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Loban, 1976; Phillips, 1990, 1992)
- (d) two language ability instruments
  - (i) the Written test (Naunton, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c)
  - (ii) Teacher ranking (based on Phillips, 1990, 1992)
- (e) an overall English proficiency instrument (the Quick Placement Test, Oxford University Press & University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2001)
- (f) a Background Questionnaire (Stephenson & Hewitt, 2006)
- (g) two open-ended questions for interviews with selected highly anxious students (based on Phillips, 1992).

*II.3.2.1. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, FLCAS, (Horwitz et al., 1986)*

#### *II.3.2.1.1. The original FLCAS.*

This scale, developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), evaluates levels of anxiety related to the experience of learning a foreign language in the classroom, “as evidenced by negative performance expectancies and social comparisons, psychophysiological

symptoms, and avoidance behaviors” (Horwitz, 1986, p. 559). Dr. Horwitz, in a personal communication (February 27, 2004), most kindly gave her permission for me to use the FLCAS in this doctoral thesis investigation.

The items of this instrument are based on “student self-reports, clinical experience, and a review of related instruments” (Horwitz, 1986, p. 560). FLCAS items were formulated taking into account:

- (a) comments made by anxious students who took part in a ‘Support Group for Foreign Language Learning’ at the University of Texas at Austin, who described their problems when learning English in the classroom
- (b) experiences recounted by counsellors/tutors at the Learning Skills Center at the same University
- (c) Horwitz’s personal experience as a language teacher of anxious students
- (d) surveys of other instruments used in the evaluation of anxiety. These were “[m]easures of test anxiety (Sarason, 1978), speech anxiety (Paul, 1966), and communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1970)” (Horwitz, 1986, p. 560); five items from the French Class Anxiety Scale (Gardner, Clément, Smythe, & Smythe, 1979), which were “made generic and added to the item pool” (Horwitz, 1986, p. 560).

The FLCAS has 33 items with which respondents express the extent of their agreement or of their disagreement with statements about how they experience learning a foreign language in the classroom, and “are reflective of communication apprehension, test-anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 129). As regards communication apprehension, several items are about nervousness felt when speaking and others are about tension experienced when listening. Two examples are item 9: “I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class”,

and item 4: “It frightens me when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language” (p. 129). Item 21 is an example of a statement concerning test-anxiety: “The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get” (p. 130), and item 13 is illustrative of fear of negative evaluation: “It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class” (p. 129). Certain items express a lack of anxiety in the language learning situation, such as item 18: “I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class” (p. 129).

Each item offers 5-point Likert-type responses, ranging from “*strongly agree*” to “*strongly disagree*”: Strongly agree (SA) = 5; Agree (A) = 4; Neither agree nor disagree (N) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; Strongly disagree (SD) = 1. Possible scores range from 33 to 165. According to Horwitz (1986), this scale has been found to have an internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, of .93, and test-retest reliability over eight weeks of  $r = .83, p = .001$  (p. 560). More information about the FLCAS was given in the Review of the Literature, section I.3., The Development of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, and Appendix B presents a copy of this scale in its original form (Horwitz et al., 1986, pp.129-130).

#### *II.3.2.1.2. The Spanish version of the FLCAS.*

For the purposes of the current investigation with Spanish students, a Spanish version, translated by the researcher, of the original English FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) was employed.

In the first instance I had intended to use a verified Spanish-language FLCAS that Rodríguez and Abreu had used in their Venezuelan investigation (2003). In order to pilot this version, I asked students enrolled in the previous year’s *Diplomatura de Relaciones Laborales* course to complete it on May 5, 2004. Due to problems arising

out of their misunderstanding of some of Rodríguez and Abreu's items, I translated the FLCAS myself and used this new version. (Extra information about Rodríguez and Abreu's version of the FLCAS is given in Appendix F).

In my translation, I attempted to be as faithful as possible to Horwitz et al.'s original English version. As a heading, I used a phrase which described the scale as a questionnaire about attitudes in the foreign language (English) classroom: '*Cuestionario sobre Actitudes en el Aula del Idioma Extranjero (Inglés)*', following Phillips (1990, p. 181), which I thought would be satisfactorily informative for participants. I translated the anchors ('Strongly agree', etc.) both verbally and numerically (Horwitz et al. had given verbal anchors only), heeding suggestions from students in the piloting session held on May 19, 2004, that both words and numbers made the options clearer. I rendered 'Strongly agree' as *Totalmente de Acuerdo* TA(5); 'Agree' as *De Acuerdo* A(4); 'Neither agree nor disagree' as *Ni de Acuerdo ni en Desacuerdo* N(3); 'Disagree' as *En Desacuerdo* D(2); and 'Strongly disagree' as *Totalmente en Desacuerdo* TD(1).

My version was verified through back translation (American Psychological Association Publication Manual, 2001, p. 20) by a final year student of *Traducción e Interpretación*, University of Granada. It was piloted without any problems at the *Biblioteconomía y Documentación* Faculty with the aid of *Inglés para Fines Específicos II* students on May 19, 2004, and so was used in the study.

Internal consistency for my administration of the FLCAS was found to be .93 using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This is identical to the internal reliability alpha coefficient found for the original English version of the FLCAS, reported by Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 129). While Horwitz et al. discovered that item 26. "I feel more tense and nervous my language class than in my other classes" was "the single best discriminator of anxiety on the FLCAS as measured by its correlation with the total score" (p. 130), in

the present research, item 20, “I can feel my heart pounding when I’m going to be called on in language class” was found to be the best discriminator ( $p = .819^{**}$ ,  $r = .001$ ;  $**p < .01$ ).

The final version, as used in this study in October 2004, is presented in Appendix G. Please note that the piloting schedule for all the instruments is given in the Procedure section.

#### *II.3.2.2. The Oral Test (based on Phillips, 1992)*

The instrument used for the oral test was originally published in Phillips (1992). This researcher had used it in a study involving Anglophone learners of French, so in the first place the instrument was in French, with instructions in English. I translated the instrument accordingly, for Spanish learners of English. My version of this instrument was also verified through back translation, in accordance with recommendations made by the American Psychological Association (2001, p. 20). The test was a communicative, one-to-one talk, held between participant and teacher, and consisted of two parts.

The first part was a culture-related test, in which the student was asked in the target language to “talk freely on a given cultural topic randomly selected from readings in the two chapters included on the test” (Phillips, 1992, p. 16), the teacher giving prompts only if necessary. Questions about culture, each printed on a separate card, were about geography, agriculture, industry, tourism, the weather, and rail transport. The teacher had a corresponding protocol, with which to maintain the conversation and elicit certain grammatical structures.

The second part of the oral test was a role-play between the participant and the teacher, in which the student was expected to take the leading role. There were three

student roles, each printed on a separate card. The teacher had a protocol with which to take part in the role play. Role-play situations were: (1) a conversation between a brother and sister, in which the elder brother/sister (the participant) gives advice about studying and exam preparation to the younger one (the teacher); (2) a conversation between two friends who meet in a café at the end of the summer and talk about their holidays; (3) a conversation between a sophomore (the participant) and a freshman (the teacher) who has just arrived on campus; the latter asks the former about his/her experiences during his/her first days at university.

The two parts were piloted with the help of a group of students in the *Ciencias Políticas y Sociología* Faculty on September 16, 2004. The two parts of the test, Cultural topics (tourism, geography, etc., within a Spanish context), and Student's cue cards with teacher protocol, translated from the original English/French (Phillips, 1992, p. 26) into Spanish/English, are presented in Appendix H.

#### *II.3.2.3. The Eight Oral Performance Criteria (based on Hunt, 1965; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Loban, 1976; Phillips, 1990, 1992)*

Not only the overall oral test grade, but also eight criteria belonging to the test were used as measures of oral performance. It was desirable to evaluate different elements of students' performance based on a deeper analysis of their oral test, and to this end I used techniques suggested by Hunt (1965), Larsen-Freeman (1983), and Loban (1976), and used in Phillips (1990, 1992). These elements were (a) Communication Units, a communication unit being "basically an independent clause with all its modifiers" (Phillips, 1992, p. 16), (b) Mazes, a maze being a word, or several words, or a fragment of a word that is that is extraneous, incorrect, or in the learner's mother tongue, and which does not contribute to successful communication

(based on Loban 1976, Phillips, 1990, 1992) (c) target structures, and (d) dependent clauses.

The eight oral performance criteria were 1) Total words in communication units (CUs), 2) Average length of CUs, 3) Percent of *error-free* CUs, 4) Percent of words in error-free CUs, 5) Percent of total words in mazes, 6) Average length of mazes, 7) Number of target structures, and 8) Number of dependent clauses (Phillips, 1992, pp. 16-17). How these criteria were identified and measured is described in great detail in Appendix I.

In order to establish the reliability of these measures, a rater and the researcher evaluated the transcripts of nine randomly-selected students according to the eight criteria, and inter-rater reliability for the eight performance criteria was computed using Pearson correlations. Internal consistency of each of the eight criteria for the scores of the two raters was also computed, using Cronbach's alpha. Pearson correlations were all positive and statistically significant, and ranged from .745 to .988, indicating an acceptably high reliability between the scorings of the researcher and the rater on all variables. They agreed most strongly on the total number of words in CUs ( $r = .988, p < .001^{**}$ ), on average length of CUs ( $r = .923, p = .001^{**}$ ), and on number of target structures used ( $r = .916, p = .001^{**}$ ), and were least in agreement about the percentage of error-free CUs ( $r = .780, p = .013^*$ ), and about the number of dependent clauses ( $r = .745, p = .023^*$ ) used by students in their oral tests, but these correlations were still significantly high. (Note.  $*p < .05$ .  $**p < .01$ .)

Cronbach's alpha coefficients showed a high degree of internal consistency (Kim, 2001, p. 81) for the ratings on all variables, with number of total words in CUs revealing the highest coefficient (.993), and number of dependent clauses used presenting the lowest (.850).

A sample oral test transcript and a table showing inter-rater reliability correlations (Pearson), and internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) for the eight oral performance criteria are also presented in Appendix I.

#### *II.3.2.4. Teacher Ranking (based on Phillips, 1990, 1992)*

This instrument, also taken from Phillips (1990, 1992), was a measure of the teacher's personal evaluation of each student's position in the class in relation to all other students. A number was assigned to each student "based on a rank ordering of all students according to the teacher's estimation of their overall (four skills) language competence" (p. 16). This ordering was not based on students' formal grades, and was carried out before any tests were taken. How this ordering was arrived at explained is in the Selection and Definition of Variables section.

#### *II.3.2.5. The Written Test (Naunton, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c)*

This test is called the Written Test to distinguish it clearly and concisely from the Oral Test. The content of this test was based on the topics and skills, including listening, reading, and writing, covered in the *Inglés para Fines Especificos* course. Most material for the test was taken directly out of the teacher's book exam section, or adapted from student's book or workbook activities (Naunton, 2000b, 2000a, 2000c), and the author of the thesis devised some of the questions. The five components of the test were:

- (1) Listening comprehension. Students listened to two telephone messages about future arrangements which had been left on an answering machine. They were asked to correct six mistakes made by the person who had noted down the messages.

- (2) Dictation. A text about the lives of two working women was dictated to students. Each phrase was repeated twice, and the whole text was repeated at the end.
- (3) Reading comprehension. Students read a passage about overwork and its possible pressures on relationships and family life. They responded to ten true/false items about the text.
- (4) Writing. Students wrote a formal letter to a language school in Britain, accepting a place on a language course, and enquiring about accommodation and cultural activities.
- (5) Communication, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. For this part, students wrote classroom language questions (for example, “What does XXX mean?”), transcribed words written in phonetic symbols into ordinary spelling, put jumbled sentences from a telephone conversation in the correct order, selected the correct tense for verbs from a job application letter, and did a gap-fill exercise with vocabulary relating to employment.

Copies of the five components of the written test are presented in Appendix J.

*II.3.2.6. The Quick Placement Test (Oxford University Press & University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2001)*

The Quick Placement Test (QPT) was developed by Oxford University Press & the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (2001). It is described in the user manual as a “flexible test of English language proficiency” (p. 2), and so I used it as a test of proficiency in my participants. This test has undergone modifications and improvements since the beginning of the 1990’s, and numerous “key quality control

stages” (p. 13) have been incorporated, taking into account “the test purpose, the intended candidates, the overall test structure, range of test types, test construct and score reporting issues” (p. 13). New testing material is tried out with “representative groups of students” (p. 14). Before being published, the present QPT was “validated in 20 countries by more than 5,000 students” (p. 14).

It is available in two versions: the paper and pen test, and the computer-based version, both of which test reading, vocabulary, and grammar. Scores correspond to the five Association of Language Testers of Europe (ALTE) bands (1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), which in turn match the five Council of Europe levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2).

Table 2, adapted from the Chart of Equivalent Levels given in the Quick Placement Test manual (p. 9), shows how the ALTE levels (and their descriptors), and the Council of Europe levels correspond to each other.

Table 2

*Chart of Equivalent Language Levels, Showing how ALTE Levels and Council of Europe Levels Correspond to Each Other*

ALTE Level	ALTE Level Description	Council of Europe Level
0	Beginner (Breakthrough)	A1
1	Elementary (Waystage)	A2
2	Lower Intermediate (Threshold)	B1
3	Upper Intermediate (Independent User)	B2
4	Advanced (Competent User)	C1
5	Very Advanced (Good User)	C2

*Note.* Adapted from Quick Placement Test manual (2001, p. 9).

The paper and pen version of the test consists of two photocopyable answer booklets (QPT Versions 1 and 2), each with its corresponding photocopyable answer sheet. The two versions are distributed alternately among students, reducing the

likelihood of cheating. According to the booklet, it “takes 30 minutes to administer” (p. 2).

Versions 1 and 2 each have two parts in identical format. Part 1 consists of 40 items: questions 1 - 5 are discrete reading comprehension multiple-choice items, each with three distractors; questions 6 – 10 are blanks in a cloze passage, with multiple-choice items, each with three distractors; questions 11 - 20 appear in two cloze reading passages, each with five multiple-choice questions (four distractors); questions 21- 40 are blanks in discrete sentences, and each item has four distractors. In Part 2, questions 41 – 50 are contained in two cloze passages, each with five items (four distractors); and questions 51 – 60 are again discrete sentences in four-distractor, multiple-choice format. Students’ scores are calculated easily and quickly by means of a transparent Key which is laid over the students’ answer sheets.

It is recommended in the QPT manual that only Part 1 (items 1 - 40) be used if “you think that your students are mostly between ALTE Levels 0 and 3 (inclusive)” (p. 8). This would be between Beginner and Upper Intermediate levels (see Table 3, adapted from the QPT manual’s “Look-up table”, p. 8, which shows equivalent ALTE levels and paper and pen test scores). It is recommended that both Parts be used, that is, items 1 – 60, “if [...] you are unsure of the level of your students” (p. 8). As may be seen in Table 3, the 40-item test and the 60-item test score-bands are slightly different from each other, in order to compensate for the fact that even lower-level candidates might guess correctly “at least 2 of the extra 20 items” in Part 2 (p. 8). The error margin for the 60-item test is given in the QPT manual as  $\pm 4$  points, meaning that “68% of the time (or about 7 times out of 10) a student’s score will be within plus or minus [...] 4 points of their ‘true score’” (p. 9).

Table 3  
*Paper and Pen Scores, and Equivalent ALTE Levels, for Part 1, and Parts 1 & 2 of the Quick Placement Test.*

ALTE Level	Paper and Pen Test Score	
	Part 1 score out of 40	Parts 1 & 2 score out of 60
0 Beginner	0 – 15	0 – 17
1 Elementary	16 – 23	18 – 29
2 Lower Intermediate	24 – 30	30 – 39
3 Upper Intermediate	31 – 40	40 – 47
4 Advanced		48 – 54
5 Very Advanced		55 – 60

*Note.* Adapted from the “Look-up table for [...] paper and pen scores” section, QPT user manual (p. 8).

The Quick Placement Test was piloted during the examination period in the month of September, 2004, at *Biblioteconomía y Documentación* on September 15 and 23, with two different groups of students, who found no problems with it. The Paper and Pen 40-item version of the test was used in the present study.

#### *II.3.2.7. The Background Questionnaire (Stephenson & Hewitt, 2006)*

In order to garner demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective data about the participants, I designed a 36-item background questionnaire in Spanish, overseen by my thesis director, and subsequently piloted. In it students were asked about demographic characteristics, such as age, sex, and nationality, about their family’s social and linguistic background, such as their parents’ professions, and family members’ mother tongues, about their general academic history, such as grade point average at Granada university, about their English-learning history, such as length of

time spent learning English at primary and secondary levels, visits to English-speaking countries, and mark at '*Selectividad*' (the Spanish university entrance exam), about their perceptions about themselves as language learners, such as their self-assessed level of English, and about their attitudes and reasons for learning English, such as perceived difficulty of the subject, or being enrolled for the sake of obtaining credits or increasing their chances of a better profession in the future. Most of these types of variables have been examined in other studies on language anxiety and language achievement (Aida, 1994; Elkhafaifi, 2005; MacIntyre et al., 1997; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999, 2000; Pappamihel, 2005), but the Background Questionnaire used in the present study went even further by asking about such demographic information as parental education, and about such cognitive information as other reasons students might have had for learning English.

Specifically, it informed students that the questionnaire was part of an investigation into the learning of English, and assured them that all information they gave would be treated in confidence. It advised them that they could ask the teacher for clarification if necessary, and thanked them for their participation. At the top students wrote their name. This was requested in case any information given was not clear, or for the sake of identifying individual participants if necessary (for example, in the selection of highly anxious students for post-oral-test interviews). Participants supplied the name of their Faculty, and the date. Items 1 to 9 of the questionnaire asked about personal details; items 10 to 13 were about family background; items 14 to 19 requested data on the participant's history as an English-as-a-foreign-language student, and about their assessment of their own level of English (globally and in the four skills); items 20 and 21 were about other foreign languages that the student might know; items 22 to 27 inquired into the subject's general academic background and formal qualifications in

English; items 28 to 34 questioned students about my subject, their opinions about it and their expectations as to how they would fare in it. Item 35 asked about the participant's future plans, and item 36 enquired about his/her feelings and attitudes about speaking activities and oral exams in the English classroom. Finally, participants were afforded the opportunity to give any other information, and were asked to give their signed consent, and were thanked for taking part. Please note that item 36a) and b) is based on Phillips (1990, p. 213).

The Background Questionnaire was piloted with the assistance of groups of students at two Faculties: a preliminary version at *Ciencias de Trabajo*, with the previous year's *Diplomatura de Relaciones Laborales* students on May 5, 2004, and the definitive version at *Biblioteconomía y Documentación* with the *Inglés para Fines Específicos II* group on May 19, 2004. Appendix K shows a copy of the Background Questionnaire, in its original Spanish version, and Appendix L presents the Background Questionnaire with the English translation of items.

#### *II.3.2.8. Two Open-Ended Questions for Interviews with Selected Highly Anxious Students (based on Phillips, 1992)*

Two open-ended questions were asked in one-to-one interviews conducted with six highly anxious students (three of high ability, and three of low ability). Students could respond however they wished to the two questions, which were: '*Por favor, describe tus pensamientos durante la prueba oral,*' and '*¿Cómo te sentiste durante la prueba oral?*' ('Please describe your thoughts during the oral test', and 'How did you feel during the oral test?', based on Phillips, 1992, p.17). For a detailed account of how these six students were selected and how interviews were conducted, please see the Procedure section.

### *II.3.3. Procedure*

In this section, I first recount the piloting of the various scales and questionnaires used, and go on to outline the teaching background of the study, and then describe the step-by-step administration of the instruments. A summary of the teaching background and the Procedure stages is given in Table 4 at the end.

#### *II.3.3.1. Piloting the Scales and Tests*

The piloting of the scales and tests used in the study was carried out during the academic year prior to the study, in May and in September, 2004. Here is the schedule of the piloting sessions.

The Background Questionnaire was piloted at two Faculties: a preliminary version at the Faculty of *Ciencias de Trabajo*, with *Diplomatura de Relaciones Laborales* students on May 5, 2004, and the definitive version at the Faculty of *Biblioteconomía y Documentación* with students from *Inglés para Fines Específicos II* on May 19, 2004.

The Spanish Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was piloted on May 19, 2004, at the *Biblioteconomía y Documentación* Faculty with help from *Inglés para Fines Específicos II* students.

The Quick Placement Test was tried out at the *Biblioteconomía y Documentación* Faculty on September 15 and 23, 2004, with two different groups of students

The two parts of the oral test were piloted with the assistance of a group of students at the *Ciencias Políticas y Sociología* Faculty on September 16, 2004.

### *II.3.3.2. Teaching Background and Step-by-Step Administration of the Instruments*

My definitive research was carried out at a large public University in Spain: the University of Granada, where all together 55,631 students were enrolled during the academic year 2004-05 (information retrieved from University of Granada website, September 8, 2005).

The 40 students who took part in my research were all studying one major subject: the university diploma course leading to the *Diploma de Relaciones Laborales* (Labour Relations Diploma). They were all studying English as an elective subject (*Inglés para Fines Específicos/English for Specific Purposes*), which focused on business and the world of work. The course lasted for one academic year and classes were held on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 14:00h to 15:00h. The level was intermediate and the course was based around one coursebook, *Head for Business* (Naunton, 2000a), with extra activities taken from the Workbook and teaching ideas and guidance from the Teacher's Book (Naunton, 2000c, 2000b). The four skills were developed and practised in classroom and homework activities.

The investigation began on October 25, 2004, near the beginning of the academic year 2004-05. I had wished to start the study on the first day of class (October 4, 2004) with at least 40 participants, but was unable to do this as very few students (19 out of a preliminary enrolment list of 63) attended class on that day. Over the following three weeks no more than 34 students came to class, due perhaps to a national long weekend (*Día de la Hispanidad*, October 12, 2004), and the official beginning-of-course celebration at that Faculty (October 20). Very importantly, there was a period of '*alteración de matrícula*' (modification of registration) at the beginning of the *cuatrimestre* (officially from October 18 to November 5, 2004) in which students were able to change their enrolment to and from courses, which meant that several other

students joined the group and a few left. Nearing the end of the modification of registration period, I presumed that all students enrolled in the class would remain so for the whole of the academic year.

Not wanting to delay commencing the study any further, therefore, I started the investigation on the October 25, 2004, that is, at the beginning of the fourth week of the course. On that day 42 students came to class. I invited them to take part in an investigation “about learning English as a foreign language,” not mentioning anxiety or nervousness. This was to avoid the Hawthorne effect (Porte, 2002, p. 236), that is, eliciting insincere or uncharacteristic responses or ‘improved’ performance that might arise from students “want[ing] to ‘do their best’, and be[ing] a good contributor – all of which can translate into their behaving in the way they think the observer/scorer wants them to behave” (p. 58). I promised course credit in return for their cooperation. I also gave assurances that any data provided or test scores obtained would be treated with complete confidentiality, and that grades would not be affected in any way, other than the course credit given in return for participation. All students present on that day agreed to take part.

My students were starting out in a course that lasted one academic year only. This meant that I had little or no idea of their English language level beforehand. So that I could ascertain students’ English proficiency level as early as possible in the course, I administered the Oxford University Press and University of Cambridge Quick Placement Test (QPT), which is a “language proficiency test” (QPT manual, 2001, p. 2), and has a relatively small margin of error in evaluating a student’s “‘true score’” (p. 9). I used the 40-item test, in the Paper and Pen version.

On the same day, October 25, 2004, I also administered a Background Questionnaire. If students did not know or could not remember any data, e.g., their

grade point average at Granada University, they were allowed to add this information at the end of class over the following weeks. In such circumstances, a student would give me any missing information verbally, and I would complete the questionnaire accordingly. In this way, participants were unable to modify any existing data on their questionnaires themselves.

The students who completed the Quick Placement Test on this date (October 25, 2004) were the ones whose questionnaire data and test scores were used in subsequent analyses, that is, they became the participants. This was because only the Quick Placement Test results of these students were secure. Other students who attended class on later dates were invited to take part in the study and completed the QPT and the Background Questionnaire for the sake of face value, but their questionnaire data and test results were not used. Of the original 42 students who came to class on October 25, one student left the room before she had completed the Quick Placement Test, and therefore could not be included, and one student attended class on that day only, so 40 participants remained in the study.

Two-and-a-half weeks later, that is, six weeks into the course, on November 10, 2004, the FLCAS was administered. This timing allowed participants to become familiar with language activities in class so that they could respond to FLCAS with more experience and more knowledgeably about them.

At the end of November 2004, that is, the ninth week of term, I selected six highly anxious students (three high ability, three low ability) for the think-aloud procedures that were to be carried out after the oral test. To identify language anxiety levels, I used primarily participants' anxiety prediction comments given on the Background Questionnaire, and their FLCAS scores. To detect English language ability, I used participants' QPT scores, their position in the group based on these scores, and

their self-professed *Selectividad* grades (the Spanish university entrance exam) or highest pre-University English grades. All six students chosen agreed to be interviewed after the oral test, to talk about their reactions to it.

At this time, I subjectively ranked the participants into levels. I did this without using any means of formal assessment, taking into account students' participation, listening to their spoken interventions, and observing their written work while monitoring during class activities.

I then administered the written test: the dictation and the composition on Monday 24, 2005, and the listening, reading comprehension, and communication, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary components on Wednesday 26, 2005, that is, in the 14th week of the first '*cuatrimestre*'. In this way, the written test coincided with the official University of Granada 'partial exam' period (*exámenes parciales*) at the end of January, 2005. These instruments were marked over the next few days.

Students made an appointment for their oral test, choosing from February 9, 10, and 11, 2005, that is, the 16th week after the beginning of the term. These dates were also selected to coincide with the official University examinations period. Students met with me individually on their chosen date.

The three topics for the first part of the test (cultural topics), each printed on a separate card, were laid face down on the desk. The examinee selected a topic at random and talked about it, the teacher giving prompts if necessary. An identical procedure was conducted for the selection of the role-play topics. The examinee led the role-play as much as possible. Each test lasted between 10 and 15 minutes. All exams were audio-recorded.

Immediately after their oral exam, the six selected highly anxious participants were asked to stay behind, listen to the recording of their test, and talk in Spanish about

what they had thought and how they had felt during the test, in answer to the following questions: '*Por favor, describe tus pensamientos durante el examen oral,*' and '*¿Cómo te sentiste durante el examen oral?*' ('Please describe your thoughts during the oral test', and 'How did you feel during the oral test?'). These think-alouds were also recorded.

Once each participant had left the room, the teacher graded his/her oral test, completing an Oral Test Grade scoring sheet, shown in Appendix M. Transcripts of the recordings of the oral tests of all students and of the think-alouds of the six selected highly-anxious students were then made.

Each oral test transcript was then scrutinised in order to determine the number of 'communication units' and of 'mazes', and to evaluate each student's oral production during the exam in accordance with the eight performance criteria (Hunt, 1965; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Loban, 1976; Phillips, 1990). It was necessary to assess the reliability of the eight performance criteria as measured by the researcher. Therefore a rater (a highly qualified teacher of English as a foreign language with many years' teaching experience) was trained over two sessions in April, 2005 to evaluate the eight performance criteria, and she and the researcher individually analysed nine oral test transcripts (three randomly selected from low scorers on the oral test, three randomly selected from moderate scorers, and three randomly selected from high scorers). The rater was not informed of the oral test grade or of the QPT scores obtained by any of the nine students whose transcripts were used in this analysis. In the Selection and Operational Definition of Variables section, and in Appendix I, information is given about the identification and evaluation of these eight variables, which was used in rater training. Interrater reliability outcomes are also given in Appendix I.

Data analysis for the five research questions was then conducted between April and June, 2005. Principal analytical techniques for the first, second, third, and fourth

research questions were Pearson correlations, partial correlations, analysis of variance, and standard multiple regression. For the fifth research question, post-oral-test transcripts were analysed.

Table 4 presents a summary of the teaching and research background of the study, as well as the schedule and dates of its different stages.

Table 4  
*Summary of the Teaching Background and the Procedure Schedule and Dates*

Teaching and research background	
<i>University</i>	
Type	Large, public
<i>Participants</i>	
Number	40 (from one class)
Age range	18-25
Gender	28 females, 12 males
Average years of FL study	10.97 ( $SD = 2.24$ )
<i>Language course</i>	
Status	Elective ( <i>Libre Configuración</i> )
Subject	English for Specific Purposes
Approach	Four skills
Coursebook	Single text (Naunton, 2000a)
Level of course	Intermediate
Duration	Two ' <i>cuatrimestres</i> '/semesters (= one academic year)
<i>Study dates and schedule</i>	
Duration	First ' <i>cuatrimestre</i> '/semester of academic year 2004-2005
Administration of questionnaires and tests	Fourth week, October 25, 2004: QPT and Background Questionnaire  Sixth week, November 10, 2004: FLCAS Ninth week: Six highly anxious (three high- and three low-level) students identified and their agreement sought to be interviewed after oral test  Fourteenth week, January 24 and 26, 2005: Written test

Sixteenth week, February 9, 10, and 11, 2005: Oral tests held and audio-recorded. Highly anxious students interviewed and recorded after oral test

*Data analysis*

End February, March 2005:  
Transcriptions of all 40 oral exams made, as well as transcriptions of six highly-anxious students' think-alouds

April 2005: Rater training with randomly chosen exam transcripts.  
Inter-rater reliability analysis conducted

April to June 2005: Data analysis. For first, second, third, and fourth research questions: Pearson correlations, partial correlations, analysis of variance, and standard multiple regression analyses. For fifth research question: analysis of post-oral-test interview transcripts.

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### II.3.4. Selection and Definition of Variables

For the *first research question*, dependent or criterion variables were nine measures of oral ability in English. These were (a) *Oral test grade*, corresponding to the overall score of the speaking component of the ‘*parcial*’ examination taken by the participants at the *Facultad de Ciencias del Trabajo* in February, 2004, and (b) eight *Oral performance criteria* scores pertaining to that test.

As regards (a) *Oral test grade*, this was marked taking into account grammatical accuracy, breadth of vocabulary, pronunciation including individual sounds and word stress, and fluency. Appendix M presents the scoring sheet for the Oral test grade. While grades on University of Granada examinations range from 0 to 10, I wished to grade participants’ oral test more finely so I used a possible range of 0 to 100.

The other oral ability variables were (b) eight *Oral performance criteria* scores pertaining to that exam (Phillips, 1992, pp. 16-17). These were:

- 1) Total words in communication units (CUs),
- 2) Average length of CUs,
- 3) Percent of *error-free* CUs,
- 4) Percent of words in error-free CUs,
- 5) Percent of total words in mazes,
- 6) Average length of mazes,
- 7) Number of target structures,
- 8) Number of dependent clauses.

A “communication unit” (CU) (based on Hunt, 1965; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Loban, 1976; Phillips, 1990, 1992) is “basically an independent clause with all its modifiers” (Phillips, 1992, p. 16). The first variable, percentage of total words in CUs,

“measured comprehensible output” (p.16). The second variable was the average number of words per CU, and this “determined, in part, syntactic maturity” (p. 17). The third and fourth variables, percent of error-free CUs and percent of words in error-free CUs, purported to offer a “rating of quality as well as quantity” (p. 17) in students’ oral tests.

The fifth and sixth variables involve ‘mazes’ (Loban, 1976; Phillips (1990, 1992), described as “‘a series of words (or initial parts of words), or unattached fragments which do not constitute a communication unit and are not necessary to the communication unit’” (Phillips, 1992, p. 17). These two variables were percent of total words in mazes, and average number of word per maze. The seventh variable was number of target structures. In the present study, target structures were a) Simple past; b) Present Perfect Progressive; c) advice constructions, e.g., try to..., you should..., you could..., you must..., don’t forget to ....., try not to..., it’s a good idea to...; + and - imperatives; d) asking about what something is like; e) inviting someone to something to eat or drink. The eighth variable was number of dependent clauses, which was “used as an additional measure of syntactic maturity” (p. 17).

For extensive notes on how communication units and mazes were defined and measured, please refer to Appendix I.

Please note that the first Oral performance criteria variable, described by Phillips as ‘*Percent of total words in communication units*’ (pp. 16, 18, my italics), should be ‘*Total words in communication units*’. Please see Appendix N for details about this discrepancy in Phillips’s (1992) description. From now on, this variable is referred to only as ‘Total words in communication units’.

Three English language ability measures were also used:

a) *Teacher ranking*

b) *Written test average*

c) *Teacher ranking and written test average.*

*Teacher ranking* was the teacher's informal and subjective assignment of each participant to a rank in relation to others in the group, without reference to any formal English language indicators, such as tests or exams. Phillips pointed out that the 'best' student was given the highest rank (= 1), and "ties were allowed" (p. 22). The ordering of ranks was carried out as in the following example. Supposing one student were considered to be the 'best', then s/he would be assigned to rank 1. If another student were esteemed to be the 'second best', then s/he would be allocated to rank 2. Supposing two students were thought to be equally good, and 'third best', they would both be assigned to rank 3. As the latter two students would be now occupying rank 3, the next best student would be allocated to rank 5 (= 3 + 2). The next best student would occupy rank 6. If three students were thought to be equally competent, and next best, they would all be placed at rank 7. As three students would now be occupying this rank, then the next position would be rank 10 (= 7 + 3), and so on. This procedure is based on Phillips's (1990) frequency table for this measure (p. 117).

*Written test average* was the average grade, out of a possible 100 marks, of the five tests, (a) Listening comprehension, (b) Dictation, (c) Reading comprehension, (d) Writing, and (e) Communication, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, that made up the written component of the first-term '*parcial*' ESP exam in February, 2005.

*Teacher ranking and written test average* was the aggregate of the two previous variables.

Also for the first research question, one anxiety measure (my Spanish translation of the *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, FLCAS*, Horwitz et al., 1986) was used as the independent or predictor variable. Calculating each student's total score on the FLCAS is as follows:

“TA(5)” (*Totalmente de Acuerdo/Strongly agree*) responses are marked as 5

“A(4)” (*De Acuerdo/Agree*) responses are marked as 4

“N(3)” (*Ni de Acuerdo ni en Desacuerdo/Neither Agree nor Disagree*) responses are marked as 3

“D(2)” (*En Desacuerdo/Disagree*) responses are marked as 2

“TD(1)” (*Totalmente en Desacuerdo/Strongly Disagree*) responses are marked as 1.

However, it is necessary to reverse-score items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32. This is because the wording of all items is “balanced [...] to reduce the effects of acquiescent and negative response sets” (Horwitz, 1986, p. 560). Therefore, these nine items are scored thus:

“TA(5)” (*Totalmente de Acuerdo/Strongly agree*) responses are marked as 1

“A(4)” (*De Acuerdo/Agree*) responses are marked as 2

“N(3)” (*Ni de Acuerdo ni en Desacuerdo/Neither Agree nor Disagree*) remains as 3

“D(2)” (*En Desacuerdo/Disagree*) is marked as 4

“TD(1)” (*Totalmente en Desacuerdo/Strongly Disagree*) is marked as 5.

Adding up the numbers selected on each response is now possible and gives the total FLCAS score.

For the *second, third, and fourth research questions*, three dependent variables were selected: two language ability measures, and one affective measure. These were *Quick Placement Test, Oral test grade, and FLCAS*.

Also for the *third, fourth, and fifth research questions*, 29 independent variables were employed, using data gleaned from students’ responses on their Background Questionnaire, and also the Written test average. They were divided into four categories: demographic, educational, academic, and affective, as follows.

*Demographic variables*

- 1) Age
- 2) Gender
- 3) Father's educational level
- 4) Mother's educational level
- 5) Father's profession
- 6) Mothers' profession
- 7) Age at which English learning started
- 8) Days spent visiting/living in English-speaking countries

*Academic variables*

- 1) Months spent learning English in schools (primary, secondary, and/or private language schools)
- 2) Years since English was last studied formally
- 3) Another language spoken or known
- 4) Year of study

*Cognitive variables*

- 1) Highest grade obtained in English at pre-university level
- 2) Grade point average at Granada University
- 3) English class attendance
- 4) Hours of English study out of class per week

Reasons for studying this English subject:

- 5) To enhance university studies
- 6) To obtain credits
- 7) To improve future profession opportunities
- 8) For another reason(s)
- 9) Difficulty of current English subject

- 10) Estimation of own English proficiency level
- 11) Self-assessed level in listening
- 12) Self-assessed level in speaking
- 13) Self-assessed level in reading
- 14) Self-assessed level in writing
- 15) Expected grade in this subject
- 16) Written test average

*Affective variables*

- 1) Belief that performance in oral activities in class will reflect English level
- 2) Belief that anxiety/nervousness will influence performance in oral activities in class.

Please note that cognitive variables ‘English class attendance’ and ‘Hours of English study out of class per week’ are related to “study habits”, which Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000) considered as a cognitive variable (p. 9).

Quick Placement Test, Oral test grade, and FLCAS were themselves used as predictor variables in correlational analyses and in multiple regression analyses.

On the Background Questionnaire where participants had given responses out of two possible options, for example, ‘Gender: Male .../ Female ...’, or ‘Do you speak or know another language apart from Spanish and English? No ... / Yes ....’, responses were assigned the numbers 1 or 2, as follows.

For Background Questionnaire item 2, ‘*Hombre ... / Mujer ...*’ (Male ... / Female ...), which became Demographic variable 2, ‘*Hombre*’ was assigned 1, and ‘*Mujer*’ was assigned 2.

For Background Questionnaire item 20, ‘*¿Hablas o conoces otra lengua aparte del español y el inglés? No ... / Sí ...*’ (Do you speak or know another language apart

from Spanish and English? No... / Yes ...), which became Academic variable 3, ‘No’ was assigned 1, and ‘Sí’ was assigned 2.

For Background Questionnaire item 34d, ‘*El conocimiento del inglés es importante por otra(s) razón(es) no señalada(s) en a), b) o c). No... / Sí ...*’ (Knowledge of English is important for another reason/s not mentioned in a, b, or c. No ..... / Yes ...), which became Cognitive variable 8, ‘No’ was assigned 1, and ‘Sí’ was assigned 2.

For Background Questionnaire item 36 a) ‘*Mi rendimiento reflejará mi nivel en inglés.....Sí / No* (Performance will be indicative of my ability in English. ....Yes / No), which became Affective variable 1, ‘No’ was assigned 1, and ‘Sí’ was assigned 2.

For Background Questionnaire item 36b, ‘*Mi nerviosismo/ansiedad influirá en mi rendimiento .....Sí / No*’ (Performance will be affected by nervousness/anxiety ..... Yes / No), which became Affective variable 2, ‘No’ was assigned 1, and ‘Sí’ was assigned 2.

#### *II.3.4.1. Research Design*

This study was pre-experimental in design, that is, it was carried out without a control group. During the academic year in which I conducted this study, I taught different English subjects to four groups of students, each at a different Faculty, so no two groups could be satisfactorily compared as they were not enrolled in the same degree courses nor were they studying similar material. Moreover, only one of those groups studied English as an annual, as opposed to a ‘*cuatrimestral*’ (one term) subject (*Inglés para Fines Específicos*, at the *Facultad de Ciencias del Trabajo*). This group of students was the one I selected to be the participants in my thesis research project, as this would allow me to conduct the study during the first term/*cuatrimestre*, but still to

be in direct contact with them during the second term in case I needed to clarify any questionnaire data.

In spite of the unavoidable constraints of using an intact class (in which students are enrolled in their class prior to the research and random allocation to groups is not possible), I conducted my research in a “genuine” language classroom. This is considered an advantage by Nunan (1992), who saw the classroom as “specifically constituted for the purposes of teaching and learning”, and not only as a “venue for research” (p. 102). In addition, Porte (2002) points out that pre-experimental designs “and the research findings that emerge from them” are not “somehow inferior to true experimental research”, but will require replication and will allow us to “discern tendencies” (pp. 72-73) in our area.

My research has been both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The *first* research question was investigated quantitatively: possible associations between language anxiety and oral performance were explored, through correlational analyses and analyses of variance involving scores on a scale (the FLCAS, Horwitz et al., 1986) and the Oral test grade, and also the FLCAS and eight performance criteria scores. Partial correlations involved Written test average, Teacher ranking, and Written test average and teacher ranking. The purpose of the partial correlations was to ascertain whether language anxiety, and not only merely language ability, was influencing any statistically significant correlations. The research design for this question follows that of Phillips’s (1992) research, in which “Pearson correlations were computed between the FLCAS and oral exam grades .... and between scores on the FLCAS and eight oral performance variables” (p. 17), and in which partial correlations controlling for ability measures were also carried out.

The *second*, *third*, and *fourth* research questions were also quantitatively investigated: correlations were conducted to discover associations between demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective student variables, and (a) English language proficiency as measured by the QPT, (b) the Oral test grade, and (c) FLCAS scores, respectively. Then regression analyses were carried out in order to detect the best predictors of (a), of (b), and of (c). Answers to the second, third, and fourth research questions compensated to some extent for our lack of knowledge about this group's demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics, all of which might have influenced relationships between language anxiety and oral performance (investigated in the first and fifth research questions).

The research design of the second, third, and fourth questions follows that of Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999, 2000). In their (1999) study, these authors used Pearson correlations to “determine correlations between foreign language anxiety and the selected independent variables” and “multiple regression analysis was used to determine the best predictors of foreign language anxiety” (p. 224). In Onwuegbuzie et al.'s (2000) research, “Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients ... were used to assess the relationship between foreign language achievement and ...18 independent variables” (p. 8), and subsequently multiple regression analyses was employed to predict foreign language achievement.

The *fifth* research question was answered qualitatively, through open-ended interviews, which allowed individual highly anxious students to talk about their feelings and thoughts during the oral test. The design of this question also follows the interview component of Phillips's (1992) research.

The two approaches, quantitative and qualitative, provide a suitable balance throughout the research. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989), qualitative research

design “allow[s] us to study individual performance closely, [but] it may or may not represent the behavior of other learners and is therefore of questionable value for generalization to language acquisition by others” (p. 115). To offset this drawback, quantitative research has the advantage that it may “represent a reality for that group” (p. 115). What is more, the post-oral-exam interviews with selected students helped to buttress findings based both on the FLCAS scale and on written comments made on the Background Questionnaire through ‘triangulation’ (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989), that is, the process of substantiating similar outcomes “through different sources” (p. 105).

My research in answering the first and the fifth research questions has followed some aspects of Phillips’s work (1990, 1992), by examining relationships between language anxiety and performance on an oral test. The second, third, and fourth research questions are based on some features of Owuegbuzie’s et al.’s studies (1999, 2000), and have extended the scope of the two afore-mentioned questions by inquiring into participant characteristics which help predict linguistic proficiency, oral performance, and language anxiety.

### *II.3.5. Data Analysis*

In this study the data gathered by means of the scales, tests, questionnaires, and interviews were analysed in several ways. This section describes how the analytical procedures were used and reported in each research question.

#### *II.3.5.1. Analytical Techniques Employed*

The analytical procedures employed to explore the *first, second, third, and fourth* research questions were computed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 12.0.

The principal statistical procedures were Pearson correlations, partial correlations, analyses of variance (ANOVA), and standard multiple regression analyses, described in Appendix A. For descriptive statistics, the mean (*M*), standard deviation (*SD*), maximum, minimum, and frequency distribution of the variables were computed. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used in testing the reliability of FLCAS scores, as well as inter-rater reliability. The third language ability variable, *Teacher ranking and written test average*, which was the sum of the two variables, Teacher ranking, and Written test average, was computed by adding these two together, using the SPSS statistical analysis procedure ‘*Transformar*’ > ‘*Calcular*’ > ‘*Sum*’ (Transform > Calculate > Sum).

##### *II.3.5.1.1. The first research question.*

For the first research question, an SPSS 12.0 spreadsheet/‘*editor de datos*’ was completed with FLCAS scores, Oral test grade scores, the eight Oral performance

criteria scores, Teacher ranking, Written test average, and Teacher ranking and written test average.

***The FLCAS scores and the Oral test grade.*** Pearson correlations were computed for the FLCAS scores and the Oral test grade. Then partial correlations were carried out controlling for three language ability measures, (a) Teacher ranking, (b) Written test average, and (c) Teacher ranking and written test average, in order to discover whether the original correlation between FLCAS scores and the Oral test grade might have been influenced by these three aspects of language ability.

An analysis of variance on the mean Oral test grade was then conducted. The independent variable was the FLCAS score, students having being assigned to three anxiety groups (high-, moderate-, and low-anxiety), with the twenty-fifth and the seventy-fifth percentiles being employed as cut-off points ( $n = 10$ ,  $n = 20$ ,  $n = 10$ ). The ANOVA explored whether there were significant differences in mean oral test grades amongst the three anxiety groups. Tukey's post-hoc analysis revealed which anxiety groups, if any, were significantly different from one another in their Oral test grade.

***The FLCAS scores and the eight Oral performance criteria variables.*** Prior to carrying out correlations between the FLCAS scores and the eight Oral performance criteria variables, inter-rater reliability was established. In order to ascertain inter-rater reliability, Pearson correlations were conducted between the two raters' scores on each of the eight variables pertaining to the transcripts of nine randomly-selected participants (three low-ability, three moderate-ability, and three high-ability), and by determining the Cronbach alpha coefficient in each case.

Once inter-rater reliability had been determined, Pearson correlations between the FLCAS scores and the eight Oral performance criteria variables were conducted.

Next, partial correlations were computed on statistically significant correlations between the FLCAS scores and the eight Oral performance criteria scores, controlling for three language ability variables: (a) Teacher ranking, (b) Written test average, and (c) Teacher ranking and Written test average. As with the FLCAS/Oral test grade partial correlation, these partial correlations were carried out in order to assess the possible influence of language ability on the statistically significant correlations.

An analysis of variance was carried out on the means of the eight Oral performance criteria variables for the purpose of detecting differences in performance among the three anxiety groups (low, moderate, and high). Tukey's post-hoc analyses were conducted to find out which anxiety groups, if any, were significantly different from one another as regards the eight Oral performance criteria.

***Statistical significance in correlations and in partial correlations.*** I used 'two-tailed' tests of significance in correlations and in partial correlations. "A two-tailed test is normally used when the researcher does not have an explicit hypothesis concerning expected direction of the coefficient, i.e., whether it will be positive or negative. The one-tailed test is normally used when there are rather explicit expectations about the direction of the coefficient" (Nie, Hadlai Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1970). I have also followed the authors of numerous language anxiety studies who specified that they used two-tailed tests of significance (Cubillos, 1992; Kim, 2000; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Phillips, 1990; Sellers, 2000).

In reporting statistical significance for correlations and for partial correlations in the body of the *text*, in most cases I have given exact probabilities (*p* values) as provided by the SPSS package, following American Psychological Association (APA) recommendations (2001, pp. 24-25). These exact *p* values are given using an '=' sign. On several occasions, however, when the SPSS programme has rendered extremely low

probabilities as .000 without supplying the exact value, I have expressed these values as .001, and used a '<' sign. Wright (2003) recommends this procedure because " $p = 0$  ... may suggest to some readers that the probability is absolute zero; that is an impossibility. We prefer reporting  $p < .001$  in these situations" (p. 125).

As regards reporting statistical significance levels in *correlation tables*, I have given correlation values ( $r$ ) and probability values ( $p$ ) in the body of the table (the latter being a provision made by APA, p. 25), as well as identifying in a Note at the bottom the  $p$  values as indicated in the SPSS package. A single asterisk (\*) specifies results achieving a statistical significance level of  $< .05$ , and a double asterisk (\*\*) indicates those reaching a statistical significance of  $< .01$ .

Wright (2003) advocates that researchers follow Thompson's (1996) suggestion of "always prefacing 'significant' with 'statistically'", as this clarifies that " $p = .05$  does not mean 'significant' in its standard English usage" (p. 124). I have followed this recommendation throughout this thesis.

#### *II.3.5.1.2 The second, third, and fourth research questions.*

For the second, the third, and the fourth research questions, Oral test grade, FLCAS, Written test average, Quick Placement Test, and the demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables were analysed.

For each of these three research queries, correlations were first computed to detect which independent (or predictor) variables were most significantly associated with the dependent variables, that is, with Quick Placement Test, with Oral test grade, or with FLCAS. The most highly correlated independent variables were then entered into the standard multiple regression analysis, which revealed which ones best predicted the dependent variable. Regression analysis was considered particularly useful here, as

it concurrently examined a multitude of personal variables pertaining to the participants (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989).

In line with Tabachnick and Fidell's (1989) advice, the independent variables entered into the regressions were highly correlated with the dependent variable in each case, but not correlated with one other. So, for example, in the regressions of the Quick Placement Test score (dependent variable), and of the Oral exam grade (dependent variable), independent variables that were themselves were English test scores were left out. Similarly, Grade point average (as a measure of general academic achievement), which has been likened to language achievement in that both are thought to reflect general intelligence, was excluded from the Quick Placement Score regression.

As regards the ratio of number of participants to number of independent variables entered into the standard regression analyses, this study conforms to, and indeed exceeds Camacho Rosales's (2002) stringent requirements of 10 to one: there were 40 participants, and in one regression, four independent variables were used, while in two of the regressions, three independent variables were employed.

***The second research question.*** Pearson correlations were computed between the Quick Placement Test scores and 30 demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables, the Oral test grade, and FLCAS score. With the statistically significant correlations found, standard multiple regression analysis was then conducted to detect which of the demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables were the best predictors of the Quick Placement Test scores.

***The third research question.*** Pearson correlations were carried out between the Oral test grade and 30 demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables, QPT scores, and FLCAS scores. With the statistically significant correlations encountered, standard multiple regression analysis was then carried out to ascertain which of the

demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables were the best predictors of the Oral test grade.

*The fourth research question.* Pearson correlations were computed between the FLCAS scores and 30 demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables, the QPT scores, and the Oral test grade. With the statistically significant correlations found, standard multiple regression analysis was then conducted to find out which of the demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables were the best predictors of the FLCAS scores.

#### *II.3.5.1.3. The fifth research question.*

Six highly anxious students (three high-ability, and three low-ability) were selected on the basis of their predictions of speaking anxiety, and of language ability indicators, as described below.

In order to distinguish participants who predicted that they would be highly anxious in speaking activities and in oral tests, comments given by all participants (N = 40) on the Background Questionnaire were taken into account in an initial scrutiny, as well as total FLCAS scores.

Amongst the highly anxious students selected in the first instance, a second inspection was made, this time of English ability indicators. These indicators were (a) scores on the Quick Placement Test, (b) students' position in the class based on the QPT, and (c) the highest mark obtained in English at pre-University level, as stated on the Background Questionnaire.

The six highly anxious students whose English proficiency levels were highest and lowest, and who agreed to be interviewed about their reactions to the oral exam, were selected.

Analysis of the transcripts of interviews recorded after the oral test by the six selected highly anxious students of both high and low ability, involved looking for (a) similarities in students of both abilities in what they had thought and felt during the oral test, (b) differences in these reactions between students of high and low ability, and (c) individual student reactions.

## II.4. Results

In this section descriptive data are given for the principle variables employed in the study, and then the results obtained for the five research questions are presented, that is, for research question 1) What associations are there between foreign language anxiety and university students' performance on an English language oral test as evaluated by grades and by several criteria variables concerning accuracy and communicative qualities?; for research question 2) What demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics are associated with and best predict participants' global level of English, as measured by the Quick Placement Test (Oxford University Press & University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2001)?; for research question 3) What demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics are associated with and best predict participants' oral test results?; for research question 4) What demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics are associated with and best predict participants' levels of foreign language anxiety, as measured by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986)?; and for research question 5) How do highly anxious participants describe their thoughts and feelings as they took an oral test in English?

### *II.4.1. Descriptive Statistics for the Principle Variables Employed in this Study*

This subsection displays descriptive statistics for the Oral test grade, for the eight Performance criteria variables, for the Written test average, for Teacher ranking, for the Quick Placement Test, for the FLCAS score, and for the Background Questionnaire data.

#### II.4.1.1. Descriptive Statistics for the Oral Test Grade

Table 5 displays descriptive statistics for the Oral test grade, showing ranges of 0-100 (modified grading) and 0-10.0 (University of Granada grading).

Table 5  
*Descriptive Statistics for the Oral Test Grade*

Measure	Possible Range	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Oral test grade (modified grading)	0-100	43-78	59.60	11.17
Oral test grade (University of Granada grading)	0-10.0	4.3-7.8	6.0	1.12

*Note.* *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation.

As may be observed in Table 5, marks fell into three of the four University of Granada grading bands: ‘*Suspensó*’/Fail (0.0-4.9); ‘*Aprobado*’/‘Pass’ (5.0-6.9); ‘*Notable*’/Very good (7.0-8.9); ‘*Sobresaliente*’/Distinction (9.0-10.0). Nine students failed the oral test, 20 students passed, and 11 received a ‘*notable*’ grade. No-one obtained a ‘*Sobresaliente*’. Frequencies for the Oral Exam Grade are shown in Appendix O.

#### II.4.1.2. Descriptive Statistics for the Eight Oral Performance Criteria Variables

The descriptive analysis of the eight Oral performance criteria variables revealed the results that are presented in Table 6.

Table 6  
*Descriptive Statistics for the Eight Oral Performance Criteria Variables*

Variable	Min.	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Total words in CUs	48	313	173.95	58.04
Average length of CU	3.76	11.53	7.04	1.52
Percent of error-free CUs	18.18	80.95	52.29	16.35
Percent of total words in error-free CUs	11.28	78.07	42.90	17.34
Average length of maze	1.17	5.71	2.74	.98
Percent of total words in mazes	5.20	63.50	23.28	12.89
Number of dependent clauses used	0	8	2.50	2.33
Number of target structures used	1	20	7.73	3.93

*Note.* CU = Communication Unit; Max. = maximum value; Min = minimum value.

It may be seen that the mean total words in communication units, which is a measure of “quantity of comprehensible output” (Phillips, 1992, p. 16), is 173.95, although the large standard deviation (58.04) indicates that there was considerable variability in mean number of CU words from student to student. Total number of words in communication units accounted on average for just over three-quarters of all words in the oral exam, as shown by the mean percent of total words in mazes (23.28%). The average length of communication units (7.04 words), which is a measure of “syntactic maturity” according to Phillips (p. 16), is about two-and-a-half times greater than the average length of maze (2.74 words). While on average just over half of all communication units were free from error (52.29%), words in these error-free communication units constituted slightly more than two-fifths (42.90%) of the total words in students’ oral exams.

On average, almost a quarter of all students’ output was made up of mazes (23.28%), although again, there was considerable variability as regards the amount of

this ‘incomprehensible’ input, i.e., fragments, repetitions, and words in L1, emitted from student to student, as shown by the notable standard deviation (12.69), and the maximum and minimum values found for this variable: in one student’s exam, 63.50% was maze output, while in another’s, only 5.20% was made up of mazes. Mean length of maze was almost three words (2.74), and mazes varied in length from just under one word (.98), to almost six words (5.71). Mazes could be fragments of words or stammerings, both of which were counted as half a word (see Appendix I, point D).

Wide variability on the part of individual student’s performance was also shown in the range of dependent clauses that they used (from 0 to 8), and even more so in the range of target structures that they employed in their oral exam (1 to 20).

#### *II.4.1.3. Descriptive Statistics for the Written Test Average and for Teacher Ranking*

Table 7 displays descriptive statistics for the Written test average. As with the Oral test grade, the possible range is between 0 and 100 (my modified grading) and 0 and 10.0 (as used at the University of Granada).

Table 7  
*Descriptive Statistics for Written Test Average*

Measure	Possible Range	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Written test average (modified grading)	0-100	38.6-81.6	58.54	11.84
Written test average (University of Granada grading)	0-10.0	3.9-8.2	5.9	1.18

Students’ written test marks fell into three of the four grading bands employed at the University of Granada: ‘*Suspenseo*’/Fail (0.0-4.9), ‘*Aprobado*’/ Pass (5.0-6.9), and

'*Notable*'/Very good (7.0-8.9). Ten participants failed this written test, twenty passed, 10 obtained a '*notable*', and no-one achieved a '*Sobresaliente*'/Distinction (9.0-10.0).

As regards Teacher ranking, that is, the teacher's informal and subjective estimation of a participant's position in the group in relation to other members of the group, I ranked the 40 participants into 16 levels.

Frequencies for the Written test average, and for Teacher ranking, and for the other language ability variable, Teacher ranking and written test average, are shown in Appendix P.

#### II.4.1.4. Descriptive Statistics for the Quick Placement Test

Descriptive statistics for the Quick Placement Test are given in Table 8.

Table 8  
*Descriptive Statistics for the Quick Placement Test*

	Possible range	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Quick Placement Test	0-40	10-28	18.65	3.932

According to the Quick Placement Test results, the 40 participants in this study were shown to be between Beginner and Lower Intermediate levels, with scores ranging from 10 to 28 points. Eight (20%) of the students were at Beginner level (scoring 15 points or below), 27 (67.5%) of the participants were at Elementary level (obtaining a score of between 16 and 23), and five (12.5%) were at Lower Intermediate level (with scores of between 24 and 28 points). The mean QPT score (18.65) showed that the average level of this group was Elementary. Frequencies for the Quick Placement Test are shown in Appendix Q.

#### II.4.1.5. Descriptive Statistics for the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

Descriptive statistics for the FLCAS are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

*Descriptive Statistics for Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale*

Scale	Possible Range	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
FLCAS	33-165	63-136	101.15	19.34

As may be seen in this table, total FLCAS scores ranged between 63 (the score indicating the lowest anxiety level in this group) and 136 points (the score indicating the highest anxiety level in this group), with an average score of 101.15. Quite a wide variability in scores is shown by the large standard deviation (19.34).

Frequencies for participants' total scores on this scale are displayed in Appendix R, and frequencies for individual items are shown in Appendix S.

#### II.4.1.6. Descriptive Statistics for Background Questionnaire Data

This sub-section presents the descriptive results for the Background Questionnaire data. Items are cited in the order they appeared on the Questionnaire. Numerical data were garnered from most of the items, while some yielded more qualitative information. Data from items 1, 4, 5, and 6, which contained private information (name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address, respectively) are not reported.

Item 2) Of the 40 students who participated in the study, 28 were women (70%), and 12 (30%) were men.

Item 3) Ages in October 2004 when the study started ranged from 18.84 years to 25.58 years, students' average age being 21.27 years ( $SD = 1.76$ ).

Item 7) The nationality of 39 out of the 40 students (97.5%) was Spanish and one student (2.5%) gave his nationality as *hispano-argentino* (Spanish-Argentinian).

Item 8) This item, which asked about the profession of participants, was left blank in all cases, indicating that they were all students without jobs.

Item 9) The mother tongue of 39 participants (97.5%) was Spanish, and one participant (2.5%) stated that her mother tongue was Portuguese.

Item 10) According to the Education Scale from the Hollingshead Index of Social Position (Hollingshead, 1957), which offers a hierarchy of seven education levels, participants' parents occupied the positions shown in Table 10. Figures are given for Father and Mother.

Table 10  
*Parental Education Levels*

Education Scale <i>Description</i>	Father	Mother
1. Professional (MA, MS, ME, MD, PhD, LLD, and the like)	1	-
2. Four-year college graduate (BA, BS, BM)	4	1
3. One to three years college (also business schools)	2	3
4. High school graduate	8	8
5. Ten to 11 years of school (part high school)	21	25
6. Seven to nine years of school	4	3
7. Less than seven years of school	-	-

*Note.* Adapted from *Hollingshead Index of Social Position* (Hollingshead, 1957).

Items 11) and 12) According to the Occupation Scale of the Hollingshead Index of Social Position (Hollingshead, 1957), participants' parents occupied the positions shown in Table 11. Originally, this Scale consisted of seven levels. I observed, however, that several participants stated on their Background Questionnaire that one or other of their parents was '*ama de casa*' (housewife) or retired. As the Occupation Scale

of this Index does not cater for those who do not work outside the home or who are retired, I added an eighth position to this scale (Home-makers, and retired persons), in line with the Registrar General's scale, which includes a category to "cover those who have never had paid work and the long term unemployed" (National Statistics Socio-economic Classifications, retrieved from the Internet, August 8, 2005).

Table 11  
*Parental Occupations*

Occupation Scale <i>Description</i>	Father	Mother
1. Higher executive of large concerns, proprietors, and major professionals	-	-
2. Business managers, proprietors of medium-sizes businesses, and lesser professionals	5	2
3. Administrative personnel, owners of small businesses, and minor professionals	8	4
4. Clerical and sales workers, technicians, and owners of little businesses	7	-
5. Skilled manual employees	6	-
6. Machine operators, and semiskilled employees	5	3
7. Unskilled employees	6	4
8. Home-makers, and retired persons	3	27

*Note.* Adapted from *Hollingshead Index of Social Position* (Hollingshead, 1957) and National Statistics Socio-economic Classifications (2005).

Item 13) Seven participants (17.5%) had family members whose mother tongue was not Spanish: one participant's (2.5%) mother, one participant's (2.5%) father, mother, brothers and sisters, one participant's (2.5%) uncles and aunts, and four participants' (10%) cousins, all had mother tongues that were not Spanish.

Item 14) Ten participants (25%) had lived in or visited an English-speaking country, and 30 (75%) had not. One student (2.5%) had stayed for a month; two (5%) had stayed for two weeks; five (12.5%) had stayed for one week; two (5%) had stayed

for less than a week. Number of days spent in an Anglophone country ranged from 0 to 104 ( $M = 2.98$ ,  $SD = 16.40$ ).

Item 15) Students' starting ages for learning English ranged from 5-years-old to 14-years-old, with a mean starting age of 9.78 years ( $SD = 2.26$ ).

Item 16) Thirty-seven participants (92.5%) had studied English at primary school. Attendance at primary ranged from 0 years to 7 years ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.79$ ) and all participants (100%) had had formal education in English at secondary school, ranging from 4 years to 6 years at this level ( $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = .87$ ). Seventeen students (42.5%) had studied English at private language schools. Attendance at private schools ranged from 0 to 12 years ( $M = 1.62$ ,  $SD = 3.07$ ). Ten participants (25%) had had tuition with private teachers, attendance ranging from 0 to 4 years ( $M = .37$ ,  $SD = .95$ ). Two students (5%) stated that they had studied English at university level apart from the course they were doing at the Faculty of *Ciencias del Trabajo*: one for a year, and one for a month. Other sources of English studies were as follows: one student (2.5%) said that she had studied for 5 years at the University language school, *Centro de Lenguas Modernas*; one student (2.5%) had done English for a year through a 'módulo' (training college study module). Total months spent studying English in schools (primary, secondary, and private schools) ranged from 48 to 252, with an average of 120.90 months ( $SD = 44.195$ ).

Item 17) Three students (7.5%) mentioned the textbook title 'Select', one (2.5%) 'Pre-select', and one (2.5%) 'Blueprint'. One student (2.5%) gave the title as '2° Bachiller', and one (2.5%) as 'PET', which allowed me to identify pre-intermediate/intermediate level textbooks. One participant (2.5%) remembered the most advanced title as being 'The Silver Sword', and another (2.5%) student gave Edgar Allan Poe as a title. Six students (15%) recalled 'Oxford' as the publisher of their most

advanced English book, while one (2.5%) remembered Heinemann, one (2.5%) McGraw Hill, one (2.5%) Cambridge, and one (2.5%) Longman. Two students (5%) said that they had not used a book in class, five (12.5%) recalled the colour of their most advanced book, and twelve (30%) left this item blank.

Item 18) Concerning students' own conception of their level of English, this ranged from beginners to upper intermediate. Seven students (17.5%) assessed their level to be beginners, while 12 (30%) considered themselves to be at elementary level. Ten (25%) esteemed their level to be pre-intermediate, and six (15%) believed they were at intermediate level. Four (10%) estimated their level was upper-intermediate, and one (2.5%) considered his level to be advanced.

Item 19) As regards the listening skill, 12 students (30%) considered themselves as beginners, and six (15%) thought that they were at elementary level. Ten (25%) believed they were at a pre-intermediate stage in this skill, and six (15%) esteemed that they were at intermediate level. Three (7.5%) assessed their listening level to be upper-intermediate, and one (2.5%) considered himself to be pre-advanced. Two participants (5.0%) esteemed that they were at an advanced level in listening in English.

Concerning the speaking skill, five participants (12.5%) believed that they were beginners, while nine (22.5%) thought that their level was elementary. Ten (25%) assessed themselves to be pre-intermediate orally, and eight participants (20%) believed that their speaking level was intermediate. Four (10%) thought that their level was upper-intermediate, and three (7.5%) esteemed that they were advanced. One student (2.5%) deemed his speaking level to be post-advanced.

In the reading skill, four participants (10%) said that they were beginners, and seven (17.5%) maintained that their level was elementary. Three (7.5%) thought that they were pre-intermediate readers, and eight students (20%) considered that their level

was intermediate. Five (12.5%) believed that their reading level was upper-intermediate, and seven (17.5%) assessed it as pre-advanced. Two participants (5.0%) esteemed that they were advanced readers of English, one (2.5%) thought he was post-advanced, and three participants (7.5%) considered their reading skills to be at Cambridge Proficiency examination level.

As far as the writing skill is concerned, five students (12.5%) believed themselves to be beginners, and six (15%) stated that they were elementary. Four (10%) assessed themselves to be pre-intermediate in this skill, while ten (25%) maintained that their writing was at intermediate level. Five (12.5%) deemed that their writing was at upper-intermediate level, and five (12.5%) estimated that it was at a pre-advanced stage. Three students (7.5%) considered that they were advanced in their English writing skills, and two (5%) that they were post-advanced.

Items 20) and 21) Eighteen students (45%) said that they spoke or knew another language apart from Spanish or English: 15 (37.5%) spoke or knew French; one (2.5%) spoke or knew Portuguese; one (2.5%) spoke or knew Italian, and one (2.5%) spoke or knew Catalan. Twenty-two students (55%) did not speak or know another language. No-one was studying a foreign language other than English at the time of the study.

Item 22) Questionnaire responses surprisingly revealed that not all of the 40 participants had done the *Selectividad* university entrance exam, or that they had done English in that exam. Thirty-seven (92.5%) had done English at *Selectividad*, and three (7.5%) had not. Of the latter students, one (2.5%) had done French in that exam, and two (5%) had entered Granada University through '*Formación Profesional*' (college training). Grades obtained in English at *Selectividad* or highest pre-University grades in English ranged from 2.5 to 8.5 ( $M = 5.47$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ ) out of 10.

Item 23) The number of years that had elapsed without studying English between *Selectividad* and enrolment in this subject ranged from 0 to 6 ( $M = 2.38$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ).

Item 24) One participant (2.5%) stated that he had taken the PET (Preliminary English Test) and obtained a Pass. One student (2.5%) said that he had a Trinity College certificate, with a Distinction.

Items 25) and 26) All students (100%) were taking the *Relaciones Laborales* degree. Twenty-nine (72.5%) were in their second year, and 11 (27.5%) were in their third year.

Item 27) Grade point average at the University of Granada can range from between 0.0 and 4.0. This range corresponds to the 0.0-10.0 grading for individual subjects. Equivalent grades, with nomenclature, are as follows:

0.0-0.99 corresponds to 0.0-4.99, *Suspense* (fail)

1.0-1.99 corresponds to 5.0-6.99, *Aprobado* (pass)

2.0-2.99 corresponds to 7.0-8.99, *Notable* (very good)

3.0-3.99 corresponds to 9.0-10.0, *Sobresaliente* (excellent).

Current grade point average for the participants of this study ranged from 0.46 to 3.50, ( $M = 1.44$ ,  $SD = .54$ ).

Item 28) All participants (100%) stated that for them this English for Specific Purposes subject was elective (*de Libre Configuración*).

Item 29) All students (100%) said that this subject was taught for two hours a week.

Item 30) As regards class attendance for the duration of the study between October 4, 2004, and January 24, 2005, students could have attended a total of 22 classes (one hour per class). Attendance ranged from 9 classes (40.9%) to 22 classes (100%), with students coming to an average of 16.87 classes (76.68%,  $SD = 3.83$ ).

Item 31) Participants maintained that they studied English outside class for between 0 and five hours per week, studying for an average of 1.43 hours ( $SD = 1.23$ ).

Item 32) Seven students (17.5%) rated this subject as being ‘easy’, 22 (55%) said that it was ‘OK’ (*regular*), ten (25%) deemed it as ‘difficult’, and for one (2.5%) student it was ‘very difficult’.

Item 33) On being asked to predict the grade they would obtain in this subject, students expected marks of between 4.00 and 9.00 out of 10.00. The average expected grade was 5.86 ( $SD = 1.16$ ).

Item 34 a), b), and c) Table 12 shows the number of students who selected each agreement/disagreement option about their reasons for learning English.

Table 12

*Statements about Reasons for Learning English with Numbers of Students who Selected each Agreement/Disagreement Option*

5 (Strongly agree)	4 (Agree)	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	2 (Disagree)	1 (Strongly disagree)
a) <i>El conocimiento del inglés es importante para mi carrera universitaria</i> (Knowledge of English is important for my degree course)				
23	13	2	1	1
b) <i>Me matriculé en esta asignatura sólo por conseguir créditos</i> (I enrolled in this subject only to obtain credits)				
-	3	10	17	10
c) <i>El conocimiento del inglés es importante para mi profesión en el futuro</i> (Knowledge of English is important for my future profession)				
26	7	5	1	1

Item 34d) Out of the 40 participants, 24 (60%) said that they were studying English for another reason or reasons, apart from those mentioned 34 a), b), and c), while 16 (40%) said that they were not. Of those who had another reason or reasons, two participants (5%) said that they were studying English because they liked it, and one (2.5%) because she felt passionate about it (*“me apasiona”*). Seven students

(17.5%) wrote that among their reasons for learning English was the wish to communicate with English speakers or foreigners (e.g., “*hablar con gente inglesa*”; “*comunicarte con extranjeros*”). Five (12.5%) indicated that they were learning English for purposes of travel. Five (12.5%) wrote that they were learning English for personal development (e.g. “*por beneficio propio*”; “*ayuda a adquirir cultura y sabiduría*”; “*ampliar mi nivel cultural*”). Five participants (12.5%) mentioned that English was “*importante*”, while two (5%) said that English would bring professional or other benefits (e.g., “*apertura del mundo laboral*”; “*abre fronteras*”). One student (2.5%) mentioned that another reason for learning English was to use the Internet.

Item 35) Desired or expected professional areas were labour relations (mentioned by four participants, 10%), human resources (nine participants, 22.5%), the civil service (five participants, 12.5%), accountancy (three participants 7.5%), labour consultancy (five participants, 12.5%), inland revenue (six participants, 15%), banking (two participants, 5%), and business (two participants, 5%). Three students (7.5%) did not know what profession they wanted to go into, and one participant (2.5%) said that she wished to continue studying.

Item 36) Regarding the two statements about nervousness/anxiety and performance in oral activities in class and oral exams, students responded in the following ways. To statement a. (*‘Mi rendimiento reflejará mi nivel en inglés’ / ‘Performance will be indicative of my ability in English’*), 33 (82.5%) students responded affirmatively, and 7 (17.5%) negatively. To statement b. (*‘Mi nerviosismo/ansiedad influirá en mi rendimiento’ / ‘Performance will be affected by nervousness/anxiety’*), 31 (77.5%) participants responded affirmatively, and 9 (22.5%) negatively. From participants’ explanations about their feelings of anxiety and its potential influence on performance, I selected the six most-highly anxious students for

the post-oral-exam interviews. See subsection II.4.6.1. for details about these comments and how they were used in the selection of highly anxious students for the post-oral-exam interviews.

Item 37) Eight participants (20%) wished to give extra information. One (2.5%) stressed that her studying English had nothing to do with obtaining credits and she wanted to find out the most efficient method of learning that language. Similarly, another participant (2.5%) wrote that he wanted to learn more English, and speak it as well as he did Spanish, and that he wanted to know how he could go about it in a way that he could afford economically. One participant (2.5%) said that she had not studied English for four years, and that she had passed all her English exams with a 5 out of 10, while another (2.5%) said that her level had been upper-intermediate, but that after six years of not studying English, she realised that she had forgotten most things. One student (2.5%) stated that he was forgetting his English through lack of practice, and was of the opinion that English was the most important language. In a similar vein, another student (2.5%) commented that this subject was difficult, but that she saw English as very important. One student (2.5%) asserted that learning languages in general was not a problem for her, but that English was more difficult because of its pronunciation, writing, and vocabulary. One participant (2.5%) wanted to let me know that he worked in a bar every summer and all the customers were English, so he practised speaking English eight hours a day at that time.

Appendix T contains a summary of the principal results of demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective data described in this section, displaying number and percentage of students in each case. Appendix U shows frequencies for item scores which were selected for use as variables.

#### *II.4.2. Results for the First Research Question*

This question explored the relationships between foreign language classroom anxiety and students' performance (overall and on eight criteria) in an oral test. I carried out correlations, partial correlations, and analyses of variance (ANOVA). The oral test score, the eight oral performance criteria variables, and FLCAS scores were used in correlational analyses. Students' written test average, the teacher's ranking of their positions in the group relative to one another, as well as these two variables taken together, were used in partial correlations.

##### *II.4.2.1. The Oral Test Grade and FLCAS Scores: Pearson Correlations, Partial Correlations, and Analyses of Variance*

In order to explore associations between my participants' overall oral performance and language anxiety, I carried out a Pearson correlational analysis on their Oral test grade and their FLCAS scores. I also computed partial correlations, controlling for Teacher ranking, for Written test average, and for Teacher ranking and written test average taken together. Results for this correlation and for the three partial correlations are arrayed in Table 13 and Table 14, respectively.

Table 13  
*Pearson Correlation for Oral Test Grades and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale Scores*

<u>Pearson Correlation</u>	<u><i>r</i></u>	<u><i>p</i></u>
Oral test grade and FLCAS	-.494	.001**

*Note.* \*\* $p < .01$ .

The Pearson correlation between students' oral test scores and foreign language anxiety was statistically significant and negative ( $r = -.494$ ,  $p = .001$ ).

Table 14  
*Partial Correlations for Oral Test Grade and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale Scores, Controlling for Three Language Ability Measures*

Partial Correlations	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Oral Test Grade and FLCAS, Controlling for</i>		
Teacher ranking	-.056	.733
Written test average	-.266	.101
Teacher ranking and written test average	-.491	.002**

*Note.* \*\* $p < .01$ .

In partial correlations, when Teacher ranking, or Written test average, each taken separately, was the ability variable that was controlled, the correlation between the Oral test grade and Foreign language anxiety was no longer statistically significant. However, when Teacher ranking and written exam average combined was the variable that was eliminated, the correlation between the oral test grade and foreign language classroom anxiety persisted ( $r = -.491, p = .002$ ).

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted in order to ascertain whether there were any differences in students' mean oral test grades of anxiety groups (low anxiety,  $n = 10$ ; moderate anxiety,  $n = 20$ ; high anxiety,  $n = 10$ ), depending on their levels of language anxiety. Table 15 displays the analysis of variance for the Oral test grade. Descriptive statistics for this ANOVA are given in Appendix V.

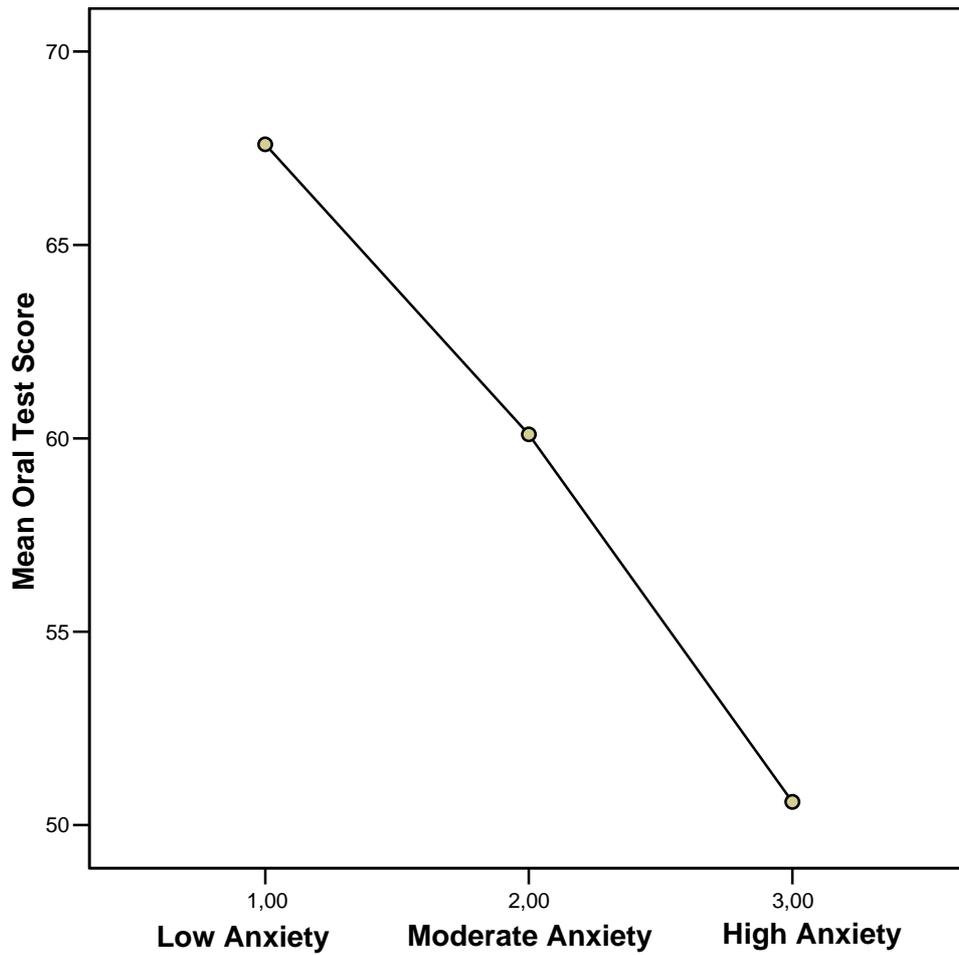
Table 15  
*Results of ANOVA for the Three Anxiety Groups Conducted on the Oral Test Grade*

Source	<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean squares</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance of F</i>
Inter-group anxiety level	1455.000	2	727.500	7.883**	.001
Intra-group anxiety level	3414.600	37	92.289		
Total	4869.600	39			

Note. \*\* $p < .01$ .

This analysis of variance revealed statistically significant differences among oral test grades for participants in the three anxiety groups ( $F = 7.883$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = .001$ ). A Tukey post hoc analysis showed that the high-anxiety group received significantly lower mean grades in their oral test than both the moderate-anxiety group, and the low-anxiety group. The mean oral test score for the low-anxiety group was 67.60. The mean score for the moderate-anxiety group was 60.10. The mean score for the high-anxiety group was 50.60, just over the pass mark (50%).

This can be better seen in Figure 1, which presents a graph showing differences in mean oral test scores among the three anxiety groups.



*Figure 1.* Graph of ANOVA showing differences in mean Oral test scores among three anxiety groups (low, moderate, and high)

#### *II.4.2.2. The Eight Oral Performance Criteria Variables and FLCAS Scores: Pearson Correlations, Partial Correlations, and Analyses of Variance*

Pearson correlations between the eight performance criteria variables and FLCAS scores of the participants were computed, and are presented here in Table 16.

Table 16  
*Pearson Correlations for the Eight Oral Performance Criteria and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale Scores*

Oral Performance Variables	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Total words in Communication Units	-.381	.015*
Average length of Communication Unit	-.074	.650
Percent of error-free Communication Units	-.005	.974
Percent of total words in error-free CUs	-.108	.507
Average length of maze	.172	.288
Percent of total words in mazes	.341	.031*
Number of dependent clauses used	-.131	.419
Number of target structures used	-.232	.149

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ .

This table shows that scores on the FLCAS correlated significantly with two of the eight Oral performance criteria: the first (Total words in Communication Units) was a negative correlation ( $r = -.381$ ,  $p = .015$ ), and the sixth (Percent of total words in mazes) was positive ( $r = .341$ ,  $p = .031$ ).

Partial correlations were carried out for these two performance criteria variables (the first and the sixth) and the FLCAS, controlling for the three language ability measures (Teacher ranking, Written test average, and Teacher ranking and written test average), the results of which are shown in Table 17.

Table 17  
*Partial Correlation for the Eight Oral Performance Criteria Variables and FLCAS scores, Controlling for Three Language Ability Measures*

Partial Correlations: Oral Performance Criteria Variables and FLCAS	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Total words in Communication Units		
<i>Ability Measure Controlled</i>		
Teacher ranking	-.122	.458
Written test average	-.219	.180
Teacher ranking and written test average	-.377	.018*
Percent of Total Words in Mazes		
<i>Ability Measure Controlled</i>		
Teacher ranking	.022	.892
Written test average	.098	.553
Teacher ranking and written test average	.342	.033*

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ .

As occurred in the partial correlations conducted between the Oral test grade and FLCAS (see Table 14), Table 17 shows that only when the combined variable Teacher ranking and written test average was partialled out, did the statistically significant correlation between these two performance criteria and FLCAS persist. The inverse relationship between Total words in communication units and FLCAS remained statistically significant ( $r = -.377$ ,  $p = .018$ ), and the positive association between Percent of total words in mazes and FLCAS also remained statistically significant, but lower ( $r = .342$ ,  $p = .033$ ).

Analyses of variance were carried out on the mean scores of each of the eight performance criteria for the three anxiety groups (low anxiety,  $n = 10$ ; moderate

anxiety,  $n = 20$ ; high anxiety,  $n = 10$ ), in order to determine whether scores differed significantly from group to group. Statistically significant results were observed for two of the performance criteria variables, the fifth and the sixth, that is, the average length of maze, and the percent of total words in mazes, respectively.

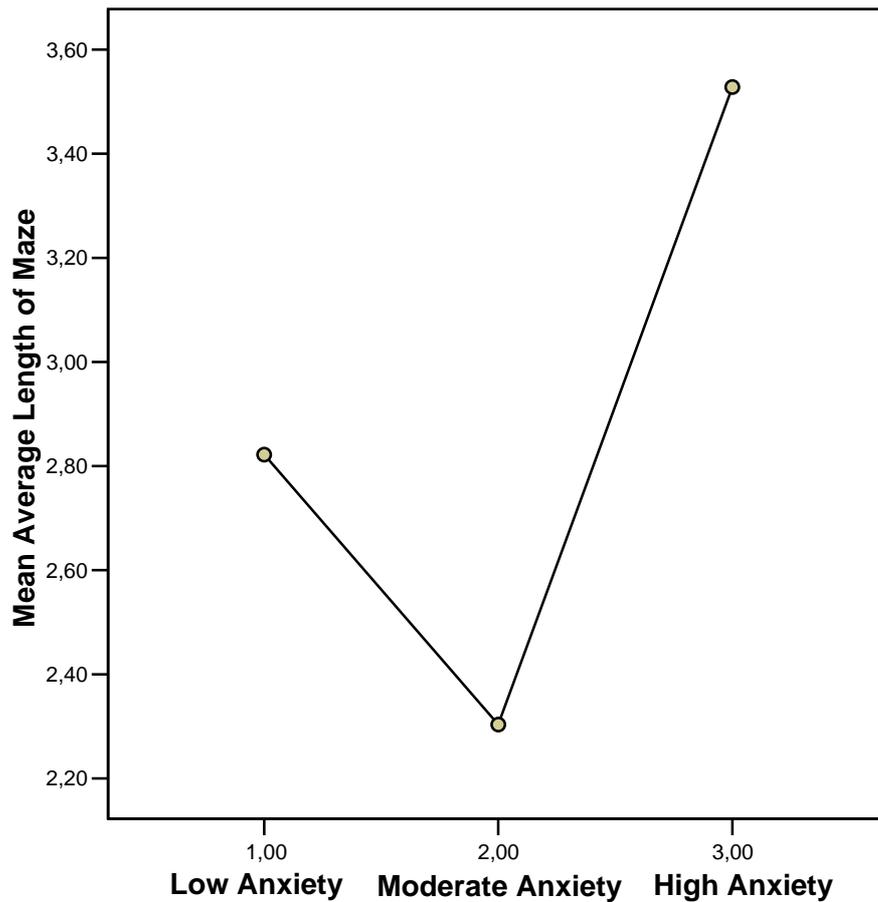
Results for these analyses of variance are displayed in Tables 18 (fifth performance criteria variable) and in Table 19 (sixth performance criteria variable).

Table 18  
*Results of ANOVA for the Fifth Oral Exam Performance Criteria Variable: Average Length of Maze*

Source	<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean squares</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance of F</i>
Inter-group anxiety level	10.087	2	5.044	6.888**	.003
Intra-group anxiety level	27.094	37	.732		
Total	37.181	39			

*Note.* \*\* $p < .01$ .

The ANOVA for the fifth performance criteria variable, Average length of maze, i.e., average number of incorrect or superfluous words and fragments that do not contribute to successful communication, shows that there were statistically significant differences in the mean length of mazes among the groups ( $F = 6.888$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = .003$ ). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that the moderate-anxiety group uttered on average significantly shorter mazes in their oral test than the high-anxiety group (2.3 words as against 3.5 words per maze on average). The average length of mazes of the low-anxiety group was 2.8 words. Figure 2 shows these differences in mean average length of maze among the three anxiety groups.



*Figure 2.* Graph of ANOVA showing differences in mean Average length of maze among three anxiety groups (low, moderate, and high)

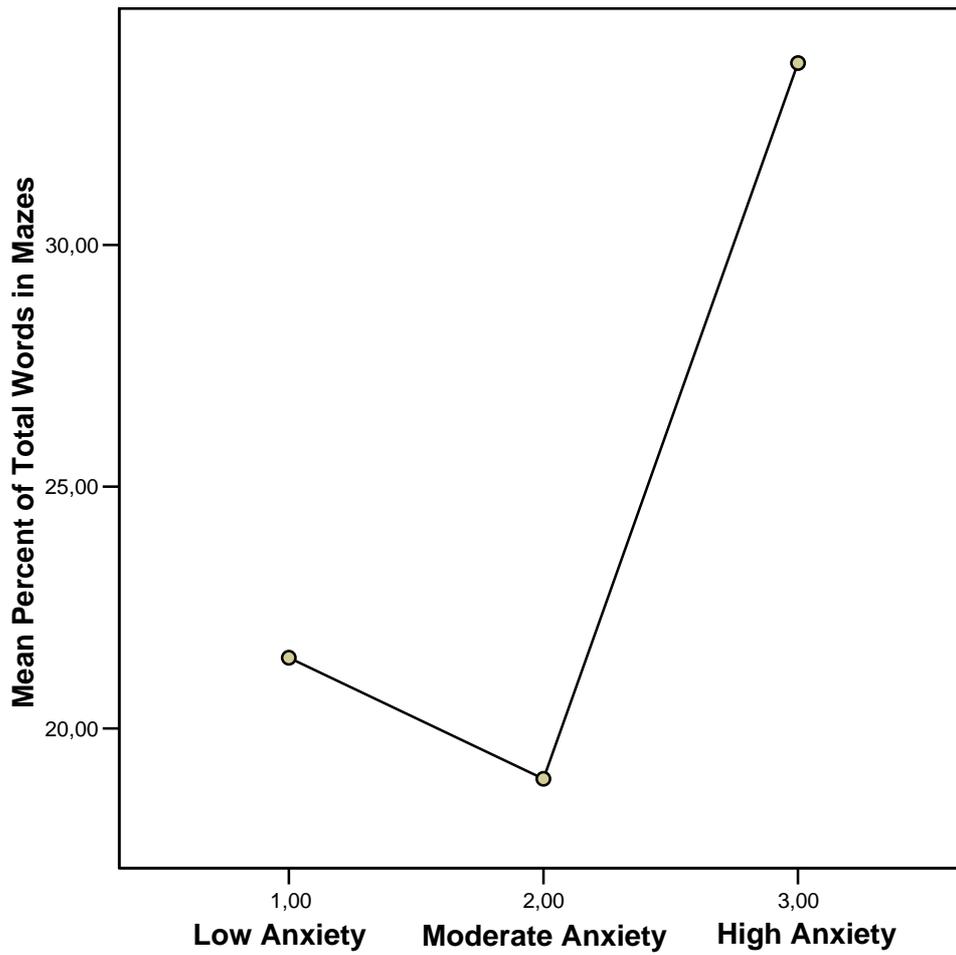
Table 19 displays ANOVA results for the sixth performance criteria variable: Percent of total words in mazes.

Table 19  
*Results of ANOVA for the Sixth Oral Performance Criteria Variable: Percent of Total Words in Mazes*

Source	<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean squares</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance of F</i>
Inter-group anxiety level	1505.417	2	752.709	5.599**	.008
Intra-group anxiety level	4974.311	37	134.441		
Total	6479.728	39			

Note. \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 19, presenting the ANOVA for the sixth performance criteria variable (percent of total words in mazes) shows that there were statistically significant differences in the mean percent of total words in mazes among the anxiety groups ( $F = 5.599$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = .008$ ). The Tukey post-hoc test showed that the group who was most highly anxious emitted on average a significantly larger percentage of maze words in relation to total words in their oral test than did those in the moderately-anxiety group: a mean of 33.76% in comparison to a mean of 18.96%. That is, the students from the most highly-anxious group uttered on average almost double the percentage of non-communicative words and fragments in their oral exam than did those from the moderately-anxious group. The mean percent of mazes pertaining to the low-anxiety group was 21.46. The differences in average percentage of maze words produced in the oral test among the three anxiety groups are shown in Figure 3.



*Figure 3.* Graph of ANOVA showing differences in mean percentage of total words in mazes among three anxiety groups (low, moderate, and high)

Descriptive results of the ANOVAs for the fifth oral performance criteria variable (Average length of maze) and for the sixth oral performance criteria variable (Percent of total words in mazes) are shown in Appendix V.

### II.4.2.3. Summary of Principal Results for the First Research Question

Table 20 offers a summary of the principal results obtained for the first research question.

Table 20

#### *Summary of Principal Results for the First Research Question*

<i>Analysis</i>	<i>Results</i>
Internal consistency of FLCAS	.93
<i>Oral test grade and FLCAS</i>	
Pearson correlation between Oral test grade and FLCAS	$r = -.494; p = .001$
Statistically significant partial correlations, controlling for ability measures	Controlling for Teacher ranking and written test average: $r = -.491, p = .002$
ANOVA on mean Oral test grade	High-anxiety group received significantly lower mean grades than both the moderate-, and the low-anxiety groups: $F = 7.883, df = 2, p = .001$  Mean Oral test grade for three anxiety groups: Low anxiety: 67.60 Moderate anxiety: 60.10 High anxiety: 50.60
<i>Eight Oral performance criteria variables and FLCAS</i>	
Pearson correlations between eight Oral performance criteria variables and FLCAS	Two statistically significant correlations found:  First performance criteria variable (Total words in CUs): $r = -.381, p = .015$ .  Sixth performance criteria variable (Percent of total words in mazes): $r = .341, p = .031$
Statistically significant partial correlations, controlling for ability measures	First performance criteria variable (Total words in CUs), controlling for Teacher ranking and written test average: $r = -.377, p = .018$  Sixth performance criteria variable (Percent of total words in mazes), controlling for Teacher ranking and written test average: $r = .342, p = .033$
ANOVAs on eight Oral performance criteria variables	Two statistically significant ANOVAs found:

Fifth performance variable (Average length of mazes):  $F = 6.888$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = .003$

Low anxiety: 2.8

Moderate anxiety: 2.3

High anxiety: 3.5

Sixth performance variable (Percent of total words in mazes):  $F = 5.599$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = .008$

Low anxiety: 21.46

Moderate anxiety: 18.96

High anxiety: 33.76.

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### *II.4.3. Results for the Second Research Question*

This section reports the results for the second research question, which first explored the relationships between participants' global proficiency in English, as measured by scores on the Quick Placement Test, and 29 demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics of the participants, as supplied by them on the Background Questionnaire, as well as Oral test grade, Written test average, and FLCAS. This was conducted through Pearson correlations. Then, using the strongest correlations, the best predictors of global English proficiency amongst these variables were sought, by means of multiple regression analysis. This analytical procedure (correlations followed by regression analysis) has been carried out by several other language anxiety researchers (Cheng, 2002; Cheng et al. 1999; MacIntyre et al., 1997; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999, 2000).

#### *II.4.3.1. Pearson Correlations*

*Pearson correlations* were conducted in order to assess how the demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables, were associated with participants' global level of English, as measured by their scores on the Quick Placement Test, QPT. Table 21 shows the results of these correlations.

Table 21  
*Pearson Correlations Between Global Level of English as Measured by Quick Placement Test Scores, and Demographic, Academic, Cognitive, and Affective Variables*

Variables	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Demographic Variables</i>		
Age	-.287	.073
Gender	-.157	.332
Father's educational level	-.168	.299
Mother's educational level	.126	.439
Father's profession	-.206	.201
Mother's profession	.110	.501
Age at which English learning started	-.480	.002**
Days spent visiting/living in English-speaking countries	.387	.014*
<i>Academic Variables</i>		
Months spent learning English in schools (primary, secondary, and/or private language schools)	.360	.022*
Years since English was last studied formally	-.175	.280
Another language spoken or known	.107	.509
Year of study	-.190	.241
<i>Cognitive Variables</i>		
Highest grade in English at pre-University level	.498	.001**
Grade point average at Granada University	.415	.008**
English class attendance	-.061	.709
Hours of English study out of class	.221	.171

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Reasons for studying this English subject:		
(a) To enhance university studies	-0.032	.845
(b) To obtain credits	-.401	.010*
(c) To improve future profession opportunities	-.076	.642
(d) For another reason(s)	-.242	.133
Difficulty of current English subject	-.309	.052
Estimation of own English proficiency level	.495	.001**
Self-assessed level in listening	.503	.001**
Self-assessed level in speaking	.410	.009**
Self-assessed level in reading	.543	.001**
Self-assessed level in writing	.531	.001**
Expected grade in this subject	.537	.001**
Oral test grade	.549	.001**
Written test average	.662	.001**
 <i>Affective Variables</i>		
Foreign language classroom anxiety	-.442	.004**
Belief that performance in oral activities in class will reflect English level	.162	.318
Belief that anxiety/nervousness will influence performance in oral activities in class	-.311	.051

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Note. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 21 shows that two demographic variables were significantly correlated with Quick Placement Test scores, one negatively: age at which English was studied for the first time ( $r = -.480, p = .002$ ), and one positively: the number of days the student

had spent visiting or living in English-speaking countries ( $r = .387, p = .014$ ). Neither the participants' age nor gender, nor their family background as reflected in parental education or professions, had any statistically significant bearing on results.

One academic variable was significantly and positively associated with the Quick Placement Test scores. This was total months spent learning English, taking into account months of attendance at primary school, at secondary school, and at private language schools ( $r = .360, p = .022$ ). The time that had elapsed since participants had studied English in a formal setting, whether or not they knew or spoke another foreign language, or their year of study at Granada University, were not significantly linked to QPT scores.

As regards cognitive variables, ten were positively and significantly correlated with Quick Placement Test scores: participants' highest grade in English obtained at pre-University level ( $r = .498, p = .001$ ), their grade point average at the University of Granada ( $r = .415, p = .008$ ), their estimation of their own proficiency in English ( $r = .495, p = .001$ ), their estimation of their levels in the four skills (listening:  $r = .503, p = .001$ ; speaking:  $r = .410, p = .009$ ; reading:  $r = .543, p = .001$ ; writing:  $r = .531, p = .001$ ), and their expected achievement on the current English course ( $r = .537, p < .001$ ), all correlated very strongly with QPT results, as did their scores on other English tests: Oral exam grade ( $r = .549, p < .001$ ) and Written exam average ( $r = .662, p < .001$ ). However, study habits (class attendance and study outside class), reasons and incentives for learning English through this subject (enhancing both present studies and future professional prospects), as well as the perceived difficulty of the course did not present any statistically significant association with QPT points.

A significant and negative link was encountered between only one cognitive variable and the Quick Placement Test: participants' reason to learn English through

this subject being to obtain credits ( $r = -.401, p = .010$ ). Other cognitive variables, that is, study habits (class attendance and study outside class), reasons and incentives for learning English through this subject (enhancing both present studies and future professional prospects), as well as the perceived difficulty of the subject, did not exhibit any statistically significant association with QPT.

Finally, one affective variable presented a statistically significant association in this analysis. This was the FLCAS score ( $r = -.442, p = .004$ ). No significant correlation was observed for the other two affective variables: participants' belief that their performance in oral activities would reflect their level of English, or their belief that their anxiety would influence their oral class performance.

#### *II.4.3.2. Standard Multiple Regression Analysis*

For subsequent standard multiple regression analysis, demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables that were found to correlate most strongly and significantly with the Quick Placement Test scores (see Table 21, above) were employed (the demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables being used as independent variables, IVs, and Quick Placement Test as the dependent variable, DV).

As may be observed in Table 21 above, two demographic variables (Age at which English learning started, and Days spent visiting/living in English-speaking countries), one academic variable (Months spent learning English in schools: primary, secondary, and/or private language schools), seven cognitive variables that themselves were not English language tests or grade point average (To obtain credits, Estimation of own English proficiency level, Self-assessed level in listening, Self-assessed level in speaking, Self-assessed level in reading, Self-assessed level in writing, and Expected

grade in this subject), and one affective variable (Foreign language classroom anxiety), all correlated significantly with Quick Placement Test scores.

The results of this standard multiple regression analysis are displayed in Table 22.

Table 22  
*Standard Multiple Regression Analysis of Demographic, Academic, Cognitive, and Affective Variables (IVs) as Predictors of Quick Placement Test (DV)*

Variable	Regression Coefficients		<i>t</i>	<i>Sr</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>p</i>
	Unstandardized <i>B</i>	Standardized <i>B</i>			
Age at which English learning started	-.582	-.334	-2.479	.100	.018*
Foreign language classroom anxiety	-.066	-.323	-2.445	.097	.020*
To obtain credits	-1.202	-.273	-2.064	.070	.046*

*Note.* Model  $R^2 = .413$ ,  $F(3, 36) = 8.433$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .364$ .

Unique variability = .267. Shared variability = .146.

\* $p < .05$ .

This standard multiple regression analysis revealed that three of these independent variables predicted Quick Placement Test scores:  $F(3, 36) = 8.433$ ,  $p < .001$ . The three regression coefficients were all negative, the independent variables being: Age at which learning started, Foreign language classroom anxiety, and To obtain credits. Age at which learning started was the best indicator, explaining 10% of the variance, Foreign language classroom anxiety was the second best predictor, accounting for over 9%, and To obtain credits was the next best predictor, explaining

7% of the variance. Together these three independent variables explained over 26% of the variance.

#### II.4.4. Results for the Third Research Question

##### II.4.4.1. Pearson Correlations

Relationships between the Oral test grade, and 29 demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables, given by students' on the Background Questionnaire, as well as Quick Placement Test, Written test average, and FLCAS, were evaluated by computing Pearson correlations. These correlations are presented in Table 23.

Table 23  
*Pearson Correlations Between the Oral Test Grade and Demographic, Academic, Cognitive, and Affective Variables*

Variables	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Demographic Variables</i>		
Age	-.464	.003**
Gender	.098	.548
Father's educational level	-.349	.028*
Mother's educational level	-.104	.525
Father's profession	-.127	.434
Mother's profession	-.210	.193
Age at which English learning started	-.410	.009**
Days spent visiting/living in English-speaking countries	.229	.155
<i>Academic Variables</i>		
Months spent learning English in school (primary, secondary, and/or private language schools)	.435	.005**
Years since English was last studied formally	-.262	.102
Another language spoken or known	.329	.038*
Year of study	-.125	.443

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<i>Cognitive Variables</i>		
Highest grade in English at pre-University level	.555	.001**
Grade point average at Granada University	.260	.105
English class attendance	.084	.604
Hours of English study out of class	.152	.350
Reasons for studying this English subject:		
(a) To enhance university studies	.128	.429
(b) To obtain credits	-.187	.249
(c) To improve future profession opportunities	.143	.377
(d) For another reason(s)	.331	.037*
Difficulty of current English subject	-.460	.003**
Estimation of own English proficiency level	.424	.006**
Self-assessed level in listening	.393	.012*
Self-assessed level in speaking	.328	.039*
Self-assessed level in reading	.350	.027*
Self-assessed level in writing	.341	.031*
Expected grade in this subject	.464	.003**
Quick Placement Test	.549	.001**
Written test average	.619	.001**
<i>Affective variables</i>		
Foreign language classroom anxiety	-.494	.001**
Belief that performance in oral activities in class will reflect English level	.341	.031*
Belief that anxiety/nervousness will influence performance in oral activities in class	-.231	.151

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Note. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

As far as demographic variables are concerned, statistically significant negative correlations were encountered between the Oral test grade and the age at which participants had started to study English ( $r = -.410, p = .009$ ), the educational status of their fathers ( $r = -.349, p = .028$ ), and their age ( $r = -.464, p = .003$ ). Non-meaningful correlations were obtained for students' gender, for their mother's educational level, for the profession of both parents, as well as for the number of days spent visiting or living in English-speaking countries.

Two of the four academic variables gave statistically significant and positive results: Time spent learning English at primary, secondary, and/or private language schools ( $r = .435, p = .005$ ), and Another language was spoken or known ( $r = .329, p = .038$ ). The number of years since English had last been studied formally, and whether the participants were in their second or third year of study at the University of Granada, were not observed to be related significantly to the Oral test grade.

Out of the 17 cognitive variables, eleven were seen to correlate significantly. Students' opinion about the difficulty of the subject correlated significantly and negatively with the Oral exam grade ( $r = -.460, p = .003$ ).

Statistically significant and positive correlations were seen with students' highest grade obtained at pre-University level ( $r = .555, p < .001$ ), with their estimation of their own English level ( $r = .424, p = .006$ ), with their assessment of their proficiency in the four skills (listening:  $r = .393, p = .012$ ; speaking:  $r = .328, p = .039$ ; reading:  $r = .350, p = .027$ ; writing:  $r = .341, p = .031$ ), with their expected grade in this subject ( $r = .464, p = .003$ ), and with their scores on other English language tests (Quick Placement Test score,  $r = .549, p < .001$ , and Written exam average,  $r = .619, p < .001$ ). Other reasons for learning English through this subject (apart from enhancing university

studies, obtaining credits, or bettering future professional prospects) also correlated significantly and positively with the oral exam score ( $r = .331$ ,  $p = .037$ ). However, students' grade point average at the university of Granada, their study habits (class attendance and hours of study outside class), and three reasons for studying this English subject (obtaining credits, and improving university studies and work prospects), were cognitive variables that were not associated significantly with the Oral test grade.

Two of the three affective correlations turned out to be statistically significant. These were participants' belief that their performance in speaking activities in the English class would reflect their actual level ( $r = .341$ ,  $p = .031$ ), and their foreign language classroom anxiety ( $r = -.494$ ,  $p = .001$ ). However, students' belief that their nervousness would influence their oral performance in class was not seen to be significantly linked to Oral test grade.

#### *II.4.4.2. Standard Multiple Regression Analysis*

For subsequent multiple regression analysis, variables that were found to correlate most significantly with the Oral test grade scores were used (see Table 23). Table 24 presents the results of this regression.

Table 24  
*Standard Multiple Regression Analysis of Demographic, Academic, Cognitive, and Affective Variables (IVs) as Predictors of Oral Test Grade (DV)*

Variable	Regression Coefficients		<i>t</i>	<i>Sr</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>p</i>
	Unstandardized <i>B</i>	Standardized <i>B</i>			
Age	-2.397	-.378	-3.101	.133	.004**
For another reason(s)	6.143	.273	2.265	.071	.030*
Months spent learning English in schools (primary, secondary, and/or private language schools)	.068	.268	2.142	.064	.039*
Foreign language classroom anxiety	-.154	-.267	-2.065	-.060	.046*

*Note.* Model  $R^2 = .515$ ,  $F(4, 35) = 9.274$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .459$ .

Unique variability = .327. Shared variability = .188.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

The standard multiple regression revealed that these four independent variables contributed significantly to the prediction of Oral test grade:  $F(4, 35) = 9.274$ ,  $p < .001$ . Age had a negative coefficient, and was found to be the best predictor, explaining more than 13% of the variance. The variable For another reason(s), which included reasons for learning English such as travel, communicating with foreigners, living abroad, and feeling passionate about English, was seen to be the second best predictor, accounting for over 7% of the variance. Months spent learning English in schools (primary, secondary, and/or private language schools), and Foreign language classroom anxiety

were the next best predictors, being responsible for just over 6% and 6% of the variance, respectively. Together these three independent variables explained over 31% of the variance.

#### *II.4.5. Results for the Fourth Research Question*

##### *II.4.5.1. Pearson Correlations*

Pearson correlations were carried out to delve into relationships between participants' English language anxiety, as measured by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986) and 29 demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables, as well as Quick Placement Test, Oral test grade, and Written test average. These correlations are arrayed in Table 25.

Table 25  
*Pearson Correlations Between the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, and Demographic, Academic, Cognitive, and Affective Variables*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Demographic Variables</i>		
Age	.238	.140
Gender	.494	.001**
Father's educational level	.064	.695
Mother's educational level	.132	.416
Father's profession	.191	.239
Mother's profession	.173	.284
Age at which English learning started	.241	.133
Days spent visiting/living in English-speaking countries	-.298	.062
<i>Academic Variables</i>		
Months spent learning English in schools (primary, secondary, and/or private language schools)	-.329	.038*

Years since English was last studied formally	.254	.114
Another language spoken or known	-.341	.031*
Year of study	.180	.267
<i>Cognitive Variables</i>		
Highest grade in English at pre-University level	-.607	.001**
Grade Point Average at Granada University	-.234	.147
English class attendance	-.033	.840
Hours of English study out of class	.230	.154
Reasons for studying this English subject:		
(a) To enhance university studies	.120	.460
(b) To obtain credits	.141	.385
(c) To improve future profession opportunities	.049	.762
(d) For another reason(s)	-.178	.272
Difficulty of current English subject	.422	.007**
Estimation of own proficiency level	-.694	.001**
Self-assessed level in listening	-.504	.001**
Self-assessed level in speaking	-.429	.006**
Self-assessed level in reading	-.476	.002**
Self-assessed level in writing	-.460	.003**
Expected grade in this subject	-.404	.010**
Oral exam grade	-.494	.001**
Written exam average	-.506	.001**
Quick Placement Test	-.442	.004**
<i>Affective Variables</i>		
Belief that performance in oral activities in class will reflect English level	-.224	.165

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Belief that anxiety/nervousness will influence performance in oral activities in class	.606	.001*
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*Note.* \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

As displayed in Table 25, only one demographic variable, gender, correlated significantly and positively with scores on the Foreign language classroom anxiety Scale ( $r = .494, p = .001$ ). Neither participants' age, nor age at which they had started to study English, nor parental socioeconomic variables were linked significantly to scores on the FLCAS. The number of days that students had spent visiting or living in an Anglophone country was not seen have any significant bearing on FLCAS scores.

Two of the four academic variables correlated significantly with the FLCAS scores. Total time spent studying English in schools correlated negatively ( $r = -.329, p = .038$ ), as did Another language spoken or known ( $r = -.341, p = .031$ ). The time that had passed since English had last been studied formally, or the year of university study, were not seen to be significantly connected to FLCAS.

As far as cognitive variables were concerned, eleven correlated significantly with foreign language anxiety. One of these variables correlated significantly and positively: perceived difficulty of the current course ( $r = .422, p = .007$ ). The other ten correlated negatively: the highest pre-University grade in English ( $r = -.607, p < .001$ ), students' self-assessed English level ( $r = -.694, p < .001$ ), their own assessment of their levels in the four skills (listening:  $r = -.504, p = .001$ ; speaking:  $r = -.429, p = .006$ ; reading:  $r = -.476, p = .002$ ; writing:  $r = -.460, p = .003$ ), their expected grade at the end of the course ( $r = -.404, p = .010$ ), their oral exam grade ( $r = -.494, p = .001$ ), their written exam average ( $r = -.506, p = .001$ ), and their Quick Placement Test score ( $r = -.442, p = .004$ ).

However, students' average grade in subjects at Granada University, their study habits (class attendance and hours of study apart from class attendance), and reasons for studying English, bore no statistically significant relationship to scores on the anxiety measure.

One affective variable correlated significantly and positively with foreign language classroom anxiety: belief that anxiety/nervousness would affect participants' oral performance in classroom activities ( $r = .606, p < .001$ ).

#### *II.4.5.2. Standard Multiple Regression Analysis*

For the standard subsequent multiple regression analysis, independent variables that were found to correlate most significantly with Foreign language classroom anxiety (see Table 25) were used. The statistically significant correlation with the independent variable that was itself an affective measure was excluded. Variables used were one demographic variable (Gender), two academic variables (Months spent learning English in schools: primary, secondary, and/or private language schools, and Another language spoken or known), and eleven cognitive variables (Highest grade in English at pre-University level, Difficulty of current English subject, Estimation of own proficiency level, Self-assessed level in listening, Self-assessed level in speaking, Self-assessed level in reading, Self-assessed level in writing, Expected grade in this subject, Oral test grade, Written test average, and Quick Placement Test). Standard multiple regression analysis indicated that three of these independent variables predicted Foreign language classroom anxiety. The results are shown in Table 26.

*Table 26*  
*Standard Multiple Regression Analysis of Demographic, Academic, Cognitive, and Affective Variables (IVs) as Predictors of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (DV)*

Variable	Regression Coefficients		<i>t</i>	<i>Sr</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>p</i>
	Unstandardized <i>B</i>	Standardized <i>B</i>			
Estimation of own proficiency level	-8.549	-.619	-5.872	.348	<.001**
Another language spoken or known	-9.969	-.260	-2.470	.062	.018*
Gender	9.955	.239	2.173	.048	.036*

*Note.* Model  $R^2 = .636$ ,  $F(3, 36) = 20.970$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .606$ .

Unique variability = .458. Shared variability = .178.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

The standard multiple regression revealed that three independent variables contributed significantly to the prediction of Foreign language classroom anxiety:  $F(3, 36) = 20.970$ ,  $p < .001$ . Estimation of own proficiency level was observed to be the best predictor, explaining over 34% of the variance. Another language spoken or known was found to be the second best predictor, accounting for more than 6% of the variance. Gender was the next best predictor, being responsible for over 4% of the variance. These three independent variables taken together contributed to over 45% of the variance.

#### *II.4.6. Results for the Fifth Research Question*

The fifth research enquired into what six highly anxious students (three of high ability, and three of low ability) had to say about what they had thought and what they had felt while taking the oral test. This section gives the results of (a) the initial selection of these students, conducted in the ninth week of the '*cuatrimestre*', and (b) their comments about the experience of taking the oral test itself, recorded immediately after the test, which was held in the sixteenth week.

##### *II.4.6.1. Selection of the Highly Anxious Students*

The selection of the six highly anxious participants for the post-oral-test interviews depended on identifying (a) three students who both predicted that they would be highly anxious in speaking activities and in oral tests, and were of high language ability, and (b) three students who both predicted that they would be highly anxious in speaking activities and in oral tests, and were of low language ability.

The results presented below show the best selection amongst the group of participants (N = 40), choosing (a) three students of the highest possible language ability combined with highest possible predicted levels of speaking anxiety, and (b) three students of the lowest possible language ability combined with highest possible predicted levels of speaking anxiety. Regarding language ability, I selected students whose QPT scores were amongst the highest and lowest for the group. As regards language anxiety, I focused primarily on their written comments and predictions about feeling anxious in speaking activities in class and in oral tests that they had given on the

Background Questionnaire, rather than on their scores on the FLCAS, which did not centre exclusively on speaking. Students' written comments are translated into English

All the selected highly anxious students were female.

#### *II.4.6.1.1. High-ability anxious students.*

##### ***Student 1***

Anxiety prediction comments given on Background Questionnaire: *“El examen reflejará mis conocimientos, lo que he estudiado durante el curso de la asignatura, pero en los exámenes orales, el nerviosismo siempre está presente, y juega malas pasadas, con lo que, a lo mejor, no puedes demostrar todo lo que realmente sabes”* (The exam will reflect my knowledge, what I have studied during the course of the subject, but [in] oral exams, nervousness is always present, and it plays dirty tricks on you, so that probably you can't show everything you really know).

FLCAS score: 119

Quick Placement Test score: 26/40 (Pre-intermediate)

Position in group, based on QPT score: 2

*Selectividad* grade 7.0/10.0.

##### ***Student 2***

Anxiety prediction comments given on Background Questionnaire: *“... me suelo poner bastante nerviosa en estas pruebas por lo que a lo mejor no demuestre mi verdadero nivel de inglés”* (I usually get quite nervous in these tests and for this reason I probably don't demonstrate my true level of English).

FLCAS score: 108

Quick Placement Test score: 24/40 (Pre-Intermediate)

Position in group, based on QPT score: 5

*Selectividad* grade: 7.5/10.0

### ***Student 3***

Anxiety prediction comments given on Background Questionnaire: “*Me pongo muy nerviosa en los exámenes... me cuesta relajarme... mi capacidad de concentración se disminuye*” (I get very nervous in exams ... it’s difficult for me to relax ... my power of concentration is reduced).

FLCAS score: 105

Quick Placement Test score: 20/40 (Elementary)

Position in group, based on QPT score: 12

*Selectividad* grade: 7.5/10.0.

#### *II.4.6.1.2. Low-ability anxious students.*

### ***Student 4***

Anxiety prediction comments given on Background Questionnaire: “*Me suelo poner nerviosa cuando me preguntan en inglés, por lo que las respuestas no pueden ser muy buenas*” (I usually get nervous when I get asked [things] in English, so my answers can’t be very good).

FLCAS score: 136

Quick Placement Test score: 14/40 (Beginner)

Position in group, based on QPT score: 36

*Selectividad* grade: 3.0/10.0.

### ***Student 5***

Anxiety prediction comments given on Background Questionnaire: “...y el nerviosismo, cuando me preguntan en inglés me bloqueo y no pongo atención en el significado y sentido de lo que se me pregunta” (and nervousness, when I am asked [things] in English I get ‘a mental block’ and I don’t pay attention to the meaning and sense of what I’m being asked)

FLCAS score: 130

Quick Placement Test score: 11/40 (Beginner)

Position in group, based on QPT score: 39

*Selectividad* grade: 3.0/10.0.

### ***Student 6***

Anxiety prediction comments given on Background Questionnaire: “... me influirán mucho los nervios y tal vez también el miedo a la hora de rendir en clase. Necesito adaptarme a la clase y coger una cierta confianza para poder leer y expresarme con claridad. Me costará mucho hacerlo por miedo a hacerlo mal, nervios, vergüenza...”  
 (...my nerves and perhaps fear as well will affect me a lot in my achievement in class. I need to adapt to the class and to get to feel a certain confidence in order to be able to read and express myself clearly. It will very difficult for me to do for fear of doing it wrong, nerves, shame ...)

FLCAS score: 130

Quick Placement Test score: 15/40 (Beginner).

Position in group, based on QPT score: 33

*Selectividad* grade: 3.5/10.0.

#### II.4.6.2. Anxious Students' Comments about the Oral Test

This sub-section describes the comments of the six highly anxious participants on hearing the recording of their oral test. It focuses first on similarities between the reactions of two groups of students (high ability and low ability), then on differences, and finally on individual student reactions.

##### II.4.6.2.1. Similarities in highly anxious students' reactions to the oral test.

Many of the reported reactions to the oral test were similar or identical, in both high- and low-ability students. On hearing the recording of their oral test, all six students stated that they had found the exam to be a very nerve-racking experience. In the first sentence uttered by each student after listening to the recording of their test, without exception, the word '*nervios*'/'*nerviosa*' was used:

"...*me he sentido muy nerviosa*" (I've felt very nervous) (h)

"*Estaba muy nerviosa.*" (I was very nervous) (h)

"...*parece... bastante nerviosa...*" ([I] seem ...quite nervous) (h)

"...*me pongo muy nerviosa...*" (...I get very nervous...) (l)

"*Pues, muy nerviosa.*" (Well, very nervous) (l)

"... *fueron muchos nervios...*" (...it was a lot of nerves...) (l)

*Note.* (h) = quote from high-ability student. (l) = quote from low-ability student.

One low-level student talked about a more extreme reaction. Not only did she talk about her nervousness but also about her feelings of fear ('*miedo*') during the test.

Students across both abilities reported psychological/cognitive reactions, such as not being able to think, not being able to remember, going blank, suffering a mental block, getting stuck, with English words and phrases slipping their mind:

“...[*los nervios*] *no me dejan pensar bien las cosas...*” ([nerves] don’t let me think straight) (l)

“...*me quedo en blanco mucho tiempo.*” (I go blank a lot of the time) (h)

“...*me bloqueo mucho...*” (I often get a ‘mental block’) (h)

“...*me bloqueo y se me olvida...*” (I get a ‘mental block’ and I forget) (h)

“...*me atranco...*” (I get stuck) (l)

“...[*cómo decirlo en inglés*] *se me va de la cabeza...*” ([how to say it in English] goes out of my head) (l)

“...*me quedo encasquillada...*” (I dry up) (h)

They also talked about physiological symptoms, such as tenseness, sweating hands, and faltering voice:

“...*estás como más tenso...*” (you’re more tense) (h)

“...*me sudan las manos...*” (my hands sweat) (l)

“...*estaba nerviosa porque me lo noto en la voz.*” (I was nervous because I can tell by my voice) (h)

#### *II.4.6.2.1.2. Differences in highly anxious students’ reactions to the oral test.*

However, there were several differences in reactions between high- and low-ability participants. On hearing the recording, all three high-ability students commented that they could have done better or said more, and that they had made mistakes when saying things that were ‘easy’ or that they ‘knew.’

“...*creo que lo podría haber hecho mejor...*” (... I think I could have done it better...) (h)

“...*escuchándome me he dado cuenta también de que tengo muchos fallos*”  
 (...listening [to the recording] I’ve realized as well that I have [made] a lot of mistakes)  
 (h)

“...*había palabras que son fáciles, pero no me acordaba...*” (...there were words that are easy, but I couldn’t remember ...) (h)

“... *cuando he oído la grabación, me he dado cuenta que no está bien*” (..when I’ve heard the recording, I’ve realized that it isn’t good) (h)

“...*tenía muchas más cosas que decir, pero...*” (...I had a lot more things to say, but...) (h)

No low-level student reported any such reaction.

Another difference that was observed between the high- and low-ability students when they talked about their oral performance was what they revealed about their learning and performance strategies. All three low-ability students talked about memorization from notes and translating strategies:

“...*intento pensarlo primero en español ... para luego decirlo en inglés...*” (...I try to think it out first in Spanish ... then to say it in English) (l)

“...*y primero lo tengo que pensar en español, para después traducirlo*” (... and first I have to think it out in Spanish, then translate it) (l)

“... *no todo viene en la hoja...*” (... not everything is [written down] in my notes)  
 (l)

“...*he intentado aprendérmelo de memoria...*” (... I’ve tried to memorize it...)  
 (l)

“...*tienes que ... entenderlo en español, porque si no, no sabría decirlo*” (...you have to understand it in Spanish, because if not, I wouldn’t know how to say it). (l)

One high-ability student mentioned how she had translated literally from Spanish to English during the exam, but thought that this was not the best way to go about it, apparently attributing this strategy to her nervousness:

*“Hay veces que se utiliza el genitivo sajón y lo decía literalmente, y ahora cuando he oído la grabación, me he dado cuenta que no está bien, que estaba muy nerviosa...”* (There are times when you use the ‘Saxon genitive’ and I said it literally, and now, on hearing the recording, I’ve realized that it’s not right, I was very nervous ... ) (h)

A difference in attitude was also observed between low- and high-ability students. Low-ability students commented that there was nothing that they could do about their nervousness, and about the adverse effects that they felt it had on their performance:

*“...para mi es imposible. Es que es imposible”* (... for me it’s impossible. It’s just impossible) (l)

*“...siempre, es que es lo de siempre, nervios, miedo a que no sea capaz de hacerlo y ya está”* (... always, it’s what always happens, nerves, fear that I won’t be able to do it, and that’s that) (l)

On the other hand, one high-ability student thought that some benefit might come of this disagreeable experience. She speculated that the exam might help her to get used to speaking to people and to overcome her nervousness, and she expressed her hope that it would be ‘of some use’:

*“Supongo que luego será bueno, porque si tienes contacto con la gente y te vas acostumbrando más que nada, a hablar y no a ponerte tan nervioso. Espero, vamos, que [el examen] sirva de algo.”*(I suppose that in the long run it will be good, because if

you're in contact with people and above all you get used to speaking and not getting so nervous. I hope, after all, that [the exam] will be of some use) (h)

#### *II.4.2.2.3. Individual reactions to the oral test.*

Individual reactions to the oral test were shown in other comments made by these highly-anxious students. One low-ability student mentioned her difficulty in paying attention and understanding the teacher's questions and interventions in the role-plays, which gave rise to her not knowing how to respond:

*"...en el momento que me, me preguntas, me pongo muy nerviosa...y los nervios no me dejan pensar bien las cosas"* (... the moment you ask me, me, I get very nervous ... and my nerves don't let me think straight) (l)

*"...haces la pregunta, no le presto atención a, a lo que me preguntas y entonces pues no me entero"* (...you ask me the question, I don't pay attention to, to what you ask and so I don't understand) (l)

One high-ability student made a comparison between speaking in an oral exam and speaking more informally to a native speaker. She deemed the former situation to be more anxiety-provoking, and considered the latter situation one in which she would be more fluent:

*"[en el examen] estás ... más nervioso, que a lo mejor, estar, conocer a algún, a alguien de fuera que es inglés. Estás hablando y lo tienes como con más naturalidad y como que te sale todo más fluido."* ([in the exam] you are ... more nervous than probably when you are, you know some, somebody from abroad who's English. You're talking and it seems more natural to you and it comes out more fluently) (h)

The same student referred to a sensation of lack of time during the oral exam, seemingly caused by thinking about what she was saying at that moment and,

simultaneously, about what to say next. This led to mistakes being made in what she was currently saying and in what she was going to say afterwards:

“...*parece que, que no, no sé, que no te da tiempo. Estás como pensando: «¿Qué quiero decir después?» pero no terminas de decir la, lo que estás diciendo. Entonces ni te sale bien lo que estás diciendo, ni lo que vas a decir después.*” (... it seems that, I don't know, that you don't have time. It's as if you're thinking, “What will I say after this?” but you don't finish what you're saying. So what you're saying isn't right, and nor is what you're going to say afterwards) (h)

The most striking nervous reaction of a student to the exam occurred during the examination itself. One high-ability participant started the first part of the exam (presentation of a cultural topic) and after a minute or two she started to cry. The teacher had to stop the recording and wait until the student composed herself so that the exam could be started again. She completed the exam without further incident.

However, once the test was over, and she was describing her thoughts and reactions, she was on the verge of tears again, but managed to complete the description without actually breaking down. She explained that she had had such a reaction because she was very nervous (“*Estaba muy nerviosa*”/ I was very nervous) and pointed out that it was not the teacher who had made her nervous, but that she was ‘made that way’ and that she was always nervous in oral exams (“*Y no porque la profesora me provocara nervios, sino porque yo soy así, en los exámenes orales me pongo muy nerviosa*” / (And not because the teacher made me nervous, but I'm made that way, in oral exams I get very nervous). She manifested that during the exam she had kept telling herself that she could do better (“*Y también pensaba: «Lo puedo hacer mejor, lo puedo hacer mejor»*” / And I also thought: I can do it better, I can do it better), and she regretted that she could not remember (“*no me acordaba*” / I couldn't remember), resorting to literal translation,

and that she had a lot of things to say but she had suffered a mental block and forgot things (“*tenía muchas cosas que decir, pero me bloqueo y se me olvida*”/ I had a lot of things to say, but I get a ‘mental block’ and I forget). Interestingly, this student had missed her first appointment for the oral test the day before, 10th February, 2005. She had apparently decided to skip this ‘*parcial*’ examination, and do it all in the final exam in June, and only came to the oral test on February 11 at the insistence of a friend).

## II.5. Discussion and Conclusions

Having posed the five research questions, having described the participants, the instruments, the procedure, the variables and corresponding data analysis, and having presented the results pertaining to this study, in this section I discuss the findings for each question on their own merits, and also compare and contrast them to other relevant results found in the literature.

It is interesting that the internal consistency as measured by the Cronbach alpha coefficient for my translation of the original English FLCAS into Spanish, as administered in this study, is .93, an identical reliability to the one Horwitz (1986) encountered in a preliminary investigation of the FLCAS (p. 560). This compares favourably with internal consistencies found by other authors who administered the FLCAS in their research. For example, in studies in which the English version was employed, Aida's (1994) computation was .94 (p. 158), as was Gardner and MacIntyre's (1993b, p. 168). Cheng et al.'s (1999) Chinese translation yielded an alpha coefficient of .95 (p. 424), while both Rodríguez and Abreu's (2003) Spanish versions of the FLCAS, one focusing on French as a foreign language and the other on English as a foreign language, demonstrated an internal consistency of .90 (p. 367).

At first glance, the oral test grades seem relatively low, ranging from 43% to 73%. It must be remembered, though, that most students had probably never had an oral test before, as speaking is not a component of the '*Selectividad*' university entrance exam, and this skill is not emphasised at secondary school level. Moreover, the level of this university course was intermediate, and as was revealed by the Quick Placement Test, all participants were at a lower global English level (their levels ranged from beginner to pre-intermediate). Taking these considerations into account, the fact that

only nine students failed the test, 20 received an '*Aprobado*'/pass, and 11 achieved a '*Notable*'/very good, seems to indicate that in general they had made a great effort preparing for and actually speaking in the oral test. Also, as the Quick Placement Test had been administered in October, 2004, and the oral test took place in February, 2005, oral proficiency had probably improved through speaking activities in class.

Regarding Research Question 1, "What associations are there between foreign language anxiety and university students' performance on an English language oral test as evaluated by grades and by several criteria variables concerning accuracy and communicative qualities?", let us first consider the relationship between the Oral test grade and Foreign language classroom anxiety encountered in my group of students. The *Pearson correlation*, which was negative and statistically significant ( $r = -.494$ ,  $p = .001$ ), indicates that the higher the levels of foreign language anxiety these students experienced, the lower the score they tended to attain on the oral test. This result is in line with outcomes reported by other researchers who investigated links between performance in the speaking skill, assessed in numerous ways, and language anxiety, evaluated by a variety of measures. For example, Young (1986) "found that for three out of the four anxiety measures, there was a significant negative correlation between the OPI [Oral Proficiency Interview] and anxiety" (p. 443). My result is also in line with the statistically significant and negative correlations between the Output Anxiety Scale and four Self-Description in French components encountered by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994a): in French Description Length, in French Accent, in French Fluency, and in French Sentence Complexity (p. 295). Another instance of this tendency was seen in MacIntyre et al.'s (1997) study, in which a statistically significant and negative correlation between Speaking and Language Anxiety was exhibited (p. 275). A further example of this trend was given by Cheng et al. (1999), who reported a negative and

statistically significant correlation between overall Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale scores and Speaking Course Grade (p. 431). In addition, Phillips (1992) also found a statistically significant correlation between FLCAS and the scores on her oral exam, but the association she reported was lower than that encountered in the current thesis ( $r = -.40, p < .01$ , as against  $r = -.494, p = .001$ , respectively). Phillips's students may have been slightly less anxious than those in the present study, because they were in the second year of their language course, and presumably had had some experience of oral exams, whereas participants of my research were sitting their first oral exam of the course, and in many cases, the first oral exam of their lives. Another possible explanation for the slightly higher correlation between FLCAS scores and oral proficiency in the present research was that participants were considerably older than those in Phillips's study, and in general had studied English for longer: their ages ranged from 18.84 to 25.58 years, and had been studying English for an average of 10.97 years, while whereas Phillips's participants' ages ranged from 17 to 21, having studied French for an average of 3.2 years (p. 16). Many students in the present study may have felt nervous because they were taking an oral exam for the first time at their relatively advanced ages, in spite of having studied English for so long. This tendency was further supported in the results of the multiple regression analysis conducted on the Oral test grade, in which age was a predictor: younger age tended to predict better oral test scores. My first result, then, upholds other findings described in the literature and seems to reflect Horwitz et al.'s (1986) submission that "[s]tudents who test high on anxiety report that they are afraid to speak in the foreign language" (p. 129).

The question remained, though, as to whether this tendency on the part of more highly apprehensive participants to perform more poorly in the oral test was influenced mainly by their anxiety, or if this poorer performance was due simply to inferior

language competence. *Partial correlations* helped answer this question. When these were performed on the Oral test grade and Foreign language classroom anxiety correlations, controlling for three language ability variables (Teacher ranking, Written test average, and the combined variable Teacher ranking and Written test average), the statistically significant correlation shown previously was seen to dissipate when the first two variables were controlled for, but persisted when the third variable (Teacher ranking and written test average) was eliminated ( $r = -.491$ ,  $p = .002$ ). This would suggest that language anxiety, and not only language ability, played a considerable role in the oral performance of these students. In other words, when the teacher's estimation of the each student's rank in relation to every other student's rank, together with the average mark of the written test, were taken into account together in the partial correlation, the negative and statistically significant correlation between oral performance in the test and anxiety levels still remained, suggesting that this statistically significant association existed, although moderately.

However, the findings of the present study differ from those of Young (1986), who encountered negative and statistically significant correlations between oral performance and three out of four anxiety scores, but found, on carrying out partial correlations, that "there were no longer any significant correlations between the OPI [Oral Proficiency Interview] and the anxiety measures" (p. 443). She concluded, as the oral test had been unofficial, that her participants were not really very anxious, and that "under these conditions the OPI test may indeed have been solely a measure of the subjects' language proficiency" (p. 443). By contrast, in the present study, in which the oral test score did count towards the overall grade for the whole of the official University course, it appears that not only students' oral proficiency was responsible for their grade, but that language anxiety was indeed present.

The persistence of statistical significance in the partial correlation between the Oral test grade and the FLCAS also seems to support the notion that the anxiety experienced by the participants may have involved test anxiety, which is one of the components put forward by Horwitz et al. (1986) in their foreign language classroom anxiety construct. As Young (1986) pointed out, if in an *official test*, “anxiety were to have a significant negative correlation with subjects’ oral performance, then we would have evidence to believe that this could be due to *test anxiety* and not necessarily due to anxiety from speaking in a foreign language” (p. 443). Our finding, then, seems to dispute the stances of other researchers (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Aida, 1994) who rejected the presence of the test anxiety element within Horwitz et al.’s (1986) proposed foreign language anxiety construct. It must be remembered, however, that MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) did not actually use the FLCAS in their study, and Aida (1994) took into account an overall measure of language achievement (“subjects’ final course grade”, p. 158), which may have been less anxiety-provoking than an oral test, as was the case in this part of my study.

The indication that there was a substantial connection between participants’ oral test grades and their foreign language anxiety, suggested by the outcomes of the correlation and partial correlations described in the previous paragraphs, was given further support by the results of an *analysis of variance* carried out on the results of the oral test, which revealed that the high-anxiety group obtained significantly lower oral test grades on average than both the moderate-anxiety group and the low-anxiety group, mean oral grades being 50.60 for high-anxiety group, 60.10 for the moderate-anxiety group, and 67.60 for the low-anxiety group. This difference implies that participants in the high-anxious group were significantly more likely to do poorly on the oral test than those in both the moderate- and the low-anxiety groups. This outcome is reminiscent of

Aida's (1994) ANOVA results. She had divided her participants (second-year students of Japanese) into two anxiety groups (high and low), and discovered that the "high anxiety group received significantly lower grades ... than the low anxiety group" (p. 162), that is, 85.6 and 89.9, respectively. But the statistically significant result of this study contrasts with that reported in Phillips's (1992) investigation, in which an ANOVA conducted on oral exam marks with FLCAS scores at three levels (low-, moderate-, and high-anxiety) produced no significant results.

The three statistical analyses described above, then, point towards a definite link between language anxiety and the performance of these students in the oral test, and add weight to the body of literature that has "found a consistent moderate negative correlation between the FLCAS and measures of second language achievement" (Horwitz, 2001, p. 114). But as these associations were correlational in nature, the question of cause and effect remained open, or as Young (1986) put it, "is it anxiety that causes low levels of proficiency [...] or do low levels of proficiency result in high levels of anxiety?" (p. 443).

As regards the direction and strength of *correlations between the eight Oral performance criteria and Foreign language classroom anxiety* in the participants of this study, the negative and statistically significant association observed for the *first* variable, that is, between language anxiety and the total number of used words in communication units (both correct and incorrect), suggests that the more nervous they felt, the sparser and the less linguistically complex tended to be their communicative output. This outcome regarding amount of output recalls that described by Steinberg and Horwitz (1986), whose relaxed-condition participants "attempted a greater number of elaborated [...] messages in English" (Horwitz, 2001. p. 115). As far as the *sixth* criterion is concerned, the positive and statistically significant connection seen between

language anxiety and the percentage of maze words out of the total number of words used in the oral test, indicates that the higher the levels of foreign language anxiety these students experienced, the higher the proportion of disconnected fragments, repetitions, and words in Spanish they tended to utter in their oral test. These two statistically significant outcomes convey the idea that language anxiety was unfavourably associated with some of the more desirable features as well as with some of the poorer aspects of participants' oral performance.

When *partial correlations* were conducted in order to find out whether language anxiety still correlated significantly with these two performance criteria variables (the first and the sixth), once the three language ability variables (Teacher ranking, Written test average, and Teacher ranking and written test average) had been controlled for, the statistically significant correlations for both these performance criteria variables were reduced to a chance level except in the case of the third ability variable (the combined variable Teacher ranking and written test average). As occurred in the partial correlation between language anxiety and the oral test grade, language anxiety persisted even when the teacher's assessment of each student's relative position in the group, in conjunction with students' written test averages, was eliminated. Controlling for the other two language ability variables (Teacher ranking, and Written test average), each on its own, was not enough to maintain the statistically significant correlations, but controlling for them in combination was enough to do so. This again suggests that there was a modest contribution of language ability to these results, as well as a real presence of language anxiety.

Delving further into possible links between language anxiety and the eight performance criteria through *analyses of variance*, statistically significant associations were observed in the fifth and in the sixth performance variables, that is, in the average

length of maze, and in the percent of total words in mazes, respectively. As regards the fifth performance variable, the average number of words per maze emitted by the three anxiety groups, the statistically significant difference observed between the moderate- and the high-anxiety groups is remarkable: although the high-anxiety group did utter the longest mean mazes (3.52 words), as might be expected, the *low*-anxiety group emitted on average *longer* mazes than the moderately anxious group (2.82 words and 2.30 words, respectively). This may have been due to the most relaxed participants paying less attention to their spoken output, and being less concerned about their errors than their more apprehensive companions. This finding brings to mind Gregersen and Horwitz's (2002) report on speaking performance, in which the "non-anxious participants recognized that their language production was imperfect but did not demand the same level of accuracy that their language anxious counterparts did" (p. 566). It may also be that the shorter mazes (and therefore greater amount of accuracy) produced by the moderately-anxious group of students was the result of increased attention and of facilitating anxiety (Alpert & Haber, 1960).

A similarly interesting phenomenon occurred in the ANOVA on the sixth variable, in which a statistically significant difference in the mean proportion of maze words out of the total number of words uttered in the test was found between the moderate-anxiety group and the high-anxiety group. While not surprisingly the oral tests of the high-anxiety group were made up on average by the largest proportion of mazes (just over a third), an unexpected finding was that on average the *low*-anxious group produced a significantly *larger proportion of mazes* (21.46%) than did the moderate-anxious group (18.96%), meaning that the latter group's performance was on average more comprehensible than the former's. As with the fifth performance variable, this perhaps may be explained by extra care being taken by students in the moderately-

anxious group, with facilitating anxiety working to their advantage. In a similar vein, Rodríguez (1995) submitted that the difference in performance between participants who passed their exam and those did not, was associated with the distinction between facilitating and debilitating anxiety.

Phillips (1992), who carried out an ANOVA involving anxiety at three levels (low, moderate, and high) on the eight oral performance criteria in her study, found statistically significant results for two of them: there was a statistically significant difference in mean number of dependent clauses, between the high- and the low-anxiety groups, and in mean average words per CU, between the low- and the moderate-anxiety groups, and also between the low- and high-anxiety groups (p. 19). Phillips discovered that these statistically significant differences occurred in 'positive' or desirable aspects of performance that were qualitative and quantitative in nature (mean number of dependent clauses, and mean average number of words per CU), while in the present thesis, the statistically significant differences were related to 'negative' or undesirable aspects of performance, that is, Average length of mazes, and Percent of total words in mazes. This suggests that higher language anxiety in my group of students tended to be more related on average to facets of poorer oral performance.

The correlational analyses and the analyses of variance conducted on the eight performance criteria variables suggest that in this thesis study the sixth variable, 'Percent of total words in mazes', is the one that was most strongly associated with language anxiety in the participants. The moderate positive and statistically significant correlation found between percent of total words in mazes and language anxiety for the participants as a whole, as well as the considerably high proportion of maze words uttered on average in the oral test by all three anxiety groups (between 18% and 33% of

all words spoken in the test), both seem to suggest that higher levels of anxiety were connected to a greater amount of poor-quality output in the oral test.

As to the possible origins of this higher proportion of poor-quality output in the more apprehensive participants, these correlational results do not allow us to claim any causal links between language performance and language anxiety, as other researchers have reminded us (Aida, 1994; MacIntyre et al., 1997; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999, Young, 1986). While we cannot be certain, therefore, that language anxiety was unequivocally responsible for lower oral scores, our findings bear out that higher language anxiety was indeed connected to poorer performance in the speaking test.

Bearing in mind Horwitz's (2001) speculation that it may be that "some uncontrolled variable is responsible for any relationship which has been observed" (p. 117) between foreign language anxiety and foreign language achievement, the aim of the second, third, and fourth research questions was precisely to investigate variables which might have an impact on global foreign language proficiency, on performance on an oral test, and on foreign language classroom anxiety, and which might predict these three aspects of language learning in the participants of this study.

As regards Research Question 2, "What demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics are associated with and best predict participants' global level of English, as measured by the Quick Placement Test (Oxford University Press & University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2001)?"', potential connections between global proficiency in English and student characteristics that were demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective in nature were sought. *Pearson correlation* results showed that overall English proficiency, as measured by the Quick Placement Test, was significantly linked to two demographic variables, to one academic variable, to twelve cognitive variables, and to one affective variable. Concerning the

positive and statistically significant correlation with the *demographic* variable Days spent visiting or living in an English-speaking country, this suggests that contact with English through experience abroad benefited general English proficiency in my participants. This finding contrasts with the report given by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000), who did not come across any statistically significant correlation between foreign language achievement and number of foreign countries visited by their students (p. 9). As regards the other demographic variable, Age at which English study started, the negative and statistically significant correlation between global English proficiency and this variable suggests that the younger participants were when they studied English for the first time, the higher their overall English level tended to be.

This indication that younger starting ages for English study was favourably linked to better general language level is further upheld by the positive and statistically significant correlation between QPT scores and the *academic* variable Months spent learning English in schools. That is, the more time participants had spent in attendance at English-teaching institutions, including private language schools, the higher their global language level was inclined to be. Rodríguez and Abreu (2003) took into account duration of language study when comparing anxiety levels between Venezuelan students of French and of English, but no statistically significant differences were observed. Even so, the authors submitted that the slightly higher levels of language anxiety noted in students of French were attributable to fewer years spent learning this language.

The significant links between overall English proficiency, as measured by the QPT, and Months spent learning English in schools and Age at which English learning started indicate the importance of time devoted to study in English proficiency. In these participants, not only the time accumulated in English schooling in terms of months was

favourably associated with better proficiency, but also the earlier in life that English learning had begun.

Age itself, however, was not seen to be significantly associated with general English competence in the participants of this study. This result is in line with a finding by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000), who speculated that the older students were, the more adverse their foreign language outcomes would be, but similarly did not find any meaningful correlations between these two variables.

Nor was gender observed to be significantly linked to students' overall English proficiency, as measured by QPT. This result is comparable to that reported by Ehrman and Oxford (1995) who found that “[g]ender had no relationship with learning success by any measure” (p. 81), but contrasts with that of other research in which a statistically significant connection between gender and foreign language achievement was encountered. Aida (1994) reported that females tended to perform more successfully than males in Japanese in their final exam, and Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000) also found that the women in their investigation were apt to achieve more highly in the foreign language than the men.

As regards the high correlations observed between QPT and several *cognitive* measures, results suggest that Quick Placement Test scores (an internationally verified test of global proficiency in English) strongly reflected two other English test scores aimed at measuring overall levels of English: the highest grade obtained in pre-University education, and Written test average. They also mirrored oral proficiency (the Oral test grade). These results offer considerable support for the reliability of the five components of the written test and of the oral test that I administered to the participants at the end of the *cuatrimestre*. In this sense, I have improved on Phillips's (1992) study,

in which the “reliability of the oral exam” was “unverified” (p. 21), and in which the reliability of the written exams was not questioned.

In addition, positive and statistically significant associations suggested that the higher students scored on the QPT, the higher they considered their own proficiency in English to be (globally and in the four skills), and the higher the mark they expected to obtain at the end of the current English course. These findings are comparable to others observed in the literature. Gardner et al. (1997) reported that language achievement in French correlated significantly and positively with self-rated Proficiency (Can Do), for both Objective Measures and French Grades (p. 352). Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000) encountered a statistically significant and positive link between expectations of foreign-language achievement and foreign language achievement in students enrolled in French, German, Spanish, or Japanese courses (p. 9).

It is noteworthy that the correlation between the Quick Placement Test score and participants’ Self-assessed level in speaking was positive and statistically significant, but was the lowest correlation amongst their own estimations of their abilities in the four language skills. The most highly correlated was Self-assessed level in reading. On the one hand, this finding seems to point towards students’ lack of knowledge about their oral level in relation to their overall language competence, due perhaps to their relatively limited experience of this productive skill in the foreign language. On the other hand, it may imply that participants were more self-aware about their reading level, as they would almost certainly be more experienced in this receptive skill.

The statistically significant and negative correlation between global English level and the tendency to reject the idea of taking the subject To obtain credits indicates that the less interested students were in adding the credits gained from this subject to their university credit total, the higher their overall English proficiency was apt to be.

This seems to suggest that there was a tendency towards intrinsic motivation on the part of students who did better on the QPT test. Or perhaps participants who fared better on the QPT simply liked English, or thought they would pass exam at the end of the academic year.

The non-significant result corresponding to study habits (class attendance and hours spent studying English) was mirrored in Onwuegbuzie et al.'s (2000) investigation, in which study habits were similarly seen not to correlate significantly with foreign language achievement.

As far as links with *affective* variables are concerned, the statistically significant and negative correlation between Quick Placement Test and FLCAS signifies that the more apprehension about language-learning students felt, the poorer overall English language proficiency they exhibited. While most researchers have examined links between language anxiety and language achievement measured at the time of the study, or language achievement assessed through final grades, Gardner et al. (1997) included in their Objective Measures a French Achievement test that was analogous in some ways to the Quick Placement Test: it was a “version of the Université Laval French Placement Test” and was a “100-item multiple choice test [...] used to determine the participants’ knowledge of French verbs, adjectives, pronouns, and prepositions” (p. 349). A time limit of 30 minutes was given, as occurred with the Quick placement Test. These authors detected a statistically significant and negative correlation between Objective Measures and Language Anxiety, a result that was comparable to the one encountered in my study between the Quick Placement Test and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale.

The *standard multiple regression analysis* that was carried out in order to ascertain which of the demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables best

predicted global English proficiency as measured by the Quick Placement Test, indicated that one demographic variable (Age at which English learning started), one affective variable (Foreign language classroom anxiety), and one cognitive variable (To obtain credits) contributed most strongly. This model suggests that the participants who exhibited highest levels of overall English proficiency tended to have started English at the earliest age, to have the lowest levels of foreign language anxiety, and to be the least interested in obtaining credits through this subject. Considering that the contribution of each of the three independent variables to the prediction of foreign language achievement was just over 10% or below, the effect sizes may be said to be small (Cohen, 1988).

The finding that the variable which explained the greatest proportion of variance (just over 10%) is Age at which English learning started suggests that amount of English learning in terms of age at commencement of study predicted the highest overall proficiency. Taking into account that the Quick Placement Test is one which evaluates reading, vocabulary, and grammar, that is, aspects of English language study that are strongly emphasised in the Spanish education system, it is not surprising that the younger students were when they started learning English predicted the highest scores on the QPT. These findings contrast with those of other researchers, who reported that academic achievement was the best predictor of foreign language achievement (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995).

The detection of foreign language anxiety as the next best predictor of overall foreign language proficiency suggests that even in the presence of many years of English study, nervousness and apprehension were still deleterious to language achievement, as measured by the Quick Placement Test. Foreign language classroom anxiety as second best predictor of foreign language achievement is a result that has also

been encountered by other researchers. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000) submitted that foreign language anxiety was the second best predictor of foreign language achievement after academic achievement, and Ehrman and Oxford (1995) asserted that “affective factors ... are clearly the second echelon” (p. 82). Saito and Samimy (1996), observed a slightly different trend: They employed final grades “as a global measure of performance” (p. 244) and their regression analysis showed that language anxiety did not predict final grades for participants at beginner level, but it was seen to be the “best predictor” (p. 245) at intermediate and at advanced levels.

The third best predictor of overall English language proficiency, To obtain credits, indicates that the less students were interested in obtaining the credits afforded by passing this subject, the higher the marks they tended to obtain on the QPT. This seems to point towards intrinsic motivation as an enhancer of language learning. This kind of motivation, which “is in evidence whenever students’ natural curiosity and interest energise their learning” (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 245), has been also been linked to “long-term retention” (Arnold and Brown, 1999, p. 14). In students who took part in this study, then, their natural interest in English, as opposed to the extrinsic reward of adding credits to their university course total, aided perhaps by improved memory, contributed to superior foreign language proficiency.

In attempting to answer the third research question, “What demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics are associated with and best predict participants’ oral test results?”, I searched for links between oral performance as measured by the Oral test grade, and demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics of the participants, and tried to discover which of these characteristics best predicted oral performance. *Pearson correlation* results showed that the Oral test

grade was significantly related to three demographic variables, to two academic variables, to thirteen cognitive variables, and to two affective variables.

As far as *demographic* variables are concerned, the fact that students' oral level was significantly linked to Father's educational level means that the more highly educated students' fathers were, the better they tended to perform on the oral test. Superior education on the part of the fathers may point towards greater importance being given at home to speaking English, and/or to fathers speaking English themselves and therefore setting an example to their sons and daughters in this regard.

As occurred in the Quick Placement Test correlations, Age at which English learning started also correlated significantly and negatively with the oral test grade, suggesting that the younger participants were when they started their English studies, the higher the mark they were inclined to obtain on the oral test. This outcome coincides with a recent finding by Domínguez and Pessoa (2005), whose investigation involving sixth-grade primary school learners of Spanish (that is, children who were about eleven years old), showed that children who had started Spanish in kindergarten "outperformed new students [i.e., those who had studied Spanish for a year] in their speaking skills in Spanish" (p. 477).

Age, however, was the demographic variable that correlated most strongly with the Oral test grade, meaning that the older the students were, the more poorly they were apt to perform in the oral test. This may have been due the fact that several students were well into their twenties, the highest age at the beginning of the study being 25.58 years. Ehrman and Oxford (1995), whose students were older (their average age was 39,  $SD = 9$ ), also detected a similar, statistically significant relationship between age and speaking: "younger students did better" (p. 81).

As far as the statistically significant correlations between the Oral test grade and *academic* variables are concerned, a quantitative link was suggested between the oral test score and Months spent learning English in schools: the more time students had been enrolled on English courses at English-teaching institutions, the better they fared on the test. The statistically significant and positive correlation between the oral test grade and Another language spoken or known appears to indicate a more qualitative connection: there was a tendency for students who spoke or who knew another foreign language apart from English to obtain a better oral test mark. This suggests that acquaintance with a language apart from English, from theoretical and/or pragmatic points of view, stood them in better stead when performing in the oral test. This finding is reminiscent of a report by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000), who observed that students who had taken more foreign language subjects at high school tended to achieve more highly in their foreign language course at university (p. 9).

Regarding *cognitive* variables, students who expected to fare well on the oral test tended to obtain higher marks, as indicated by the positive and statistically significant correlation between the Oral test grade and Expected grade in this subject. This is consistent with the high correlation seen between the Oral test grade and average of the Written test, which students took three months after indicating their expectations on the Background Questionnaire.

In addition, the strong correlations between the Oral test grade and the Highest grade in English at pre-University level, and the Quick Placement Test, indicate that students who had performed better in English at high school level in the Spanish education system, and on an international placement test, were inclined to obtain higher oral grades.

The correlations between the Oral test grade and measures of *actual* performance (Highest grade in English at pre-University level, the Quick Placement Test, and the Written test average) were higher than those observed between this variable and students' *assessment* of their English language proficiency (Estimation of own proficiency level, overall and in the four skills). This may be due to the fact that participants completed the Background Questionnaire near the beginning of the course (October 2004), and not having had a lot of experience in the oral skill up until that time, they may have not been very aware of their own proficiency in speaking. Over three months of classroom oral activities in the ESP subject together with a certain amount of oral test preparation may explain how students fared better on the oral and written tests taken in February 2005 than their own estimation tended to indicate.

The negative and statistically significant correlation between this variable and Difficulty of current English subject indicates, not surprisingly, that the more problematic the participants found the subject to be, the more poorly they tended to speak in the oral test. An interesting positive and significant link was observed between performance on the oral test and taking this subject For another reason(s), which indicates that the more diverse reasons students had for studying English, apart from enhancing their university career, from obtaining credits, and from bettering their professional prospects, the higher the oral grade they tended to achieve. As described in Results subsection II.4.1.6, these reasons included love of the language, desire to communicate with Anglophones and with other foreigners, travel, personal development, and the perceived importance of the English language. This association seems to indicate that different kinds of motivation were favourably connected to higher oral test scores.

Regarding *affective* variables, the negative and statistically significant correlation between the Oral test grade and Foreign language classroom anxiety suggests that the more highly anxious students were, the more poorly they were inclined to do on the oral test. This result has been commented on in detail in the discussion of the first research question at the beginning of this subsection, and further endorses the findings of other researchers who also found that language anxiety was unsatisfactorily related to speaking in the foreign language (Cheng et al., 1999; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a; MacIntyre et al., 1997; Young, 1986). The tendency for students who expressed a Belief that performance in oral activities in class would reflect their English level to obtain a higher mark on the oral test, reveals that those who were more aware of their general language proficiency were apt to produce better English in the speaking test. Again this is interesting because participants completed this item about their feelings near the beginning of the course on the Background Questionnaire: those who were more assured about their level being reflected in speaking activities tended to do better four months later in the oral test, while those who were less assured were apt to do more badly. These findings lend support to Bandura's (1989) theory that "those who are assured of their capabilities intensify their efforts when they fail to achieve what they seek and they persist until they succeed" (p. 49).

The *standard multiple regression analysis* that was conducted to find out which of the demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables were the best predictors of the Oral test grade revealed that one demographic variable (Age), one cognitive variable (For another reason/s), one academic variable (Months spent learning English in schools: primary, secondary and/or private language schools), and one affective variable (Foreign language classroom anxiety) were the prime contributors.

This result points to the following model: the participants in this study who performed best on the speaking test tended to be younger, to have other reasons for studying English, to have spent more time studying that language in terms of months registered in English-teaching institutions, and to be the least language-anxious. The contributions of For another reason(s), of Months spent learning English in schools (primary, secondary and/or private language schools), and of Foreign language classroom anxiety, were each under 8%, which according to Cohen's (1988) parameters, represent small effect sizes. The contribution of Age was over 13% and may be considered, in line with Cohen's (1988) criteria, to represent a medium effect size.

The finding that age was the best predictor of oral performance as measured by the Oral test grade (older age predicting poorer oral grades) may be explained as follows. It may be that the older participants in my study had been at university, studying an unrelated subject (Labour Science) for longer than the younger participants, and this may have taken its toll in the oral test. Or it may have been due to a decline in oral faculties that accompanies ageing, as some research (Lieberman, 1984; Newport, 1986, cited in Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000) has indicated: "phonology and morphology, as well as the capacity to speak a second language without an accent, deteriorate ... severely with age" (p. 6). Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000)'s notion that older language learners might be at a disadvantage in activities in which a "quick response" (p. 6) was required, may also have been true here.

In the second best predictor, For another reason(s), we are seeing that four types of motivation (intrinsic, as illustrated by interest in the language for its own sake or for personal enrichment; extrinsic, as suggested by the perceived importance of learning English; integrative, as shown by the desire to communicate with speakers of English and to travel; and instrumental, as a means of reaping benefits from it, such as using the

Internet), all predicted superior performance on the speaking test. This suggests that freedom from outwardly-imposed prizes or penalties, or the “autonomy of self-reward” (Bruner, 1962, cited in Arnold, 1999, p. 14) paid dividends in the oral test. In addition, this result is congruous with the one observed in the QPT regression analysis in which a lack of interest in obtaining credits was found to be a predictor of higher scores on this proficiency test.

The detection of total months spent learning English at schools as the third best predictor is suggestive of a quantitative link between better speaking performance and the amount of time accumulated learning English in a formal setting.

It is notable that the fourth best predictor of the Oral test grade was Foreign language classroom anxiety. This result differs from that encountered in Cheng et al.’s (1999) research, in which stepwise multiple regression analysis showed that language anxiety was the best predictor of English oral grades. The finding in the present study that an affective variable was further down the list, as it were, as a predictor of the Oral test grade than a demographic variable, a cognitive variable, and an academic variable, highlights how much more intricate the relationship between oral performance and anxiety, discussed in the first research question, actually was in these students. Age, motivations, and language learning history appeared to play a more outstanding role in their oral test outcomes than their feelings of apprehension at learning English.

In addressing the fourth research question, “What demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective characteristics are associated with and best predict participants’ levels of foreign language anxiety, as measured by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986)?” I looked for connections between language anxiety as measured by FLCAS scores, and demographic, academic, cognitive, and

affective features pertaining to the students, and aimed to find out which of these student characteristics best predicted language anxiety.

*Pearson correlation* results showed that the scores on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale were significantly related to one demographic variable, to two academic variables, to eleven cognitive variables, and to one affective variable.

As regards *demographic* variables, the positive and statistically significant correlation between FLCAS scores and gender suggests that the female participants in this study were significantly more anxious than the males. This result echoes similar findings reported in the literature. Padilla, Cervantes, Maldonado, and García (1988) submitted that female language students were more apt to be language-anxious than their male counterparts. Similarly, Cheng (2002), in research conducted into writing anxiety in Taiwanese students of English, reported higher levels of anxiety in females. Elkhafaifi (2005), whose investigation delved into Arabic listening anxiety in Anglophone students, also discovered that females tended to be more anxious than males in general Arabic anxiety. In addition, in the secondary school context, Pappamihel (2002) found that females were much more anxious than males in the mainstream classroom. However, my result contrasts with reports submitted by other researchers in which no significant connection between language anxiety and gender was observed (Aida, 1994; Dawaele, 2002, Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999).

Female students were seen to be significantly more language anxious than males in my study, as seen in the previous paragraph. This brings to mind Pappamihel's (2002) situation, in which female students of English were more anxious in the mainstream classroom than male students, and which made her speculate that the females reacted in this way because they had lost the warm support of the instructors they had had in the English-as-a-second-language setting. In my case, the FLCAS was

administered six weeks into the term, which gave students time to become acquainted with me and with my methodology, but even so, female participants still tended to feel language-anxious.

The non-significant result for the relationship between foreign language anxiety and age in the participants of the present study contrasts with the statistically significant association found in other research: Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) discovered that the older their participants were, the more highly anxious they were inclined to be. While in the latter work, students' mean age was only slightly higher than in mine (22.7 in Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999, as against 21.27 in the current research), their ages ranged from 18 to 71 (p. 222), in contrast to an age range of 18-25 in my study. The considerably more advanced ages of several of Onwuegbuzie' et al.'s students may have explained their significantly greater anxiety.

The *demographic* variable Days spent visiting/living in English-speaking countries was not observed to be significantly related to language anxiety, even though it did correlate significantly and positively to global English proficiency, as measured by the Quick Placement Test scores. In other words, having visited or lived in an English speaking country tended to benefit the overall English of these participants, but not having done so was not significantly linked to their anxiety. This suggestion differs from findings of other writers (Aida, 1994; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999), who did find a statistically significant connection: in their studies, the more visits students had made to foreign countries, the less anxious they were.

As to *academic* variables, the negative and statistically significant correlation between foreign language classroom anxiety, as measured by the FLCAS, and Months spent learning English in primary, secondary, and/or private language schools, signifies that the more months students had spent learning English formally, the less

apprehensive about language learning they felt. This result is somewhat similar to Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999)'s negative and statistically significant correlation shown between foreign language classroom anxiety and foreign languages taken at high school (in terms of number of courses, p. 224), and also to Rodríguez and Abreu's (2003) observation of slightly higher, though not significant, levels of language anxiety noted in students of French who had dedicated fewer years to studying that language.

While the finding relating to months of study indicates that the greater *quantity* of English that participants had studied in schools, the less language-anxious they tended to be, the other significantly correlated academic variable, Another language spoken or known, points to a more *qualitative* connection: the more knowledge of another language students had, the lower their degree of language anxiety tended to be. It will be remembered that a beneficial connection concerning these two academic variables came to light in the Oral test grade correlations: months spent learning English in schools, and knowledge of another language were both associated with higher speaking grades.

Concerning the relationship between year of study and language anxiety, I had imagined that there might be a statistically significant difference in levels of anxiety between students who were in their second year, and those who were in their third (and final) year as *Relaciones Laborales* students, speculating that the latter participants might show significantly higher levels of language anxiety as they would soon be graduating and would perhaps feel more apprehensive about their English level in the face of future professional requirements. However, no such statistically significant association was observed. This finding contrasts with outcomes of other studies in which statistically significant associations were reported. Onwuegbuzie et al.'s (1999) subjects, who were at three foreign language different levels (beginning, intermediate,

and advanced), displayed a fairly consistent rise in anxiety as they progressed through years of study (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors). Cheng (2002), on the other hand, noted that while anxiety did not increase depending on levels of writing proficiency, it did rise with year of study, freshmen (first year) tending to exhibit least anxiety and juniors (third year) tending to exhibit most. In the present study, perhaps the lack of a significant difference in language anxiety with regard to year of study (second or third) may be explained by the fact that students completed the FLCAS near the beginning of an ESP course which was pitched at one level only (intermediate), and which lasted for only one year. Differential levels of anxiety between second- and third-year students may simply not have had time to develop. A longitudinal study, conducted over two or more years, might have revealed greater differences as students progressed through academic years.

Amongst the *cognitive* variables, the scores for English language tests (Highest grade in English at pre-University level, Oral test grade, Written test average, and Quick Placement Test) all correlated significantly and negatively with FLCAS scores, meaning that the higher students' levels of anxiety were, the more poorly they tended to score on all measures of English achievement: in a Spanish secondary school examination (*Selectividad* in almost all cases, 37 out of 40 participants), in the two tests administered at the end of the first term of their English for Specific Purposes course, and on an internationally proven proficiency test, the QPT. It is worthy of note that the strongest correlation occurred between FLCAS scores and the highest mark obtained in English at pre-University level ( $r = -.607, p = .001$ ), and the lowest occurred between FLCAS scores and the Quick Placement Test ( $r = -.442, p = .004$ ), with the two ESP test correlations falling in between (Oral test grade:  $r = -.494, p = .001$ ; Written test average:  $r = -.506, p = .001$ ). While correlational results do not permit us to determine cause and

effect, that is, whether anxiety influenced poorer performance in the exams and tests, or whether unsatisfactory exam results give rise to more acute anxiety in these students, the time scale of the administration of the exams and tests, and the type of exams or tests they were suggest various trends.

The first exam taken by the participants was the *Selectividad* (or similar) examination prior to university entrance, whose result would most probably have been perceived by students to be extremely important as it would have contributed directly to their access to a university course of their choice. In addition, *Selectividad* is an exam in which students ‘produce’ English (there is a writing component), so poor English ability would be greatly in evidence. With that examination still in mind, therefore, participants may have felt quite language-anxious at the beginning of the university-level English for Specific Purposes course that is the focus of this research. The next English test to be taken was the Quick Placement Test (administered in October, 2004, at the beginning of the fourth week of term), which students knew would in no way influence their grade at the end of the course, and which they possibly felt was less demanding than *Selectividad* in that no language was ‘produced’, as all items were in multiple-choice format. This may have resulted in students exhibiting lower degrees of anxiety as regards the QPT. Next, as we have seen, the correlations between FLCAS scores and the results of the intermediate-level ‘*parcial*’ exams (which consisted of the speaking test, and the average of five components of the written test: listening, dictation, reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary, and composition), taken a few months later in January and February, 2005, were more pronounced than the FLCAS/QPT one. This may be again explained by the nature and by the scheduling of the ‘*parcial*’ exams: students were required to deal with various types of test designed to evaluate receptive, productive, and communicative skills, so participants would probably feel that their

linguistic abilities would be displayed clearly, and this may have provoked language anxiety in its three principal manifestations (test anxiety, communication apprehension, and fear of negative evaluation), especially in the lower-level students. On the other hand, the '*parciales*' may have been perceived to be of less importance than *Selectividad*: they contributed only partially to the final grade of the English for Specific Purposes course, and students could improve on their performance in June, 2005, whereas '*Selectividad*' had been a single test of vital importance. We may be seeing here not only possible 'causes' and 'effects' between language anxiety and language achievement (for example, poorer performance in *Selectividad* 'causing' greater anxiety at the beginning of the ESP course), but also 'vicious circle' effects (for example, productive-skill tests 'causing' more intense anxiety, which in turn 'causes' poorer performance in subsequent productive and communicative tests). The possible instances of 'cause and effect' and 'vicious circle' found in this study mirror similar descriptions offered by other researchers (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a; MacIntyre et al., 1997; Saito & Samimy, 1996), and support MacIntyre et al.'s (1997) position that "one can best view the link between anxiety and performance as reciprocal" (p. 279).

The positive and statistically significant correlation between FLCAS scores and Difficulty of current English subject reveals that those participants who were more language-anxious were inclined to find this subject more problematic.

The negative and statistically significant correlations between FLCAS scores and Estimation of own proficiency level, and between FLCAS scores and Self-assessed level in listening, in speaking, in reading, and in writing show that students who had higher degrees of language anxiety tended to consider their own level of English (overall, and in the four skills) to be lower. Correlations for language anxiety regarding self-perception in the receptive skills (listening and reading) were slightly stronger than

those regarding self-perception in the productive skills (speaking and writing). This is a surprising finding, in that it might be logical to suppose that students would be more apprehensive in their assessment of their own levels of productive skills, which display linguistic ability more openly. This contrasts with MacIntyre et al.'s (1997) report, in which correlations between language anxiety and self-assessed proficiency were more robust for the productive skills than for the receptive ones. A possible explanation for this finding is that participants in the present study had had relatively little experience of speaking and writing in the foreign language (both at schools and outside the classroom) and so perhaps they were less aware of their level in those skills. MacIntyre et al.'s students, on the other hand, were studying a second, not foreign, language at a bilingual university, and therefore would probably have had a more precise idea of their own proficiency in all four skills.

The correlation with language anxiety for participants' Expected grade in this subject was negative and statistically significant, implying that the more anxious students were, the lower the grades they thought they would obtain in this subject. This result is similar to the one found by Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999), who also encountered a significant and negative correlation between language anxiety and the final grade participants expected to attain.

In this study, participants' language anxiety was also seen to correlate negatively and significantly with their actual course grades, as measured by the oral test score and by the average mark for their written test, implying that more highly anxious students had lower expectations of their test marks, as seen in the previous paragraph, and did in fact do more poorly in their tests. This lends weight to a comment made by Horwitz (2001) about an early investigation of hers (1986), in which she came across a similar phenomenon in her students, who, like those in the present study, were taking their first

semester of foreign language study at university. “In the first study using the FLCAS (Horwitz, 1986) there was a significant moderate negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and the grades the students expected on their first semester language class as well as their actual final grades, indicating that students with higher levels of foreign language anxiety both expected and received lower grades than their less anxious counterparts” (Horwitz, 2001, p. 115).

In the present study, the correlation between language anxiety and Expected grade in this subject ( $r = -.404, p = .010$ ) was lower than that observed between language anxiety and actual test grades ( $r = -.494, p = .001$  for the Oral test grade, and  $r = -.506, p = .001$  for the Written test average), suggesting that anxiety played a less important role in their expectations than in the reality of the tests. This may be accounted for by the fact that the Background Questionnaire, in which students indicated the mark they expected to achieve in this English subject, was administered near the beginning of the academic year, and at that early stage, students may have had little idea about how they would fare in tests that were still quite far in the future.

On the other hand, the correlation between language anxiety and students’ Estimation of own proficiency level was much higher ( $r = -.694, p = .001$ ) than that observed between language anxiety and actual test grades. Students’ estimation of their own English level was also given on the Background Questionnaire near the beginning of the course, but this information was not about some event in the distant future (e.g., end-of-term tests), but about how students felt *at that moment* about their English level. Feelings of insecurity in the face of a new and demanding language course at that early point in the academic year, together with negative language learning and achievement experiences in the past, for example, poor performance at *Selectividad*, may have accentuated language anxiety in many students.

As far as the positive and statistically significant correlation between FLCAS scores and the *affective* variable, the Belief that anxiety/nervousness will influence performance in oral activities in class, we are seeing here that the more language anxious students were, the more strongly they believed that nervousness would have an effect on their oral performance in the classroom. This result is not remarkable in itself as it is congruent with other statistically significant findings concerning the relationship between language anxiety and oral proficiency (Self-assessed level in speaking:  $r = -.429$ ,  $p = .006$ , and the Oral test grade:  $r = -.494$ ,  $p = .001$ ), but the strength of the correlation is notable ( $r = -.606$ ,  $p = .001$ ). This information, given in the Background Questionnaire near the beginning of the course, was about challenging speaking activities that students were becoming familiar with at that time, and the corresponding correlation shows their more extreme levels of anxiety in this regard.

It is of interest that the three highest FLCAS correlations (with Highest grade in English at pre-University level, with Estimation of own proficiency level, and with Belief that anxiety/nervousness will influence performance in oral activities in class) span the past, present, and future of language learning facts and perceptions. The first association may be a residue of anxiety relating to a key English exam taken in the past, while the second and third associations are a sign of extreme anxiety felt with regard to current abilities and future outcomes in English.

The *standard multiple regression analysis* carried out in order to discover which demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables were the best predictors of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety showed that one cognitive variable (Estimation of own proficiency level), one academic variable (Another language spoken or known), and one demographic variable (Gender), were the principal contributors. This result indicates the following model: participants in this study who had highest

levels of foreign language anxiety tended to have the lowest estimation of their proficiency in English, to be female, and not to know or speak another foreign language. The contribution of Estimation of own proficiency level to the variance was over 26%, and so in accordance with Cohen's (1988) criteria, its effect size may be considered as large. The contributions of Another language spoken or known, and of Gender were both under 8%, and therefore their contributions to the variance may be said to represent small effect sizes (Cohen, 1988).

Self-assessed English-language proficiency on the part of the students, observed in this study to be the best predictor of language anxiety, is in line with other reports, such as Cheng's (2002) regression analysis, which revealed that confidence in writing in the foreign language was the best predictor of anxiety related to the writing skill. The large effect size of our result points to the importance of students' self-perceptions about their language-learning abilities, and illustrates MacIntyre et al.'s (1997) remark that "actual competence, perceived competence, and language anxiety are all interrelated" (p. 274).

The finding that the second best predictor was Another language spoken or known reveals the influence that knowing or speaking another language may exert in lowering anxiety in the language classroom. In spite of the small effect size of its prediction of language anxiety, this is a variable of considerable consequence to the learners in the current study, as it was also shown to be favourably linked to higher oral test grades. Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) also discovered that "prior high school experience with foreign languages" (p. 226) was a predictor of foreign language anxiety.

The detection of Gender as the third best predictor of anxiety in these participants lends support to submissions by several other researchers who similarly

found higher levels of anxiety in female learners (Cheng, 2002; Elkhafafi, 2005; Pappamihel, 2002). While a greater proportion of women took part in this study (70% were female), it is noteworthy that all six highly-anxious students of both high and low ability selected for the post-oral-test interviews happened to be female. But the reasons for this tendency towards higher language anxiety in the female participants remain unclear.

As regards Research Question 5, “How do highly anxious participants describe their thoughts and feelings as they took an oral test in English?”, the interviews with the six highly anxious students, three high-ability and three low-ability, enhanced our understanding of the numerical outcomes corresponding to the first four research questions. The one-to-one interviews were not only useful in supporting and illuminating those findings for the whole group, but were important for revealing individual student reactions and states of mind that would never have come to light at all in the analysis of the scales, of the test results, or of written comments.

When considering *similarities* between the responses of the anxious students of both abilities, I was struck by how alike their *affective* reactions were. The interviews had not been focused so that the students would necessarily talk about their apprehension, nervousness, or anxiety, but it was notable that all six students used the word “*nerviosa*” or “*nervios*” in their very first sentence, suggesting nervousness was the overall or most prominent sensation experienced across abilities. One low-ability student’s mention of the “*miedo*” she had felt during her oral test reflects the feelings of “fear” of communicating in the foreign language and of being negatively assessed that is ubiquitous in the language anxiety literature (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986; Oh, 1990; von Wörde, 2003; Vogely, 1998). Indeed, Horwitz et al. (1986)’s “*fear* of

negative evaluation” (my italics) was proposed by them as one of the three major components of their construct of foreign language classroom anxiety (p. 127).

There were also some remarkably similar *cognitive* reactions in both ability groups, involving obstacles and hindrances to successful communication perceived to be caused by nervousness. High-ability students’ reactions were virtually indistinguishable from those given by low-ability students. Compare, for example, one low-ability participant’s report that “...[los nervios] no me dejan pensar bien las cosas...” (...[nerves] don’t let me think straight) with one high-level student’s comment that “...me quedo en blanco mucho tiempo” (my mind stays blank for a long time). Also, notice the similarity between “...me bloqueo mucho...” (I get a ‘mental block’) and “...me quedo encasquillada...” (I get stuck), comments by a low-ability student and by a high-ability student, respectively.

There were fewer comments about *physiological* signs of nervousness, such as physical tenseness, perspiring hands, and wavering voice, but they reported by highly anxious participants of both abilities. These symptoms are shared by other language-anxious students, as noted in the literature (Horwitz et al., 1986; Price, 1991; von Wörde, 2003); Horwitz et al.’s learners complained of “tenseness, trembling, perspiring, palpitations, and sleep disturbances” (p. 129), and of “freezing” in class, going blank before exams, and feeling reticence about entering the classroom (p. 128). Price’s (1991) participants describing how they felt during oral activities, talked about how they “sighed, fidgeted, laughed nervously” (p. 103).

Concerning *differences* in responses about the oral test, there were *affective* and *cognitive* reactions, but no differences in *physiological* symptoms were reported.

As far as differences in *affective* reactions were concerned, dissimilarities in attitude were seen. Low-ability students’ attitude tended to be one of resignation,

lamenting the “impossibility” of overcoming their nervousness in order to perform better, as well as “nerves” and “fear of not being able to do it”, reminding us of one of Price’s (1991) participants, who commented: “I should be able to do this and I can’t do it” (p. 105). This contrasts with the more positive outlook on the part of one high-ability student, who felt that she might be able to conquer the nervousness she had felt during the test and that it might stand her in good stead for when she came to speak in English with people outside the classroom. These ways of thinking seem to reflect learned helplessness (Seligman, 1991) on the part of low-ability participants, while the high-ability student appeared more willing to ‘help herself’. The question of cause and effect arises once more here. Were the three low-ability/beginner students (who had all stated on the Background Questionnaire that they had studied English over a long period: 50 months, 63 months, and 90 months) still at their low level because of their learned helplessness and therefore because they were convinced that they could not achieve any more highly, or had they learned to feel helpless because of their poor language ability?

Comments about nervousness distracting their attention from the teacher’s interventions during the interview, and giving rise to listening difficulties, were made only by the low-ability students. This may have been due to the fact that their level was well below that of the test, which was intermediate. Or it may also have originated in “input anxiety” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a), which hindered the successful taking in and retention of the teacher’s words in their short term memory, and “may explain why anxious students have trouble comprehending long sentences” (p. 296).

In the *cognitive* vein, reported use of learning strategies and of performance strategies distinguished students of the two abilities. All three low-ability participants seemed to rely without question on ‘bottom-up’ approaches to study and test-taking (citing memorization and direct translation), whereas one high-ability student, who

realised that she had used translation techniques, was apparently not happy about this, considering that she had resorted to translation through her nervousness. The unquestioning use of memorization and direct translation on the part of low-ability participants (who were all beginners according to their Quick Placement test results) may be attributable to their difficulties in coping with an oral test which was pitched at intermediate level: they perhaps did not have enough linguistic knowledge to do anything else. The higher-ability student seemed to have reached a stage in her oral development which rejected translation, but her nervousness had seemingly made her 'regress' to the use of a technique more commonly favoured at lower levels.

The comment, made by one high-ability student, about feeling flustered by a lack of time, which did not allow her to concentrate on what she was saying at a particular moment, or to prepare satisfactorily for what she was going to say next, suggests that the speed, the accuracy, and the efficiency of her production (current and subsequent) were all hampered by her perception of a need to hurry when speaking, even though no time limit was imposed in the oral test. Her reaction calls to mind MacIntyre and Gardner's (1994a) suggestion that time limits might have a detrimental and cumulative effect on the stages of language learning and language production in highly anxious students (input, processing, and output). This student's comments perhaps reveal a substage of output anxiety, even in the absence of a time limit: not only did anxiety harm her present output, but it also spilled over into the preparation her subsequent output, and made her misjudge time.

The most striking individual response to the oral test was the high-ability student's distress during the oral test itself when she broke down after uttering a few words. After composing herself she completed the oral test and post-test think-aloud without further upset, but it is notable that she revealed that she had intended not to do

this *'parcial'* examination in February, 2004, and put it off until June, and that she only agreed to do the February exam at the insistence of a friend. The tendency to procrastinate was manifested in Horwitz et al. (1986) study, in which some anxious students stated that had “postpone[d] required foreign language courses until the last possible moment” (p. 131), and also by Gregersen and Horwitz (2002), whose highly-anxious participants “reported avoidance and procrastination in their language learning” (p. 566). Interestingly, the latter students were not only highly anxious, but also high-ability, like the student in this study. Perhaps through her lack of preparation for the oral test, this high-ability student did not achieve a high grade (53.00).

Similarities were observed between the present research and Phillips's (1992) study regarding highly anxious students' reactions on listening to their recorded oral test. In both studies, anxious students of both abilities said that they had felt apprehensive, but the range of adjectives used by Phillips's students to describe their thoughts and feelings was wider than that employed by students in the current investigation. The former described themselves as ““panicky”” as well as ““nervous,” ‘intimidated,’ ‘tense,’ ‘confused,’ ‘worried,’ and ‘dumbfounded’” (p. 19), in comparison to the latter, who said that they were ‘*nerviosa*’, ‘*con muchos nervios*’, and ‘*con miedo*’.

In Phillips's (1992) work, a highly anxious student also started to cry and was unable to continue with the oral exam for some minutes. It is remarkable that both were high-ability students and, incidentally, female. In Phillips's study, though, the student in question felt unable to listen to the recording of her oral exam, and merely described her feelings, such as nervousness caused through memory lapse or emphasised by thoughts about “failure” (p. 19). In the present investigation, however, the student *was* able to talk about her feelings during the think-aloud procedure. Like Phillips's student she

complained of not being able to remember things, lamented that she could not remember (“*no me acordaba*”), resorting to literal translation, and that she had a lot of things to say but she had suffered a mental block and forgot things (“*tenía muchas cosas que decir, pero me bloqueo y se me olvida*”). The most notable difference between the two students is the grade they obtained: Phillips’s student attained 90, while the student in the present investigation obtained 53.

*In conclusion*, looking over the thesis as a whole, the *Review of the Literature* in the first part of the thesis was structured in an original and novel way, progressing from wide perspectives to focus on ever-more specific works that would lay the foundations for the empirical study in Part II.

Considering the *five research questions*, while we cannot be so forthright as to assert about our students’ English language proficiency in general and about their oral test results in particular that “language anxiety [...] negatively affect[ed] language learning and production” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b, p. 302), we submit that our findings bear out that higher anxiety experienced by the participants was indeed linked to poorer overall language proficiency and to inferior performance in the speaking test.

A major contribution of the current research has been the exploration of foreign language anxiety and its relationships to overall proficiency in the foreign language, and not only in speaking ability assessed on one test. Another important contribution has been the examination of a wealth of personal data pertaining to the students that might shed light on the complex relationships among oral performance, global language proficiency, and foreign language classroom anxiety.

Findings served to illustrate the intricate intertwining of these three principal phenomena. First, foreign language anxiety appeared to be associated negatively to overall grades in an oral test, and these associations persisted even when partial

correlations were carried out, implying that language anxiety, and not solely language ability, played a role in the oral test marks obtained by participants. Second, language anxiety also seemed to be unfavourably linked to several performance criteria pertaining to that test. Third, there was evidence of facilitating anxiety aiding oral performance in participants who were in the moderately-anxious group. Fourth, language anxiety was seen to be a predictor two aspects of English language achievement: global language proficiency, and performance on a speaking test, apparently having an adverse effect. Fifth, these two aspects of language achievement were apparently favoured by a lack of interest in obtaining university credits, and by having diverse reasons for learning English, involving what appeared to be different kinds of motivation, including intrinsic, integrative, and instrumental motivation. Sixth, length of time spent studying English seemingly enhanced linguistic accomplishment: early starting age appeared to ameliorate global English proficiency, while months of accumulated study apparently improved speaking test scores. Seventh, older students tended to be at a disadvantage as far as the speaking test was concerned. Eighth, regarding language anxiety itself, females in this study were inclined to be more apprehensive about language learning. Ninth, language anxiety was apparently attenuated where another foreign language was known or spoken. Tenth, students' positive perceptions about their own language level were observed to be very favourably linked to lower levels of language anxiety. In addition, post-oral-test interviews with highly anxious students of high ability and of low ability revealed many similar affective responses across abilities, such as feeling nervous and afraid, and also cognitive reactions that were alike in participants of both abilities, such as going 'blank' and getting 'stuck'. Interviews also suggested that low-ability students seemed often to resort to 'bottom-up' learning strategies for the oral

test, such as memorization and translation, perhaps due to their lack of linguistic knowledge.

It is remarkable that language anxiety was seen to play such an outstanding role in so many aspects of English language learning of the participants of this study, especially as they were studying English as an elective subject, and could simply have chosen to study something else. In spite of its elective nature, however, participants may still have felt ‘obliged’ to do this English subject, because of its perceived importance, and hence may have still felt anxious about it.

In the light of these observations, several *teaching implications* spring to mind. First, if speaking competence and overall language achievement benefit from lower levels of anxiety, it would clearly be advantageous to reduce students’ feelings of nervousness in class. As described in the Review of the Literature, researchers have put forward innumerable suggestions as to how to go about this, but our study seems to point in several specific directions.

First, the introduction of more than one foreign language at school would be beneficial: students’ familiarity with the grammatical, syntactical, and lexical characteristics of one language may mean that they would be less perturbed when confronted with another one, especially if the two languages were cognates.

Second, in view of the very strong negative association observed between language anxiety and students’ estimation of their own proficiency, it would seem beneficial to attempt to enhance the latter. Encouragement and support on the part of the teacher will probably only work as long as students see that enhancement of their own estimated level does indeed result in coping better with the level demanded of the language course. Perhaps teachers could take heed of MacIntyre and Gardner’s point that students “taught to emphasise their own successful experiences in the second

languages would come to perceive themselves as more proficient language learners” (p. 303). In this regard, teachers frequently come up against a great problem in English for Specific Purposes courses at university: students are not usually specialist language learners, and consequently their language level is not particularly high, as occurred in the case of the participants in this study. In addition, ESP students are enrolled in university degree courses dealing with topics that are usually far removed from those covered in the general English language courses that students are probably more familiar with, and ESP texts are often written or recorded in authentic or semi-authentic English, so students may find that their language knowledge is inadequate or of a much lower level than the one required to attain success. This has several pedagogical implications: teachers must choose authentic texts with care, as suggested by Saito et al. (1999), and exploit them even more carefully. S/he must grade the tasks, especially if the text itself is not graded. If coursebooks on the Specific Purposes subject are available, it is advisable to select one which corresponds as far as possible to the level of the students, so that course demands are coherent with actual language levels.

Third, recommendations for lowering language anxiety in female students are more problematic, as they will depend on less general solutions. The teacher will have to be aware, as Pappamihel (2001) was, of “peer-interactional” (p. 31) tensions among female students in communicative activities, and may find that apprehension can be lowered through teacher support and “safer group work” (p. 35).

Teaching recommendations based on the findings of the present research for improving general English proficiency and oral achievement include the commencement of foreign language study at an early an age as possible, implying that favourable outcomes would depend on the earliest possible introduction of foreign language subjects at school, as advocated by Aida (1994) and by Onwuegbuzie et al.

(1999). Not only consecutive periods of language study were seen to be advantageous (e.g., primary school followed by high school), but intensity of study, for example, studying English at a private language school and at regular school simultaneously. As older age also seemed to be deleterious to the speaking skill in this research, accumulated past experience in foreign language learning will probably counteract this effect.

The post-oral-test interviews showed the very real presence of feelings of anxiety in both high- and low-level participants. Language instructors should be constantly aware that many of their students may be literally suffering in silence from facets of language anxiety, such as communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation. The selected students of both abilities admitted that they had had memory failures and mental 'blocks' when trying to speak in English, so teachers should take into account that when a student does not respond or answers falteringly in the language class that this may be due, not necessarily to lack of knowledge, but to a temporary or habitual lapse of linguistic faculties associated with apprehensiveness. In order to counteract this, first, the teacher should strive to establish a warm and supportive rapport with students, so that on a personal level the students feel as comfortable as possible, as recommended by Elkhafaifi (2005), who considered that providing a "supportive and friendly environment" (p. 217) would be beneficial. Second, oral exercises should be planned carefully, with the teacher giving clear instructions and allowing sufficient time for 'safe' preparation so that students do not feel flustered or lost when they have to speak. This preparation could include writing sample questions and answers prior to the activity itself. These questions and answers could be drilled to aid students with pronunciation. Aspects of pronunciation, such as use of the phonemic symbols, should be taught overtly, as proposed by Ganschow et al. (1994), throughout

the course, to boost confidence in this regard and to help students cope with pronunciation independently, for example, through dictionary use. Third, oral activities themselves could be organised in pairs or in small groups, as recommended by Pappamihel (2001), so that students have plenty of oral practice, on the one hand, but so that they do not feel exposed to scrutiny by the whole class, on the other.

As we have seen, lower-ability selected students in this study showed signs of learned helplessness, admitting to their “fear” of communication, and lamenting the “impossibility” of the speaking tasks. The teacher, through emotional and academic assistance, could guide students towards ‘unlearning’ their feelings of powerlessness so that they can cope better with the emotional and academic stresses of speaking in the foreign language. Emotional help could be tendered by attempting to establish a “psychologically secure environment” in class, as advised by Saito and Samimy (1996, p. 247). Academic assistance to students could involve the gradual setting of achievable goals, so that the process of speaking more confidently could be the step-by-step reaching of simple and ‘possible’ oral accomplishments. This assistance could include encouraging students to prepare dialogues which they refer to less and less as the speaking task unfolds, and which they eventually do not refer to at all, and also it could involve helping students to cope with anxiety in learning and in tests. In this regard, Phillips (1992) suggested holding cooperative oral exams in order to reduce competitiveness, and having evaluations in pairs and groups as way of lowering apprehension, as well as giving practice tests prior to oral exams.

Finally, as selected students sometimes indicated that they had resorted to ‘bottom-up’ techniques in listening, which had failed them in the oral test, direct teaching of ‘top-down’ listening strategies, such as fostering listening competence for overall message without the need to translate every word, is recommended (Vogely,

1998). Also Elkhafaifi (2005) recommended supplying comprehensible listening input, making sure that students know what they have to do in listening tasks, and giving them “positive feedback” (p. 215).

The *limitations* of this research are many. First, and most obviously, the number of participants (N = 40) was small, and this has restricted the generalisability of findings to larger populations. Also, the findings relate to these participants and their learning situation over a limited time-span, and may have been different if the study had been conducted earlier or later, for example, nearer the date of their graduation. Also, the potential effects of anxiety might have been elucidated to a greater extent if the study had lasted longer and anxiety had been measured at different points over a longer period. Moreover, the pre-experimental nature of the study, carried out without randomization, does not allow us to generalise findings.

In addition, the oral test, which was a component of the ‘*parcial*’ examination administered in February 2005, involved topics that were slightly more general than the ESP subject that participants were taking. As their degree course focused on labour relations and the world of work, the written components of the ‘*parcial*’ exam, and indeed most of the course content, were of necessity about these ESP areas. Students might have found the oral test easier if it had been based on their specialist area, or conversely an oral test involving more specific vocabulary and communicative situations might have been more problematic for them.

What is more, the factual data given by students on the Background Questionnaire could not be verified, and may have been influenced by what they thought the teacher wanted to know about them, and, as Kim (2000) pointed out, “self-report measures [...] are typically subject to forgetting, leveling, and wishful thinking”

(p. 158). Also it may have been difficult for participants to convey precisely information about ideas and emotions.

The teacher conducted the post-oral-test interviews with students who were, of necessity, highly anxious. This very apprehension on their part may have made them reticent about informing the teacher about more intimate or delicate thoughts and feelings experienced during the oral test. So some information may simply not have been reported. This indeed happened in the case of one of Phillips's selected students who felt unable to listen to the recording of her test, and who "preferred simply to talk about her feelings" (1992, p. 19), which may have meant that she did not focus on certain aspects of her test, or that she forgot others.

The statistical procedure of correlation did not allow us to imply causes and effects amongst the three principal variables that were the focus of this study (foreign language classroom anxiety, overall English proficiency, and oral test scores) and the other demographic, academic, cognitive, and affective variables, although the multiple regression analyses compensated for this to some extent.

The findings of this study suggest that *further research* could be undertaken in several ways.

First, a similar study could be carried out involving participants of English for Specific Purposes in a different specialist area. It would be interesting to investigate whether students whose university courses require more use of English on a daily basis (for example, in psychology or medicine) exhibited less anxiety, through increased contact with English, or conversely whether they showed more anxiety, because of the more constant linguistic demands of their course.

Second, replication of the study with participants whose mother tongue was not Spanish, and with other target languages, studied at different levels (beginner, intermediate, or advanced), would endorse or challenge findings.

Third, anxiety and linguistic achievement could be measured at intervals throughout the period of study, to ascertain whether anxiety fluctuates at different times, for example, before examinations.

Fourth, a true experiment would lend generalisability to findings. A larger number of students of English assigned randomly to two groups, with interventions aimed, for example, at increasing or lowering anxiety in the experimental group, such as using a different methodology (more 'communicative' or traditional) or establishing a different classroom atmosphere (warm/relaxed or cold/strict), would shed more light on to language anxiety and its associations with language achievement, and would inspire greater confidence in findings. In particular, a control group could be added with non-ESP students in order to verify if ESP learners differ from the general population as regards language anxiety.

Fifth, facilitating anxiety, which was apparently linked to higher achievement in moderately anxious participants in this study, could be investigated further, with a view to extending its favourable effects to highly anxious learners.

Sixth, interviews could be carried out with students whose levels of anxiety are moderate and low, to gain insights into their relaxation and learning styles and strategies, with the aim of helping highly anxious students adopt these relaxation and learning techniques for their own benefit.

Seventh, language anxiety could be examined in the light of variables other than the ones included in this study. Its relationships with psychological variables, such as motivation and self-esteem, could be explored.

All in all, continued research is needed to further clarify links between language anxiety and language achievement. New findings will increase the understanding of teachers and researchers into the discomfort, apprehension, and fear often experienced by foreign language students, and it is to be hoped that these deeper insights will help them to dispel anxiety and enhance achievement in their learners.



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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

## Glossary of Terms Relating to Variables, to Research Design, and to Data Analysis

*Variable*: “a property or quality of a person, piece of text, or object which is able, or seen, to differ or vary across these people, texts, or objects” (Porte, 2002, p. 245).

*Independent variable*: “one that can be used to predict or explain another variable, usually referred to as a dependent ... variable” (Porte, 2002, p. 237). Independent variables are sometimes called ‘predictor’ variables.

*Dependent variable*: “a variable in a study, whose values are ‘dependent on’ other variables for their outcomes” (Porte, 2002, p. 234). Dependent variables are sometimes called ‘criterion’ variables.

*Control variables*: “factors which the researcher deliberately decides to control in order to cancel out any possible effects on the main relationship studied” (Porte, 2002, p. 25).

*Reliability*: “the extent to which (a) an independent researcher, on analysing one’s data, would reach the same conclusion, and (b) the replication of one’s study would yield similar results” (Nunan, 1992, p. 231). The same writer explains that *internal reliability* “refers to the consistency of the results obtained from a piece of research”, while *external reliability* “refers to the extent to which independent researchers can reproduce a study and obtain results similar to those obtained in the original study” (p. 231-232).

*Inter-rater reliability*: “a way of describing to what extent different raters or teachers assess performance in a test in the same way” (Harris & McCann, 1994, p. 90).

*Validity*: “the extent to which one has really observed what one has set out to observe, and the extent to which one can generalise one’s findings from the subjects and situations to other subjects and situations” (Nunan, 1992, p. 232).

*Face validity*: “the degree to which a test appears to measure the knowledge or abilities it claims to measure, based on the subjective judgement of an observer” (Richards et al., 1992, p. 135).

*Mean*: “the average of a set of scores, obtained by adding the scores together and dividing by the total number of scores” (Nunan, 1992, p. 231).

*Standard deviation (SD)*: “a measure of the dispersion of a set of scores from the mean of the scores. It is calculated by obtaining the square root of the variance of a set of scores” (Nunan, 1992, p. 232). “The higher the standard deviation, the more varied and the more heterogenous a group is on a given behavior, since the behavior is distributed more widely within the group” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p. 217).

*Cronbach alpha*: “one of the most commonly reported reliability estimates in the language testing literature” (Brown, 2002, p. 16). It is frequently expressed as the Greek letter  $\alpha$ , and is employed to “estimate the proportion of variance that is systematic or consistent in a set of test scores. It can range from 0.00 (if no variance is consistent) to 1.00 (if all variance is consistent) with all values between 0.00 and 1.00 also being possible. For example, if the Cronbach alpha for a set of scores turns out to be .90, you can interpret that as meaning that the test is 90% reliable” (p. 17).

*Correlation*: This “represents the degree to which [two] variables are related” (Porte, 2002, p. 233). Porte asserts that “it is important to bear in mind that correlation does not necessarily mean causation” (p. 233). A *correlation coefficient* is:

a number between -1 and 1 measuring the extent to which two variables have a linear relationship. A correlation coefficient of 1 is obtained if there is a perfect linear relationship with a positive slope between variables. In the case of a positive correlation, whenever one variable has a high (or low) value, so does the other. A coefficient of -1 is obtained if there is a perfect linear relationship with negative slope between two variables. In this case, whenever one variable has a high (or low) value, the other has a low (or high) value. (Porte, 2002, p. 233)

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is often called Pearson  $r$ , or  $r$ . The level of significance is expressed by  $p$  (significance probability). A  $p$  that is equal to or smaller than .05 ( $= .05$ , or  $< .05$ ) means that “a correlation of the magnitude found would have occurred by chance fewer than five times out of a hundred” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p. 220), and a  $p$  that is equal to or smaller than .01 ( $= .01$ , or  $< .01$ ) means that such a correlation would have been unlikely to arise by chance less frequently than one time out of a hundred.

*Partial correlation*: “the correlation of two variables while controlling for a third or more other variables” (Garson, 2006, p. 1), in which the original correlation is compared to the controlled correlation. If no difference is observed, then “the inference is that the control variables have no effect” (Garson, 2006, p. 1).

*One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)*: This is used to examine differences in mean scores among two or more groups, and is called ‘one-way’ because only one independent variable is used (Camacho Rosales, 2002, p. 174). This analytical procedure examines “whether the variability *between* the different groups is greater than the variability *within* each of the groups” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p. 232). It is reported using the  $F$  value, which is “the ratio of the ‘between’ variance, over the ‘within’ variance”, and a “significant  $F$  will occur when the variability among the groups is greater than the variability within each group” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p. 232). Also reported are sum of squares, degrees of freedom (= the number of groups minus 1), mean squares, and significance of  $F$ . While the  $F$  value points towards significant differences among groups, it does not indicate which groups are significantly different from one other. To ascertain which groups are significantly different from one another, post-hoc analyses, such as Tukey’s, may be carried out, as recommended on the Georgetown University Department of Psychology webpage.

*Multiple regression analysis*: An analytical procedure by which the researcher may explore “the relationship and predictive power of one or more independent variables with the independent variable” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, pp. 222-223). Employing this kind of analysis, s/he can “predict and estimate the amount of variance in the dependent variable attributable to a number of independent variables” (p. 223). These authors consider that multiple regression has “major advantages over simple correlational techniques in which relationships of only two variables can be examined at a time. Such advantages are especially relevant for second language research, in which focusing on only two variables at a time represents too narrow a view. L2 learning is known to involve social, personal, situational, contextual, and cognitive variables, all operating simultaneously” (p. 223).

In reporting multiple regression analysis, the  $R^2$  is given, that is, the squared multiple correlation, representing the “proportion of the variation in the DV that is predictable from the best linear combination of the IVs” (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989, p. 135). Also reported is the  $Sr^2$ , that is, the squared semipartial correlation. The  $Sr^2$  for an IV expresses its unique contribution to the total variance of the DV (the amount by which  $R^2$  would be reduced if this IV were eliminated from the regression equation). The *unique variability* is the total of all the  $Sr^2$  for each IV. *Shared variability* is the difference between  $R^2$  and unique variability, and represents the variance that all the IVs contribute to the  $R^2$  (Cano, in press).

*Variance* is a “measure of dispersion, calculated for a set of scores by subtracting each score from the mean, squaring the resulting values, adding these together, and dividing by the remainder of the number of scores minus 1” (Nunan, 1992, p. 233).

*Open-ended interviews* or *open interviews* “provide the interviewee with broad freedom of expression and elaboration and often resemble informal talks.... There is usually a topic for the interview but, by allowing the respondent maximum freedom of expression, ample and often unexpected information emerges” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p. 167).



21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.
22. I *don't* feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.
23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.
25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.
28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.
33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

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\*SA = strongly agree; A = agree; N = neither agree nor disagree; D = disagree; SD = strongly disagree.

## APPENDIX C

## The Original Oral Exam (Phillips, 1992)

The “Culture Related Test Questions”, and “Students’ Cue Card (*with Teacher Protocol*)” (Phillips, E. M., 1992), were published in the article ‘The effects of language anxiety on students’ oral test performance and attitudes’ in *The Modern Language Journal*, 76(1), 14-26. They are reproduced here with permission of Blackwell Publishing.

***Culture related test questions***

1. *Pourriez-vous me parler un peu de la France? la géographie? l’agriculture? l’industrie?*

PROMPTS: *Quels sont les pays voisins (à côté)? Il y a beaucoup de fleuves (de rivières)? Et l’agriculture? Et la technologie?*

2. *La Provence et la Bretagne sont deux provinces bien connues en France. Est-ce que vous pouvez me parler un peu de la Provence?*

PROMPTS: *Qu’est-ce qu’il y a à Marseille? à la Camargue ou à la Côte d’Azur? Que savez-vous de la Bretagne?*

PROMPTS: *Quel temps fait-il en général? Et les touristes, qu’est-ce qu’ils visitent en Bretagne?*

3. *Pourriez-vous me parler un peu de la SNCF – les trains en France?*

PROMPTS: *Que savez-vous des gares à Paris? Qu’est-ce que c’est que le TGV? Parlez aussi des billets de train.*

PROMPTS: *Quelles sortes de billets y a-t-il?*

***Students’ cue card with teacher protocol***

1. You will play the role of an older brother/sister. Your younger sister (the teacher) wants to discuss some of her school concerns with you. You are generally agreeable but, being older, like to encourage appropriate behavior and discourage inappropriate behavior. Exchange greetings.

*Salut, \_\_\_\_\_*

Ask your sister about her French class.

*Ah, tu sais je ne comprends pas très bien le français et j’ai un grand examen dans cette classe dans trois jours.*

And give her some suggestions and/or advice about what you think necessary, good, important, essential, preferable, etc. – or what is not.

Wait for advice like study, do home work, listen in class. Agree (*Ouais, mais, c'est difficile, bien, d'accord, ce sont de bonnes suggestions.*)

She is also taking a trip to France with her class and has never travelled without the family. Ask when she's going to France.

*Dans trois semaines je vais faire ce voyage en France avec mon professeur de français et mes camarades de classe.*

Give advice about what she will need to do to get ready for the trip and what she should be sure and see once there.

*Qu'est-ce que je dois faire avant le voyage pour que je n'ai pas de problèmes?*

*Bien, alors, mais c'est du travail! Tu as déjà visité la France, n'est-ce pas? Qu'est-ce je devrais voir en France?*

2. You have just met your best friend in a café. Greet her.

*Bon jour, \_\_\_\_\_. Comment vas-tu?*

Ask what she would like to drink.

*Pour moi un citron pressé.*

You have not seen her over the summer vacation, so ask what she has been doing.

*Pas grand'chose. J'ai travaillé; c'est tout. Et toi, qu'est-ce que tu as fait?*

Tell her all the details of your summer – what you did for fun, where you worked, where you travelled, what it was like there, who you met and what he/she was like. Give as much information as possible about the past three summer months. Be inventive if your summer was boring!

Respond with appropriate murmurs and nods.

*Tu t'es bien amusé? Tu as travaillé? Tu as voyagé?*

3. I am a freshman just arriving on campus in September. You play the role of a sophomore who is welcoming me.

*Bonjour.*

Ask me my name.

*Je m'appelle...*

Ask if I'm nervous

*Oui, un peu.*

if you have any questions.

*Alors, c'est ma première journée à l'université. Est-ce vous vous rappelez le premier jour où vous êtes arrivé ici?*

Tell me about the first day you arrived on campus. What was it like (weather, time of year)? How did you feel? How were the other students (your first impressions)? What did you do the first day (from morning until night if you remember). Give me as many details as possible about what happened and what it was like. (Say as much as possible and invent if you like!).

*Comment vous sentiez-vous? Quelle était votre impression des étudiants? Vous avez fait beaucoup ce jour-là?*

## APPENDIX D

The English for Specific Purposes Subject and Other Subjects Studied  
in the *Diplomatura de Relaciones Laborales* University Diploma Course  
at the *Ciencias del Trabajo* Faculty, University of Granada

The English for Specific Purposes (*Inglés para Fines Específicos*) is a *Libre Configuración* (elective) subject, offered by the University to students who must choose a number of such subjects to cover not less than 10 per cent of their credits over the whole of their university course. In this way students design a considerable part of their own university curriculum, either by deepening their knowledge in their own area, or by widening their studies in complementary fields of learning:

*[L]a Universidad de Granada viene ofreciendo a sus estudiantes una amplia oferta para que puedan ejercer su derecho a diseñar una parte de su formación, tanto si buscan profundizar en la especialización, como si prefieren adquirir conocimientos complementarios a los dominantes en la titulación que cursan. (Catálogo de Libre Configuración, 2004-2005, p. 1)* (The University of Granada offers its students a wide range [of *Libre Configuración* subjects] so that they may exercise their right to design a part of their course, both if they wish to deepen [their knowledge] in their special area of study, or if they prefer to acquire knowledge that will complement the major contents of the degree course they are taking.)

The English for Specific Purposes subject taught at the *Ciencias del Trabajo* Faculty focuses on aspects of business and the world of work. It lasts for the whole academic year, from October to June, and is worth six credits. Classes are an hour a long, and are taught twice a week, Mondays and Wednesdays, from 2 o'clock to 3 o'clock at the end of 'morning' classes. A four-skills approach is used, and the course is based on the textbook *Head for Business, Intermediate Student's Book*, by Jon Naunton (2000a). Topics included in the course programme are Communication at work (*La comunicación en el trabajo*), Attitudes towards work (*Las actitudes hacia el trabajo*), Company organization (*La organización de las compañías*), Employment sectors (*Los sectores del empleo*), Telephone conversations (*Las llamadas telefónicas*), Writing a CV (*La elaboración de un currículum vitae*), Writing a letter of enquiry (*Escribir una*

*carta pidiendo información*), and Applying for a job (*Solicitar un trabajo*). Students do a ‘*parcial*’ exam in February and a final exam in June.

Other subjects taken in the *Relaciones Laborales* university diploma course are shown below. The following information is taken from the *Guía del Alumnado* (Students’ Guide), 2004-2005, pp. 42-75.

Subjects studied during the first year of the *Relaciones Laborales* course for the academic year 2004-2005 included *Historia del Trabajo, Dirección y Gestión de Personal, Elementos de Derecho Público y Privado, Economía, Estadística, Historia Social y Política Contemporánea, Administración de Empresas, Estadística Asistida por Ordenador, Sociología y Técnicas de Investigación Social, Sociología y las Relaciones Industriales*, and *Estructura Económica de España*.

Second-year subjects included *Derecho del Trabajo, Derecho de la Seguridad Social, Seguridad en el Trabajo, Introducción al Derecho Procesal, Organización y Métodos del Trabajo, Ampliación de Derecho Público y Privado, Gestión Estratégica de los Recursos Humanos*, and *Régimen Fiscal de la Empresa*.

In the third year, subjects included *Contabilidad General, Derecho Sindical, Introducción al Derecho Comunitario, Proceso Laboral, Regimen Fiscal de las Actividades Económicas, Psicología del Trabajo, Acción Social en la Empresa, Procedimientos Tributarios, R. J. Trabajadores Extranjeros, Organización y Financiación de la Seguridad Social, Contabilidad Financiera, Derecho Público de Andalucía*, and *El Proceso Administrativo*.

## APPENDIX E

Data for Students Enrolled in *Diplomatura de Relaciones Laborales* Degree Course  
at the *Ciencias del Trabajo* Faculty for the Academic Year 2004-2005

These data were obtained from the '*Facultad de Ciencias del Trabajo: Titulación*' (Faculty of Work Sciences: Degree) booklet, University of Granada, dated January 8, 2005.

	Number	%
<i>Total enrolment</i>	1904	100.0
Males	694	36.4
Females	1210	63.6
<i>Age</i>		
17 or under	34	1.8
18	85	4.5
19	205	10.8
20	201	10.6
21	216	11.3
22	211	11.1
23	225	11.8
24	168	8.8
25	135	7.1
26	88	4.6
27	76	4.0
28	54	2.8
29	40	2.1
30 or over	166	8.7
<i>Number of students per academic year</i>		
First	336	17.6
Second	429	22.5
Third	1139	59.8
<i>Country of residence</i>		

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Spain	1898	99.5
Belgium	1	0.1
Gambia	1	0.1
Other	6	0.3
<i>Nationality</i>		
Argentinian	2	0.1
Egyptian	1	0.1
Spanish	1879	98.7
Equatorial Guinean	1	0.1
Moroccan	10	0.5
Mexican	1	0.1
Rumanian	1	0.1
Other	9	0.5

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## APPENDIX F

## Extra Information about Rodríguez and Abreu's Spanish Version of the FLCAS

It has been seen in the Review of the Literature that Rodríguez and Abreu (2003), in an investigation involving Venezuelan learners, had used a Spanish version of the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986), which Rodríguez and Abreu asserted had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .90 (p. 367). As this version did not appear in their article, I wrote to Dr. Rodríguez, who very kindly sent me a copy. In their translation, Rodríguez and Abreu had substituted "foreign language" for "*Inglés*".

I observed some misprints in items 10 and 22, and when it was piloted in May, 2004, at the *Biblioteconomía y Documentación* Faculty students pointed out that the meaning of some items was not clear, for example, item 24, which read "*Me siento muy consciente al hablar Inglés delante de otros estudiantes*" (underlining added). I was not sure if these difficulties were due to differences between Spanish spoken in Venezuela and in Spain, or if the translation leaned too heavily on the original: Horwitz et al.'s item 24 was "I feel very *self-conscious* about speaking the foreign language in front of other students" (my italics).

In view of these problems, I overhauled Rodríguez and Abreu's version and produced a revised one, as is permitted in the customs of research design. On the one hand, I attempted to make this version as 'faithful' as possible to Horwitz et al.'s. For example, I rendered the original item 8 "I am usually at ease during tests in my language class" as "*Normalmente me siento tranquilo/a durante los exámenes de inglés.*" (Rodríguez and Abreu had not translated "usually": their item 8 reads "*Me siento tranquilo(a) durante los exámenes de Inglés*"). On the other hand, I also attempted to use words and expressions that would be more readily understood by Spanish, as opposed to Venezuelan, learners. For instance, I translated "course" as "*asignatura*" rather than "*curso*" (item 6), and "confident" as "*seguro/a de mi mismo/a*" rather than Rodríguez and Abreu's "*confiado(a)*" (item 18).

## APPENDIX G

## Post-Pilot Spanish Version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

(based on the original

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, Horwitz et al., 1986)

**Cuestionario sobre Actitudes en el Aula del Idioma Extranjero (Inglés)**

A continuación aparece un conjunto de proposiciones. Por favor, lee con atención cada una de ellas y marca con un círculo la alternativa más apropiada.

TA (5): Totalmente de Acuerdo  
 A: (4): De Acuerdo  
 N: (3): Ni de Acuerdo Ni en Desacuerdo  
 D: (2): En Desacuerdo  
 TD: (1): Totalmente en Desacuerdo

1. Nunca me siento del todo seguro/a de mi mismo/a cuando hablo en mi clase de inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

2. *No* me preocupa cometer errores en la clase de inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

3. Tiemblo cuando sé que me van a pedir que intervenga en la clase de inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

4. Me asusto cuando no entiendo lo que está diciendo en inglés el profesor.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

5. No me importaría en absoluto hacer cursos de otras lenguas extranjeras.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

6. Durante la clase de inglés, me doy cuenta de que estoy pensando en cosas que no tienen nada que ver con la asignatura.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

7. Siempre pienso que los otros estudiantes son mejores que yo en los idiomas.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

8. Normalmente me siento tranquilo/a durante los exámenes de inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

9. Me entra el pánico cuando tengo que hablar sin haberme preparado nada en la clase de inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

10. Me preocupan las consecuencias de suspender la asignatura de inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

11. No entiendo por qué a algunas personas les afectan tan negativamente las clases de idiomas extranjeros.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

12. En la clase de inglés, puedo llegar a ponerme tan nervioso/a que olvido cosas que sé.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

13. En la clase de inglés me da vergüenza ofrecerme de voluntario para dar respuestas.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

14. *No* me pondría nervioso/a al hablar en inglés con hablantes nativos.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

15. Me incomoda el no entender lo que el profesor está corrigiendo.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

16. Incluso cuando estoy bien preparado/a para la clase de inglés, me siento ansioso/a.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

17. A menudo siento ganas de no asistir a mi clase de inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

18. Me siento seguro/a de mi mismo/a cuando hablo en la clase de inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

19. Me da miedo que mi profesor/a esté dispuesto a corregir cada uno de los errores.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

20. Siento que el corazón se me va a salir cuando sé que me van a pedir que intervenga en la clase de inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

21. Cuanto más estudio para un examen de inglés, más confundido/a me siento.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

22. *No* me siento presionado/a a prepararme muy bien para la clase de inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

23. Siempre pienso que mis compañeros/as hablan inglés mejor que yo.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

24. Me da mucha vergüenza a la hora de hablar en inglés delante de otros estudiantes.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

25. Las clases de inglés van tan rápido que me preocupa quedarme atrás.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

26. Me siento más tenso/a y nervioso/a en mis clases de inglés que en el resto de las clases.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

27. Me pongo nervioso/a y me confundo cuando hablo en mi clase de inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

28. Cuando voy camino a la clase de inglés, me siento muy seguro/a y relajado/a.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

29. Me pongo nervioso/a cuando no entiendo cada una de las palabras que dice el profesor.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

30. Me siento abrumado/a por la cantidad de reglas que hay que aprender para hablar en inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

31. Me da miedo que mis compañeros/as se rían de mí cuando hablo en inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

32. Probablemente me sentiría cómodo/a con hablantes nativos de inglés.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

33. Me pongo nervioso/a cuando el profesor de inglés hace preguntas que no me he preparado con antelación.

TA (5)      A (4)      N (3)      D (2)      TD (1)

## APPENDIX H

The Oral Test (Translated and Adapted from Phillips, 1992, p. 26)

***Culture related test questions***

1. Could you tell me a little bit about Spain? Its geography? Its agriculture? Its industry?

PROMPTS: What countries are next to it? Are there many rivers? And what about its tourism? And its technology?

2. Cataluña and Galicia are famous regions. Could you tell me anything about them?

PROMPTS: What do you know about Barcelona? And Santiago de Compostela? What's the weather like in these places? Why do tourists go there?

3. Could you tell me a little about RENFE?

PROMPTS: Do you know anything about stations in Madrid? What do you know about the AVE?

***Students' cue cards, with teacher protocol***

1. Tú harás el papel de un/a hermano/ mayor. Tu hermana menor (la profesora) quiere hablar contigo de unos problemas que tiene en el colegio. Tú accedes sin problema, pero siendo el/la hermano/a mayor, quieres darle consejos sobre lo que debería y no debería hacer.

*Hi.*

Pregúntale a tu hermana sobre su clase de inglés.

*I know you can speak English very well and I've got an important English exam in two or three days. What should I do?*

Dale unos consejos sobre lo estimas necesario, importante, preferible, etc., para aprobar el examen, y sobre lo que no es necesario, importante, preferible.

*(Wait for advice such as "study, do homework, listen in class." Agree with the advice.)*

*Yes, but it's difficult. OK, that's good advice.*

Tu hermana va a Inglaterra en viaje de estudios con los compañeros de clase. Pregúntale cuándo va a Inglaterra.

*In three weeks' time I'm going to England with my teacher and classmates. What should I do before I go?*

Aconséjale sobre los preparativos para el viaje, y de lo que debería ver una vez que esté en Inglaterra.

*Well. That's a lot of work! What should I go and see once I get to England?*

2. Acabas de encontrarte con tu mejor amiga (la profesora) en una cafetería.

*Hi, (name). How are you?*

Pregúntale qué va a tomar.

*I'll have an orange juice.*

No la ves desde el verano, así que pregúntale qué ha estado haciendo desde entonces.

*Not much. I've been working, that's all. What about you? What did you do in the summer?*

Cuéntale con detalle lo que hiciste durante el verano: lo que hiciste para pasarlo bien, dónde trabajaste, a quién conociste, cómo era. Da toda la información que te sea posible sobre los tres meses de verano. ¡Invéntate cosas si tu verano fue aburrido!

*(Respond with appropriate murmurs and nods). Did you have a good time? Did you travel?*

3. La profesora hará el papel de una estudiante de Primero que acaba de empezar la carrera universitaria. Tú harás el papel de un/a estudiante de segundo que le da la bienvenida a la Facultad.

*Hello.*

Pregúntale cómo se llama.

*My name's...*

Pregúntale si está nerviosa.

*Yes, a little.*

... y si tiene alguna pregunta.

*Yes, it's my first day at university Can you remember your first day here?*

Háblale sobre tu primer día en la Universidad. ¿Qué tiempo hacía? ¿Qué época del año fue? ¿Cuál fue tu primera impresión de tus compañeros? ¿Qué hiciste el primer día desde por la mañana hasta por la noche, si te acuerdas? Da todos los detalles que te sea posible sobre lo que pasó y cómo era. (Di todo lo que te sea posible e ¡invéntate cosas si quieres!)

*How did you feel? What was your impression of the students? Did you do a lot that day?*

## APPENDIX I

## Identifying and Measuring the Eight Oral Performance Criteria

(Based on Hunt, 1965; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Loban, 1975; Phillips, 1990, 1992)

The eight oral performance criteria are based on Hunt's (1965), Larsen-Freeman's (1983), Loban's (1976), and Phillips's (1990) theories, definitions and explanations. Unless otherwise stated, the *examples given are all taken from my participants' oral test transcripts*. As the following notes were used in rater training, the examples were *not* taken from any of the nine randomly-selected exam transcripts given to the rater to analyse after the training sessions. Similarly, the sample transcript given at the end of this appendix, which was used for training purposes, was *not* among the nine randomly-selected transcripts.

**A) *The eight oral performance criteria***

These were:

- 1) "percent of total words in communication units (CUs);
- 2) average length of CUs ...
- 3) percent of *error-free* CUs;
- 4) percent of words in error-free CUs ...
- 5) percent of total words in mazes;
- 6) average length of mazes ...
- 7) number of target structures;
- 8) number of dependent clauses produced by the students."

These were used by Phillips (1992, pp. 16-17), in her evaluation of her participants' performance in their oral exam.

**B) *Identifying communication units (CUs) and mazes***

Communication Units, CUs, included in the first four criteria, are based on Hunt's (1965) measures aimed at evaluating writing ability, and extended by Loban (1976) to include speaking ability. The first two criteria measure quantity of output, while the third and fourth criteria take into account Larsen-Freeman's (1983) approach for evaluating quality of production (Phillips, 1992).

**Identifying Communication Units (CUs)**

What are they? Two useful definitions are as follows. “The CU is the basic unit for measuring comprehensible speech” (Phillips, 1990, p. 200). “The CU can be defined simply as one independent clause with all its modifiers” (p. 94).

Phillips’s examples of CUs are:

- 1) “Mary had a little lamb” (1 CU)
- 2) “Mary had a little lamb whose fleece was white as snow” (1 CU)
- 3) “Mary had a little lamb and its fleece was white as snow” (2 CUs) (p. 200).
  - 1) A **complex** sentence is considered as ONE communication unit “because none of its parts can stand alone” (p. 94). See example 2, above.
  - 2) A **compound** sentence is considered as TWO CUs “because there are two independent clauses” (pp. 94-95). The coordinating conjunction is counted with the second clause. See example 3, above.
  - 3) **Repetition of part of teacher’s question** IS considered a communication unit, e.g. Teacher: Can you tell me a little bit about Spain’s geography? Student: Geography? (1 CU)
  - 4) **Answering with a phrase** (i.e. not a complete sentence) IS a communication unit, e.g., Teacher: Where are you from in Argentina? Student: Buenos Aires (1 CU).
  - 5) **One-word answers** ARE considered as CUs, e.g., Yes. / No. / Pardon? / Fine. Each is counted as 1 CU.
  - 6) **Sentence fragments that are attempts to “express a complete thought”** (p. 201) ARE CUs. Phillips’s (1990, p. 201) examples are:  
 Teacher: “Que savez-vous de la côte d’azur?”  
 Student: “Oh, très, très belle” (meaning “Elle est très belle”).  
 Student: “Beaucoup touristes” (meaning “Il y’a beaucoup de touristes”).  
 An example of such a fragment uttered by one of the participants of the present study is:  
 I went Granada to Valencia. About eight hours (meaning “It took about eight hours”).

## B) Identifying mazes

What is a maze? It is defined as “everything that does not belong to a CU (Phillips, 1990, p. 202), and citing Loban (1976, p. 10), Phillips submits that the maze is used “to have some measure of the S’ degree of linguistic uncertainty” (Phillips, 1990, p. 96).

According to Loban, a maze is a “series of words (or initial parts of words), or unattached fragments which do not constitute a communication unit and are not necessary to the communication unit” (Loban, 1976, p. 10). The examples that follow were uttered by my participants.

- 1) A maze “includes **stuttering and repetitions**” (Phillips, 1990, p. 202).  
(e.g., **The weather** the weather in Andalucía **is is very nice** is very nice. / **I I I** worked **in** in hotel.)
- 2) **Message abandonment**  
(e.g. Don’t forget the anorak. **And don’t forget...**)
- 3) **Words in L1** (Spanish) not essential to CU  
(e.g. The AVE is very rapid. **No sé**). Here, AVE is a Spanish word, but it IS essential to the CU.
- 4) **Gobbledygook**  
(e.g., **Also the import company is the multinacional very important in the Spain**)
- 5) Phillips notes that “there may be mazes of one word or some mazes of two or three lines. In some CUs every other word may be a maze due to stuttering” (1990, p. 203).  
(e.g., And **when when** when **we we** came here **we we** started **to to to meet** to meet **a** a lot of people.)
- 6) Sometimes the student **self-corrects** (the first corrections constitute a maze).  
(e.g., The first day I came to Granada **I don’t know I don’t I didn’t knew** I didn’t know the city.)

### *C) Identifying error-free and non-error-free CUs*

#### Identifying error-free CUs

Error-free CUs are presumably correct sentences. The first two of Phillips’s (p. 207) three clarifications as to what constitutes error-free CUs only serve to confuse the issue:

1) **Self-correction**. Her self-correction examples are themselves fragments of sentences so it is hard to see what makes up the supposedly error-free CU and what makes up the maze.

2) **Repetition**. Mystifyingly, Phillip states on this page that “[r]epetition of a word or a part of a word” is an instance of an error-free CU. Looking back at p. 202, we

see that this is something that constitutes a maze. I can only conclude that she has got mixed up here.

3) **Fragments that are appropriate questions** (2+ words). This is clear. An example from one of my participants is “And you?”

#### Identifying CUs that are NOT error-free

CUs that are NOT counted as error-free (according to Phillips’s notes on p. 206) are as follows. Examples are from my participants.

- 1) **Single word responses** (e.g., OK. /Yes.)
- 2) **Fragments** (e.g., About eight hours)
- 3) **Message abandonment** (e.g., Well, you must...). As we have seen, on p. 202, ‘Message abandonment’ was defined by Phillips as a maze. Here is it apparently a CU that is not error-free. In my analysis, I have called such instances mazes.
- 4) CUs containing **an L1 word** (e.g., Don’t forget your pasaporte)
- 5) If verb is in an **inappropriate tense** (e.g., When I came to Granada I make two exams).

#### *D) Procedure for measuring the eight oral exam performance variables*

##### Variables 1-6

We need to calculate the eight performance variables for each exam. Here is a procedure for calculating the first six variables.

Using computer commands to mark the transcript, I found it convenient to underline the CUs and mark the mazes in **bold**.

You will need to do the following before you begin:

- a. Count total number of words in student’s exam. (Contractions such as ‘I’m’ constitute two words. “Partial words and stutterings are counted as half a word”, Phillips, 1990, p. 205.).
- b. Count number of CUs.
- c. Count number of words in CUs.
- d. Count number of error-free CUs.
- e. Count number of words in error-free CUs.
- f. Count number of mazes.

g. Count number of words in mazes.

Using the above information (a. to g.) for each exam transcript, there follow the mathematical operations necessary for calculating the first six variables.

*Variable 1. Total words in communication units*

For each transcript, count the number of words in the CUs (score c).

*Variable 2. Average length of CUs*

The average number of words per CU is the total number of words in CUs divided by number of CUs, that is, score c is divided by score b.

*Variable 3. Percent of error-free CUs*

To calculate percent of CUs that are error-free, divide score d by score b, and then multiply by 100.

*Variable 4. Percent of words in error-free CUs*

To calculate percent of the total words found in error-free CUs, divide score e by score a, then multiply by 100.

*Variable 5. Average length of maze (= average number of words per maze)*

To calculate average number of words per maze, score g is divided by score f.

*Variable 6. Percent of total words in mazes (= percent of maze words to total words)*

To calculate the percent of maze words to total number of words, divide score g by score a, then multiply by 100.

### Variables 7 and 8

*Variable 7. Number of dependent clauses*

*Variable 8. Number of target structures*

In the oral test these were: a) Simple past; b) Present Perfect Progressive; c) advice constructions, e.g., try to..., you should...; you could...; you must...; don't forget to ....; try not to...; it's a good idea to...; + and - imperatives, etc; d) asking about what something is like; e) inviting someone to something to eat or drink.

### ***E) Scoring sheet***

You have a Scoring Sheet for the Eight Oral Performance Criteria Variables for each of the nine transcripts. Please write in the name of the student, do the initial counts

a. to i, and fill in your scores for each of the eight performance variables, using the above procedures.

### Scoring Sheet for Eight Oral Performance Criteria Variables

Name (first name only given)..... List number .....

#### Initial counts

- a. Count total number of words in student's test .....
- b. Count number of CUs .....
- c. Count number of words in CUs .....
- d. Count number of error-free CUs .....
- e. Count number of words in error-free CUs .....
- f. Count number of mazes .....
- g. Count number of words in mazes .....
- h. Count number of dependent clauses. ....
- i. Count number of target structures .....

#### Scores for eight performance criteria

1) Total number of words in CUs	
2) Average number of words per CU	
3) Percent of CUs that are error-free	
4) Percent of total words found in error-free CUs	
5) Average number of words per maze	
6) Proportion (percent) of maze words to total words	
7) Number of dependent clauses	
8) Number of target structures (simple past; present perfect progressive; advice constructions)	

*F) Example of oral test transcript used in rater training*

Here is the transcript of the recording of one of the oral tests. The participant very kindly gave me her permission to reproduce the transcript here. Paula is not her real name. The randomly-chosen cultural topic was ‘Andalucía or Cataluña’, and the randomly-chosen role-play topic was giving advice to a younger sister about studying for an English exam and about a coming trip to England.

The transcript is marked with what I consider to be CUs and mazes. CUs are underlined and counted (1). The letter ‘e’ means that I consider it to be error-free. Mazes are in **bold**. Note that all pauses, ‘ah’s’, ‘em’s’, laughter, etc., have been deleted.

Transcript of Paula’s oral exam

Jean: Hi.

Paula: Hi. (1)

Jean: OK, then, Paula, thank you. Would you choose a topic from these three. Yes, thank you. It’s about Cataluña or Andalucía.

Paula: Andalucia. (1)

Jean: OK. Can you tell me anything about Cataluña or Andalucía?

Paula: Andalucía. (1)

Jean: Ah.

Paula: Andalucía is very beautiful. (1e)

**It was it has got it it it has got a wonderful mountains, a natural parks and beaches, like in Málaga Málaga Granada.** (1)

And it is has got very good restaurants and with good fast and very good food. (1e)

Too it has got very important **monu** monuments, like Alhambra in Granada, Mezquita in Cordoba. (1e)

**And the** and the people is very, very, nice with the foreigners. (1)

Jean: What about the weather in Andalucía? What’s the weather like?

Paula: It’s sunny (1e) and for example, Granada is very cold (1e) **in vent.**

Jean: OK. And why do tourists go to Granada?

Paula: **Why do be why do** Repeat, please? (1e)

Jean: Why do tourists come to Granada?

Paula: It’s very beautiful. (1e)

It has got very very beaches and monuments (1)

and the people is very nice and happy with the tourists. (1)

Jean: Thank you very much, Paula. Please choose another topic.

Paula: Yes. (1) What about your class English? (1e) All right? (1)

Jean: It's all right, it's very good. I know that you can speak English very well and I've got an important English exam in two or three days. What should I do?

Paula: You should study **you study** every day for two hours. (1e)

Too **you** you could do the **dia** diagrams (1e) and then you could do a lot of **exer** exercises practice. (1)

It's a good idea **idea** that **a** you study with your friends. (1e)

**And** and try don't **don't** study **all** do all every last day(1),

and **and try don't** and try not be very nervous in the exam. (1)

Jean: That's very good advice, but it's difficult. And I'm going to England with my teacher and classmates.

Paula: **When** when are you going to England? (1e)

Jean: In three weeks. Sorry, what should I do before I go?

Paula: **Don't forget your** don't forget take your pasaport (1) your pasaport.

**And** and it's a good **id** idea that you that that you do the bank and travel card. (1e)

And then, when you arrive at there, is a good idea that you buy a map of city. (1)

Jean: Ah.

Paula: **And** and if you can, **visit** visit to Bucking Palace o el Big Ben.(1)

Is a very beautiful (1) **beautiful**.

Jean: Oh, thank you very much. That's very good advice. Thank you, Paula.

Paula: Thank you.(1)

**G) Inter-rater reliability correlations (Pearson), and internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) for the eight oral performance criteria**

Criterion	Pearson Correlations		Cronbach's Alpha
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	
Total words in CUs	.988	.001**	.993
Average length of CU	.923	.001**	.950
Percent of error-free CUs	.780	.013*	.875
Percent of total words in error-free CUs	.788	.012*	.877
Average length of maze	.908	.001**	.950
Percent of total words in mazes	.829	.006**	.858
Number of dependent clauses used	.745	.021*	.850
Number of target structures used	.916	.001**	.956

*Note.* CU = Communication Unit.

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01.

## APPENDIX J

The Written Test (Naunton, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c)

*a) Listening*

**You are going to hear two messages left in an answering machine. The messages contain 6 mistakes. Listen and correct them.**

## Message 1

Message for.....Jo Kellogg...
From....Malcolm Turner .....
Time of call ...6.35, Friday evening...
MESSAGE:.....Malcolm will come to office at about 11.30 on Thursday to talk about book cover. Staying at Cosimo Lounge Hotel. Telephone: 01665 897455..... ..... .....

## Message 2

Message for.....Ludovic Vega.....
From....Mark Jordan .....
Time of call.....3.55, Wednesday
MESSAGE: ..... Please call Monday p.m? Call my mobile number 635885210..... ..... ..... ..... ..... .....

(Tapescript for message 1. Hi, this is Malcolm Turner here. Calling at 6.05 on Friday evening. Can you tell Jo Kellogg that I'll be coming into the office at around 11.30 on Tuesday to talk about the design of the book cover. I'm staying at the Cosimo Lounge Hotel; their number's (01665) 987455. Thanks.

Tapescript for message 2. This is Ludovic Vega here. I had wanted to speak to Mark Jordan. Can he call me first thing on Monday morning? I'll be out of the office but he can reach me on my mobile. The number is 635885210. Bye.)

*Note.* Adapted from Naunton (2000b, p. 7)

**b) Dictation**Dictated texts:

a) Twenty-six-year old Trish Crofts, a media buyer with the advertising agency Ogilvy and Mather, is typical of the young professionals who feel that their work is depriving them of a real life. She starts work at 9 a.m. but often doesn't leave her office until 8 p.m. Occasionally she is at work until 10 p.m. 'In my company when people leave they are not replaced and everyone is expected to work extra hard,' she said. Ms Croft enjoys her work but feels stressed all the time. She said: 'My hair is already going grey.' As her partner, Graham Dodridge, frequently does not arrive home until late either, the couple often do not have their meal until after 10 p.m. Ms Crofts would be prepared to accept a cut in pay if it would guarantee a genuine reduction in her workload, but she believes her promotion prospects would suffer. 'You have to sacrifice your personal life if you want career advancement,' she said.

b) Martina Khan, aged 23, set up an IT consultancy in Manchester two years ago, directly after she graduated. Her parents and brother are self-employed so she drew on their advice and experience. It was an immediate success as many large organizations choose to buy in freelance contractors rather than employ their own staff full-time. She has even taken on seven other IT specialists, some of whom are much older. She has to work very long hours and weekends. However, now that the business is more established she has a bit more free time than before. Her relationship with her boyfriend ended, but she admits she wanted the business to succeed more than the relationship. She is still young and says she has plenty of time to find a partner and have children. She has no regrets and even refuses to complain about not having a holiday for two years.

*Note.* Texts from Naunton (2000, pp. 14, 103)

*c) Reading*

**Read the text and decide if the statements 1 – 10 are true (T) or false (F) according to the text.**

A new survey out today seems to confirm some of our worst fears about what work is doing to our lives. The survey shows that people throughout the country are being made to put work before everything else.

It isn't a surprise to learn that people are working longer and longer hours, or that this is leading to greater stress and pressure on relationships and family life. Ambitious young professionals are having to make greater personal sacrifices than their parents or even their older brothers and sisters. A third of all the people who responded reported that they had lost an important relationship or that overwork had caused the breakdown of a marriage.

One of the greatest regrets was that people missed seeing their children grow up; it is quite common for male managers with young families to leave home before their children are awake, and to return after they have gone to bed. Many men admitted to being a way on business trips when their children were born.

For women the situation is worse, as many say they have to wait for the right time and situation before having children. Even today, it is commonly accepted that many women's careers effectively end once they have family commitments. One in four men and 40% of women say they would happily accept a lower salary if this meant they had greater personal time and freedom. The survey results also show that, as many of us have already suspected, women are affected far more than men and that they have to make far greater personal sacrifices to achieve any career goals. Married women still complain that their husbands don't do enough at home. They feel that they are the ones who carry the main responsibility for housework, cooking, and bringing up the children.

1. The survey contains no real surprises. ....
2. People spend more time at work than they used to. ....
3. There appears to be a connection between short working hours and poor family relationships. ....
4. Earlier generations used to be under more pressure at work. ....
5. People would like to see more of their grown up children ....
6. Some women do not continue their careers after they have children. ....
7. Fewer men than women would be prepared to accept a reduction in salary. ....
8. Work forces people to miss important family events. ....
9. Women still have to work harder than men to achieve equivalent goals. ....
10. Men seem to be sharing more of the responsibilities at home. ....

*Note.* From Naunton (2000c, p. 79)

#### ***d) Writing***

##### **A formal letter**

You are a student of English and you have been accepted on a course at the *International House Language School* in Newcastle, England.

You write to the director, Mrs Margaret Thompson, to thank her for accepting you. You tell her the date of your arrival (3-4-05). Ask her for details of accommodation (you want to live with a family) and about the cultural programme.

The address of the language school is:

International House Language School,  
15 Rosedene Villas,  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE16 7HR,  
England.

*Note.* Test component (d) was devised by the author of the thesis.



C) Grammar

**Complete the text by choosing the correct form of the verbs in brackets.**

Next month education experts 1..... (**will try** / try) to find out why the English 2..... (are being / are) so bad at foreign languages. A table which 3..... (compares / is comparing) how well different European teenagers speak foreign languages 4..... (is showing / shows) Britain at the bottom. Educational experts 5..... (are fearing / fear) that the widespread use of English 6..... (make / will make) even more people believe that a knowledge of foreign languages 7..... (will be / is) unnecessary. They 8..... (believe / are believing) this view 9..... (damages / has damaged) British business prospects over the last few years. Entrepreneur Richard Branson 10..... (had welcomed / has welcomed) the enquiry. He 11..... (has never studied / didn't study) a foreign language properly when he 12..... (had been / was) younger and he 13..... (is still regretting / still regrets) it. While he 14..... (established / was establishing) Virgin's businesses in Japan he 15..... (had noticed / noticed) the positive effect that learning just a few words of Japanese (had / was having).

*Note.* From Naunton (2000c, p. 6)

D) Communication

**Complete the telephone conversation with a word or expression from the list a-j below.**

*Switchboard:* Portillo Mouldings. 1...c....?

*Marina:* Good morning. 2..... to Alan Blake, please.

*Switchboard:* Just a moment. 3..... to his department.

*Hannah:* Customer Services.

*Marina:* Hello. 4....., please?

*Hannah:* 5..... he is in a meeting.

*Marina:* I see. 6.....?

*Hannah:* Yes, of course.

*Marina:* Could you ask him 7..... as soon as possible? My name's Marina Prodi.

*Hannah:* 8..... that for me?

*Marina:* Sure, it's P-R-O-D-I. 9 .....my number.

*Hannah:* OK, 10..... he gets your message.

- a) Would you mind spelling
- b) I'm afraid
- c) How can I help
- d) Could I speak to Alan Blake
- e) I'll make sure
- f) to call me back
- g) He's got
- h) Could I leave a message
- i) I'll put you through
- j) I'd like to speak

*Note.* From Naunton (2000c, p.6)

E) Vocabulary

**Complete the gaps in 1 – 14 with one of the words from the box.**

overtime	qualifications	applications	references	experience
unemployed	challenging	employment	freelance	creative
fill in	vacancies	salary	set up	lay off

1. They received fifty ...**applications**.... for the secretarial post that they advertised.
2. Her new employer wrote to her old employer to ask for written .....
3. Only include certificates of your ..... if your employers ask for them.
4. You've got the right qualifications, but we are looking for someone with more .....
5. Could you help me to ..... this form? I don't know what to write.
6. A ..... job is difficult but satisfying at the same time.
7. They need a ..... person for this job; someone with lots of fresh ideas.
8. We'll have to ..... more staff if we don't get some more orders.
9. I don't want to work for someone else; I'd like to work .....
10. He ..... his own Internet company and now he's a millionaire.
11. The company pays your ..... into your bank account at the end of each month.
12. If you work extra hours, the company will pay you for .....
13. She doesn't have a job; she's been ..... for nearly two years.
14. She went to the ..... agency to find out if there were any ..... for a sales executive.

*Note.* From Naunton (2000b, p. 80)

## APPENDIX K

The Background Questionnaire (Original Spanish Version)  
(Stephenson & Hewitt, 2006)

All items were devised by Jean Stephenson, under the supervision of Elaine Hewitt, except for items 36a) and b), which were taken from Phillips (1990, p. 213).

**Este cuestionario forma parte de una investigación sobre el aprendizaje del inglés. Todos los datos que aquí aportes serán estrictamente confidenciales. Si necesitas cualquier aclaración, no dudes en preguntarle a la profesora.**

Muchísimas gracias por tu colaboración.

Fecha ..... Facultad .....

- 1) Nombre .....
- 2) Hombre ...../ Mujer .....
- 3) Edad: años ..... meses .....
- 4) Dirección .....
- 5) Teléfono .....
- 6) Correo electrónico .....
- 7) Nacionalidad .....
- 8) Profesión (si trabajas. En caso contrario, deja este espacio en blanco.)  
.....
- 9) Lengua materna .....
- 10) ¿Qué nivel educativo tienen tus padres (Graduado Escolar / Bachillerato / Licenciatura / Doctor etc.)? padre ...../ madre .....
- 11) Profesión de tu padre .....
- 12) Profesión de tu madre .....
- 13) ¿Alguien de tu familia más cercana tiene como lengua materna otra que no sea español? No.... / Sí ..... (¿quién?) .....
- 14) ¿Has vivido en / visitado algún país anglófono? No ... / Sí ... (¿durante cuánto tiempo? años: ... ; meses: ... ; semanas: ... ; días: ... )
- 15) ¿A qué edad empezaste a aprender el inglés? .....
- 16) **Aparte de esta asignatura**, ¿dónde y durante cuánto tiempo has aprendido inglés?  
(1) Colegio ..... (años: .....; meses: .....)

- (2) Instituto ..... (años: ..... ; meses: .....)
- (3) Academia ..... (años: ..... ; meses: .....)
- (4) Clases particulares ..... (años: ..... ; meses: .....)
- (5) Universidad ..... (años: .....; meses: .....)
- (6) Otro (específica) ..... (años: .....; meses: .....)
- 17) ¿Cuál es el título del libro más avanzado que has usado para estudiar inglés?  
..... (Si no te acuerdas del título, ¿cuál era la geditorial/autor/color del libro,  
etc.? .....)
- 18) De la lista de niveles de inglés que hay a continuación, ¿cuál consideras que describe mejor el tuyo? (Rodéalo con un círculo.) Principiante 1 / elemental 2 / pre-intermedio 3 / intermedio 4 / intermedio alto 5 / pre-avanzado (= *First Certificate* de Cambridge) 6/ avanzado 7 / post-avanzado 8 / *Proficiency* de Cambridge 9 / hablante nativo 10.
- 19) De la anterior lista de niveles, (principiante 1, elemental 2, etc.), ¿cuál consideras que se corresponde con tu nivel actual de inglés en cada una de las siguientes destrezas? (Rodea tu respuesta con un círculo).
- La destreza auditiva (= escuchar inglés): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
- La destreza oral (= hablar en inglés): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
- La destreza lectora (= leer en inglés): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
- La destreza escrita (= escribir en inglés): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
- 20) ¿Hablas o conoces otra lengua aparte del español y el inglés? No / Sí ... ¿cuáles?  
.....
- 21) Actualmente, ¿estás estudiando otras lenguas? No ... / Sí ... ¿Cuáles son?  
.....
- 22) ¿Qué calificación obtuviste en inglés en Selectividad? .....
- 24) ¿Tienes algún diploma internacional en inglés? No .../ Sí .....(Indica cuáles y escribe tu calificación: *PET* , calificación: ..... 1 / *First Certificate*, calificación: ..... 2 / *Cambridge Advanced*, calificación: ..... 3 / *Cambridge Proficiency*, calificación: ..... 4 / *TOEFL*, calificación: ..... 5 / Escuela Oficial de Idiomas, calificación: .....6 / otros, calificación:.....7)
- 25) ¿Cuál es el nombre de la carrera que cursas actualmente?  
.....
- 26) Curso académico (1º, 2º, 3º etc.) .....
- 27) ¿Cuál es la nota media de tu carrera hasta ahora? .....

28) Esta asignatura de Inglés para Fines Específicos es:

de Libre Configuración .....1; Opcional .....2; Troncal .....3.

29) ¿Durante cuántas horas a la semana se imparte esta asignatura? .....horas.

30) Este cuatrimestre, ¿cuántas veces has asistido a clase? .....

31) Aparte de las horas de clase, ¿cuántas horas estudias inglés a la semana? .....horas.

32) Comparado con mi nivel de inglés, considero el nivel de esta asignatura:

fácil ..... 1 ; regular .....2 ; difícil .....3 ; muy difícil ..... 4.

33) ¿Qué nota crees que obtendrás en esta asignatura? (Marca la nota con una cruz.)

Suspense (...): escribe tu nota entre 0,0 – 4,9 (...);

Aprobado (...): escribe tu nota entre 5,0 – 6,9 (...);

Notable (...): escribe tu nota entre 7,0 – 8,9 (...);

Sobresaliente (...): escribe tu nota entre 9,0 – 10 (...);

Matricula de honor (...): escribe tu nota entre 9,0 – 10 (...).

34) Indica hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo con las siguientes frases:

(Totalmente de acuerdo = 5

De acuerdo = 4

Ni de acuerdo, ni en desacuerdo = 3

En desacuerdo = 2

Totalmente en desacuerdo = 1)

a) El conocimiento del inglés es importante para mi carrera universitaria ( ... )

b) Me matriculé en esta asignatura sólo por conseguir créditos ( ... )

c) El conocimiento del inglés es importante para mi profesión en el futuro ( ... )

d) El conocimiento del inglés es importante por otra(s) razón(es) no señalada(s) en a), b)

o c). No ..... / Sí ..... (En caso afirmativo, por favor indica la(s) razón(es):

.....)

35) ¿Qué profesión te gustaría ejercer/vas a ejercer una vez acabada la carrera?

.....

### 36) Actividades orales en clase de inglés

Como es normal en la asignatura de Inglés para Fines Específicos, se realizarán numerosas actividades orales en lengua inglesa a lo largo del curso en las cuales se espera tu participación. Además habrá exámenes orales en enero de 2005 (examen parcial), y en junio de 2005 (examen final). Basándote en experiencias anteriores de las clases de inglés, ¿cómo crees que te sentirás en clase?

a) Mi rendimiento reflejará mi nivel en inglés .....Sí/No

b) Mi nerviosismo/ansiedad influirá en mi rendimiento .....Sí/No

Explica tus respuestas.

37) Escribe aquí cualquier otra información que desees comunicar a la profesora.

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

Firma de consentimiento de participación:

Fdo:.....

**MUCHAS GRACIAS**

## APPENDIX L

The Background Questionnaire (Stephenson &amp; Hewitt, 2006)

with English Translation of Items

***Este cuestionario forma parte de una investigación sobre el aprendizaje del inglés. Todos los datos que aquí aportes serán estrictamente confidenciales. Si necesitas cualquier aclaración, no dudes en preguntarle a la profesora.***

*Muchísimas gracias por tu colaboración.*

*Fecha ..... Facultad .....*

(This questionnaire is part of an investigation about learning English. All the information you give will be treated in the strictest confidence. If you need any help, please don't hesitate to ask the teacher.

Thank you very much for your participation.

Date ..... Faculty .....

1) *Nombre* ..... (Name .....

2) *Hombre ... / Mujer ...* (Male ... / Female ...)

3) *Edad: años ... meses ...* (Age: years ... months ...)

7) *Nacionalidad* ..... (Nationality .....

8) *Profesión (si trabajas. En caso contrario, deja este espacio en blanco.)*  
..... (Profession, if you work. If not, leave this space blank.)

9) *Lengua materna* ..... (Mother tongue .....

10) *¿Qué nivel educativo tienen tus padres (Graduado Escolar / Bachillerato / Licenciatura / Doctor etc.)? padre ...../ madre ..... (What educational level do your parents have: Primary school certificate / Secondary school certificate / University Degree / Doctorate, etc.? father ..... / mother .....*

11) *Profesión de tu padre* ..... (Your father's profession .....

12) *Profesión de tu madre* ..... (Your mother's profession .....

13) *¿Alguien de tu familia más cercana tiene como lengua materna otra que no sea español? No.... / Sí ..... (¿quién? ) ..... (Does any close family member speak a language other than Spanish as their mother tongue? No ... / Yes ....: who? .....*

14) *¿Has vivido en / visitado algún país anglófono? No ... / Sí ... (¿durante cuánto tiempo? años: ... ; meses: ... ; semanas: ... ; días: ... ) (Have you lived in or visited an English-speaking country? No ... / Yes .... For how long? years ... ; months: ... ; weeks: ...; days .... )*

15) *¿A qué edad empezaste a aprender el inglés? ..... (How old were you when you started to learn English? .....*

16) **Aparte de esta asignatura, ¿dónde y durante cuánto tiempo has aprendido inglés?**

(1) *Colegio* ..... (años: .....; meses: .....

(2) *Instituto* ..... (años: .....; meses: .....

(3) *Academia* ..... (años: .....; meses: .....

(4) *Clases particulares* ..... (años: .....; meses: .....

(5) *Universidad* ..... (años: .....; meses: .....

(6) *Otro (especifica)* ..... (años: .....; meses: .....)

**Apart from this subject**, where and for how long have you studied English?

(1) Primary school ..... (years: .....; months: .....)

(2) High school ..... (years: .....; months: .....)

(3) Private language school (years: .....; months: .....)

(4) Private classes .....(years: ...; months: .....)

(5) University ..... (years: .....; months: .....)

(6) Other (specify) ..... (years: .....; months: .....)

17) *¿Cuál es el título del libro más avanzado que has usado para estudiar inglés?* ..... (Si no te acuerdas del título, ¿cuál era la editorial / autor/ color del libro, etc.? ..... ) (What is the title of the most advanced book you have used to study English? ..... If you can't remember the title, what was the publisher, colour of the book, etc? ..... )

18) *De la lista de niveles de inglés que hay a continuación, ¿cuál consideras que describe mejor el tuyo? (Rodéalo con un círculo.)* Principiante 1 / elemental 2 / pre-intermedio 3 / intermedio 4 / intermedio alto 5 / pre-avanzado (= First Certificate de Cambridge) 6/ avanzado 7 / post-avanzado 8 / Proficiency de Cambridge 9 / hablante nativo 10. (Of the following list of levels of English, which do you consider best describes yours? Circle your level. Beginner 1 / elementary 2 / pre-intermediate 3 / intermediate 4 / upper intermediate 5 / pre-advanced = Cambridge First Certificate 6 / advanced 7 / post-advanced 8 / Cambridge Proficiency 9 / native speaker 10)

19) *De la anterior lista de niveles, (principiante 1, elemental 2, etc.), ¿cuál consideras que se corresponde con tu nivel actual de inglés en cada una de las siguientes destrezas? (Rodea tu respuesta con un círculo).*

*La destreza auditiva (= escuchar inglés):* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

*La destreza oral (= hablar en inglés):* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

*La destreza lectora (= leer en inglés):* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

*La destreza escrita (= escribir en inglés):* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

(From the previous list of levels, beginner 1, elementary 2, etc., which do you consider corresponds to your current level of English in each of the following skills? Circle your answer.

The listening skill = listening to English: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

The oral skill = speaking in English: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

The reading skill = reading in English: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

The writing skill = writing in English: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)

20) *¿Hablas o conoces otra lengua aparte del español y el inglés? No ... / Sí ... ¿Cuáles?* ..... (Do you speak or know another language apart from Spanish and English? No ... / Yes .... : Which ones? .....)

21) *Actualmente, ¿estás estudiando otras lenguas? No ... / Sí ... ¿Cuáles son?* ..... (At present, are you studying any other languages? No ... / Yes .... : Which ones? .....)

22) *¿Qué calificación obtuviste en inglés en Selectividad?* ..... (What grade did you get in English at *Selectividad*? .....)

23) *¿Has dejado de aprender inglés desde Selectividad? No .../ Sí ... (en caso afirmativo, cuántos años hacía que no estudiabas inglés antes de matricularte en esta asignatura? ..... )* (Have you stopped studying since *Selectividad*? No ... / Yes ... If your answer is Yes, how many years had you gone without studying English before enrolling in this subject?.....?)

24) *¿Tienes algún diploma internacional en inglés? No .../ Sí .....(Indica cuáles y escribe tu calificación: PET , calificación: ..... 1 / First Certificate, calificación:*

..... 2 / Cambridge Advanced, *calificación:* ..... 3/ Cambridge Proficiency, *calificación:* ..... 4 / TOEFL, *calificación:* ..... 5 / *Escuela Oficial de Idiomas, calificación:* .....6 / *otros, calificación:*.....7)

(Do you have any international qualifications in English? No ... / Yes ..... Indicate which ones and give your grade. PET, grade:.....1 / First Certificate, grade:.....2 / Cambridge Advanced, grade:..... 3 / Cambridge Proficiency, grade:..... 4 / TOEFL, grade:..... 5 / Official Language School, grade:..... 6 / other, grade:.....7)

25) *¿Cuál es el nombre de la carrera que cursas actualmente?* ..... (What is the name of the degree you are studying for at present ? .....)

26) *Curso académico (1º, 2º, 3º etc.)* ..... (Academic year, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc..... )

27) *¿Cuál es la nota media de tu carrera hasta ahora?* ..... (What is your grade point average up until now?)

28) *Esta asignatura de Inglés para Fines Específicos es:*

*de Libre Configuración* .....1; *Opcional* .....2; *Troncal* .....3.

(This English for Specific Purposes subject is: 'Free Configuration' .....1; Elective ..... 2; Required .....3.)

29) *¿Durante cuántas horas a la semana se imparte esta asignatura?* .....horas. (For how many hours a week is this subject taught? ..... hours.)

30) *Este cuatrimestre, ¿cuántas veces has asistido a clase?* ..... (How many times have you attended class this term? .....)

31) *Aparte de las horas de clase, ¿cuántas horas estudias inglés a la semana?* .....horas. (Apart from class time, how many hours a week do you spend studying English? ..... hours.)

32) *Comparado con mi nivel de inglés, considero el nivel de esta asignatura:*

*fácil* ..... 1 ; *regular* .....2 ; *difícil* .....3 ; *muy difícil* ..... 4.

(In comparison to my level of English, the level of this subject is: easy .....1; OK .....2; difficult .....3; very difficult .....4.)

33) *¿Qué nota crees que obtendrás en esta asignatura? (Marca la nota con una cruz.)*

*Suspenso (...): escribe tu nota entre 0,0 – 4,9 (...);*

*Aprobado (...): escribe tu nota entre 5,0 – 6,9 (...);*

*Notable (...): escribe tu nota entre 7,0 – 8,9 (...);*

*Sobresaliente (...): escribe tu nota entre 9,0 – 10 (...);*

*Matricula de honor (...): escribe tu nota entre 9,0 – 10 (...).*

(What grade do you think you will get in this subject? Mark the grade with a cross.

Fail ....: write your grade between 0.0 and 4.9 ...;

Pass ....: write your grade between 5.0 and 6.9 ...;

Very good....: write your grade between 7.0 and 8.9 ...;

Excellent ....: write your grade between 9.0 and 10 ...;

Distinction ....: write your grade between 9.0 and 10 ...).

34) *Indica hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo con las siguientes frases:*

*(Totalmente de acuerdo = 5*

*De acuerdo = 4*

*Ni de acuerdo, ni en desacuerdo = 3*

*En desacuerdo = 2*

*Totalmente en desacuerdo = 1)*

a) *El conocimiento del inglés es importante para mi carrera universitaria ( ... )*

b) *Me matriculé en esta asignatura sólo por conseguir créditos ( ... )*

- c) *El conocimiento del inglés es importante para mi profesión en el futuro ( ... )*  
 d) *El conocimiento del inglés es importante por otra(s) razón(es) no señalada(s) en a), b) o c). No ..... / Sí ... (En caso afirmativo, por favor indica la(s) razón(es): .....)*

(Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

Strongly agree = 5

Agree = 4

Neither agree nor disagree = 3

Disagree = 2

Strongly disagree = 1

- a) Knowledge of English is important for my university degree course ( ... )  
 b) I enrolled in this subject only to obtain credits ( ... )  
 c) Knowledge of English is important for my future profession ( ... )  
 d) Knowledge of English is important for another reason/s not mentioned in a, b, or c.  
 No ..... / Yes ... If your answer is Yes, please give reason/s.  
 .....)

35) *¿Qué profesión te gustaría ejercer/vas a ejercer una vez acabada la carrera?*

..... (What profession would you like /are you going to have once you have once you have finished you degree?)

### 36) **Actividades orales en clase de inglés**

*Como es normal en la asignatura de Inglés para Fines Específicos, se realizarán numerosas actividades orales en lengua inglesa a lo largo del curso en las cuales se espera tu participación. Además habrá exámenes orales en enero de 2005 (examen parcial), y en junio de 2005 (examen final). Basándote en experiencias anteriores de las clases de inglés, ¿cómo crees que te sentirás en clase?*

a) *Mi rendimiento reflejará mi nivel en inglés.....Sí / No*

b) *Mi nerviosismo/ansiedad influirá en mi rendimiento .....Sí / No*

*Explica tus repuestas.*

### (Oral activities in the English class

As is normal in the 'English for Specific Purposes' subject, we will be doing a lot of speaking activities in English throughout the course in which you will be expected to participate. Also, there will be oral exams in the partial exam in January 2005, and in the final exam in June 2005. Thinking about your past experiences in English classes, how do you think you will feel in class?

a. Performance will be indicative of my ability in English. .... Yes / No

b. Performance will be affected by nervousness/anxiety ..... Yes / No

Explain your answers.)

37) *Escribe aquí cualquier otra información que desees comunicar a la profesora.*

.....  
 (Here write any other information you would like the teacher to know.  
 .....)

*Firma de consentimiento de participación:*

*Fdo:.....*

(Signature giving consent to participate:

Signed .....)

**MUCHAS GRACIAS**

**(THANK YOU VERY MUCH)**

APPENDIX M

The Oral Test Grade Scoring Sheet

Oral Test  Name:..... Date: ..... .....			
<u>Part One</u> Cultural Topic:      1 / 2 / 3			
GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	PRONUNCIATION	FLUENCY
			Score..... .....
<u>Part Two</u> Role-play Topic:      1 / 2 / 3			
GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	PRONUNCIATION	FLUENCY
			Score..... .....
			Total .....

## APPENDIX N

Discrepancy in the Name of the First Oral Performance Criteria Variable in  
Phillips (1992)

When I carried out correlations between the eight performance variables and the FLCAS scores (see Results section), I noticed that results for my first variable ‘Percent of total words in Communication Units’ and for my sixth variable ‘Percent of total words in mazes’ were identical, except for a difference in sign:  $r = -.341, p = .031$ , and  $r = .341, p = .031$ , respectively. At first sight, this was not surprising, because in the oral tests what was not percentage of communication units was logically percentage of mazes. What was surprising, though, is that the correlations for these two variables in Phillips’s (1992) study *did* show different values: the correlation for ‘Percent of total words in Communication Units’ was  $r = -.38, p < .01$ , and the correlation for ‘Percent of total words in mazes’ was  $r = .26, p < .10$  (Table II, p. 18). To try to solve this mystery, I looked at a previous study (Phillips, 1990), in which she had carried out a correlation between the FLCAS and this variable (p.133). Here I saw that the variable in question was called ‘Total words in Communication Units’ (not ‘*Percent of total words in Communication Units*’) and that the correlation result was  $r = -.38, p < .01$ , that is, the same one that she used in her (1992) article. I can only conclude that Phillips got mixed up when naming this variable in her (1992) work. I therefore called the corresponding variable in my study was ‘Total words in Communication Units’ and I computed results accordingly.

## APPENDIX O

Frequency Table for the Oral Test

Value	Frequency	Percent	Accumulated percent
43	3	7.5	7.5
46	2	5.0	12.5
47	1	10.0	15.0
48	2	5.0	20.0
49	1	2.5	22.5
50	1	2.5	25.0
51	2	5.0	30.0
52	1	2.5	32.5
53	4	10.0	42.5
54	1	2.5	45.0
55	1	2.5	47.5
58	1	2.5	50.0
60	3	7.5	57.5
63	2	5.0	62.5
65	2	5.0	67.5
68	1	2.5	70.0
69	1	2.5	72.5
70	1	2.5	75.0
71	1	2.5	77.5
73	2	5.0	82.5
74	2	5.0	87.5
75	3	7.5	95.0
77	1	2.5	97.5
78	1	2.5	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

## APPENDIX P

Frequency Table for Teacher Ranking, Written Test Average,  
and Teacher Ranking and Written Test Average

Teacher ranking			Written test average			Teacher ranking and written test average		
Value	Freq	%	Value	Freq	%	Value	freq	%
1	1	2.5	38.6	1	2.5	52.00	1	2.5
2	1	2.5	39.4	1	2.5	63.20	1	2.5
3	1	2.5	39.8	1	2.5	68.80	1	2.5
4	3	7.5	40.0	1	2.5	69.00	1	2.5
7	2	5.0	42.2	1	2.5	69.40	2	5.0
9	3	7.5	43.4	1	2.5	70.20	1	2.5
12	2	5.0	44.4	1	2.5	70.60	1	2.5
14	3	7.5	45.4	1	2.5	71.40	1	2.5
17	2	5.0	46.4	1	2.5	72.20	1	2.5
19	3	7.5	49.2	1	2.5	72.80	1	2.5
22	3	7.5	50.8	1	2.5	74.00	1	2.5
25	2	5.0	51.8	1	2.5	74.60	1	2.5
27	3	7.5	52.4	1	2.5	75.20	1	2.5
30	3	7.5	54.0	1	2.5	75.40	1	2.5
33	3	7.5	54.4	1	2.5	76.20	1	2.5
36	5	12.5	54.6	1	2.5	76.40	1	2.5
			56.2	1	2.5	76.60	1	2.5
			57.6	1	2.5	77.40	1	2.5
			58.2	1	2.5	77.60	1	2.5
			58.6	1	2.5	78.40	1	2.5

59.4	1	2.5	79.00	1	2.5
60.4	1	2.5	79.20	1	2.5
61.6	1	2.5	79.40	2	5.0
62.2	1	2.5	81.40	2	5.0
65.0	1	2.5	81.60	1	2.5
65.8	1	2.5	81.80	1	2.5
67.4	1	2.5	82.60	1	2.5
68.6	1	2.5	83.80	1	2.5
70.0	2	5.0	84.60	1	2.5
70.4	2	5.0	85.20	1	2.5
71.2	1	2.5	85.60	1	2.5
72.0	1	2.5	87.80	1	2.5
72.2	1	2.5	88.20	1	2.5
74.2	1	2.5	89.40	1	2.5
79.6	1	2.5	91.00	1	2.5
81.6	1	2.5	92.00	1	2.5
			99.20	1	2.5

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## APPENDIX Q

Frequency Table for the Quick Placement Test

Value	Frequency	Percentage
10	1	2.5
11	1	2.5
14	3	7.5
15	3	7.5
16	5	12.5
17	2	5.0
18	5	12.5
19	5	12.5
20	4	10.0
21	2	5.0
22	3	7.5
23	1	2.5
24	1	2.5
25	2	5.0
26	1	2.5
28	1	2.5

APPENDIX R  
Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale: Frequency Table for Total Scores

Value	Frequency	Percent	Accumulated percent
63	1	2.5	2.5
64	1	2.5	5.0
65	1	2.5	7.5
66	1	2.5	10.0
76	1	2.5	12.5
77	1	2.5	15.0
81	1	2.5	17.5
85	1	2.5	20.0
86	1	2.5	22.5
89	1	2.5	25.0
91	1	2.5	27.5
94	2	5.0	32.5
96	1	2.5	35.0
97	1	2.5	37.5
98	1	2.5	40.0
100	1	2.5	42.5
101	2	5.0	47.5
102	1	2.5	50.0
103	1	2.5	52.5
104	1	2.5	55.0
105	2	5.0	60.0
107	2	5.0	65.0
108	2	5.0	70.0
112	1	2.5	72.5
113	1	2.5	75.0
114	1	2.5	77.5
116	1	2.5	80.0
117	1	2.5	82.5
119	1	2.5	85.0
122	1	2.5	87.5
126	1	2.5	90.0
129	1	2.5	92.5
133	1	2.5	95.0
136	2	5.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

## APPENDIX S

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale: Frequency Table  
for Responses to Individual Items

	T=5 (SA)	A=4 (A)	N=3 (N)	D=2 (D)	TA= 1 (SA)	M	SD
1. Nunca me siento del todo seguro/a de mi mismo/a cuando hablo en mi clase de inglés. ( <i>I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.</i> )	8	18	9	5	-	3.73	.93
2. No me preocupa cometer errores en la clase de inglés. ( <i>I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.</i> )	6	17	5	10	2	3.38	1.17
3. Tiemblo cuando sé que me van a pedir que intervenga en la clase de inglés. ( <i>I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.</i> )	4	12	9	9	6	2.98	1.25
4. Me asusto cuando no entiendo lo que está diciendo en inglés el profesor. ( <i>It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.</i> )	2	12	13	9	4	2.98	1.07
5. No me importaría en absoluto hacer cursos de otras lenguas extranjeras. ( <i>It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.</i> )	-	7	7	12	14	2.17	1.11
6. Durante la clase de inglés, me doy cuenta de que estoy pensando en cosas que no tienen nada que ver con la asignatura. ( <i>During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.</i> )	-	2	7	18	13	1.95	.85
7. Siempre pienso que los otros estudiantes son mejores que yo en los idiomas. ( <i>I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.</i> )	7	5	17	9	2	3.15	1.12
8. Normalmente me siento tranquilo/a durante los exámenes de inglés. ( <i>I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.</i> )	4	17	11	6	2	3.38	1.03
9. Me entra el pánico cuando tengo que hablar sin haberme preparado nada en la clase de inglés. ( <i>I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.</i> )	7	16	6	9	2	3.43	1.17
10. Me preocupan las consecuencias de suspender la asignatura de inglés. ( <i>I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.</i> )	19	12	4	2	3	4.05	1.22
11. No entiendo por qué a algunas personas les afectan tan negativamente las clases de idiomas extranjeros. ( <i>I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.</i> )	3	7	19	4	7	2.88	1.14
12. En la clase de inglés, puedo llegar a ponerme tan nervioso/a que olvido cosas que sé. ( <i>In language class, I can get so nervous I forget</i>							

<i>things I know.)</i>	5	21	4	7	3	3.45	1.15
13. En la clase de inglés me da vergüenza ofrecerme de voluntario para dar respuestas. ( <i>It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.</i> )	8	11	12	7	2	3.40	1.15
14. No me pondría nervioso/a al hablar en inglés con hablantes nativos. ( <i>I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.</i> )	5	17	9	7	2	3.40	1.08
15. Me incomoda el no entender lo que el profesor está corrigiendo. ( <i>I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.</i> )	11	20	6	2	1	3.95	.93
16. Incluso cuando estoy bien preparado/a para la clase de inglés, me siento ansioso/a. ( <i>Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.</i> )	1	11	10	13	5	2.75	1.08
17. A menudo siento ganas de no asistir a mi clase de inglés. ( <i>I often feel like not going to my language class.</i> )	1	6	7	13	13	2.23	1.14
18. Me siento seguro/a de mi mismo/a cuando hablo en la clase de inglés. ( <i>I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.</i> )	4	18	10	6	2	3.40	1.03
19. Me da miedo que mi profesor/a esté dispuesto a corregir cada uno de los errores. ( <i>I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.</i> )	1	6	6	19	8	2.33	1.05
20. Siento que el corazón se me va a salir cuando sé que me van a pedir que intervenga en la clase de inglés. ( <i>I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.</i> )	6	10	8	7	9	2.93	1.40
21. Cuanto más estudio para un examen de inglés, más confundido/a me siento. ( <i>The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.</i> )	-	2	11	16	11	2.10	.87
22. No me siento presionado/a a prepararme muy bien para la clase de inglés. ( <i>I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.</i> )	-	10	11	16	3	2.70	.94
23. Siempre pienso que mis compañeros/as hablan inglés mejor que yo. ( <i>I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.</i> )	8	10	10	11	1	3.33	1.16
24. Me da mucha vergüenza a la hora de hablar en inglés delante de otros estudiantes. ( <i>I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.</i> )	5	13	10	10	2	3.23	1.12
25. Las clases de inglés van tan rápido que me preocupa quedarme atrás. ( <i>Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.</i> )	2	9	9	18	2	2.78	1.03
26. Me siento más tenso/a y nervioso/a en mis clases de inglés que en el resto de las clases. ( <i>I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.</i> )	2	11	11	8	8	2.78	1.21
27. Me pongo nervioso/a y me confundo cuando hablo en mi clase de inglés. ( <i>I get nervous and confused when I am speaking</i>							

<i>in my language class.)</i>	2	17	10	10	1	3.23	.97
28. Cuando voy camino a la clase de inglés, me siento muy seguro/a y relajado/a. <i>(When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.)</i>	3	6	17	13	1	2.93	.94
29. Me pongo nervioso/a cuando no entiendo cada una de las palabras que dice el profesor. <i>(I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.)</i>	4	20	8	7	1	3.47	.99
30. Me siento abrumado/a por la cantidad de reglas que hay que aprender para hablar en inglés. <i>(I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.)</i>	4	11	13	12	-	3.18	.98
31. Me da miedo que mis compañeros/as se rían de mí cuando hablo en inglés. <i>(I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.)</i>	3	12	7	15	3	2.93	1.14
32. Probablemente me sentiría cómodo/a con hablantes nativos de inglés. <i>(I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.)</i>	5	8	18	8	1	3.20	.99
33. Me pongo nervioso/a cuando el profesor de inglés hace preguntas que no me he preparado con antelación. <i>(I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.)</i>	1	22	9	7	1	3.37	.90

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*Note.* TA = 5: Totalmente de acuerdo; A = 2: De acuerdo; N = 3 : Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo; D = 2: En desacuerdo; TD = 1: Totalmente en desacuerdo.  
(SA: Strongly agree; A: Agree; N: Neither agree nor disagree; D: Disagree; SD: Strongly disagree.)

## APPENDIX T

Summary of Demographic, Academic, Cognitive, and Affective Data  
 Pertaining to Participants (N = 40) with Numbers and Percentages

Characteristics of Participants	Number	%
<i>Year at Facultad de CC del Trabajo</i>		
2 <sup>nd</sup>	29	72.5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	11	27.5
<i>Grade point average, Granada University</i>		
0.00-1.00	3	7.5
1.00-2.00	33	82.5
2.00-3.00	3	7.5
3.00-4.00	1	2.5
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	28	70.0
Male	12	30.0
<i>Age</i>		
18.84-18.99	1	2.5
19.00-19.99	10	25.0
20.00-20.99	10	25.0
21.00-21.99	6	15.0
22.00-22.99	6	15.0
23.00-23.99	3	7.5
24.00-24.99	2	5.0
25.00-25.58	2	5.0
<i>Nationality</i>		
Spanish	39	95.5
Hispano-argentino	1	2.5
<i>Mother tongue</i>		
Spanish	39	95.5
Portuguese	1	2.5
<i>Language learning history</i>		
At primary school	37	92.5
At secondary school	40	100.0
At private language school	17	42.5
With private teacher	10	25.0
<i>Speaks or knows another foreign language</i>		
Yes	18	45.0
No	22	55.0
<i>Year of study</i>		
Second	29	72.5
Third	11	27.5
<i>'Selectividad' or highest pre-University grade</i>		
0.00-4.99	13	32.5
5.00-6.99	20	50.0
7.00-8.99	7	17.5
9.00-10.00	-	-
<i>Years since English was studied formally</i>		
0	2	5.0
1	10	25.0
2	12	30.0

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3	8	20.0
4	5	12.5
5	1	2.50
6	2	5.0
<i>Perceived difficulty of course</i>		
Easy	7	17.5
OK	22	55.0
Difficult	10	25.0
Very difficult	1	2.5
<i>Expected grade on this English course</i>		
0.00-4.99 (' <i>Suspenso</i> ')	2	5.0
5.00-6.99 (' <i>Aprobado</i> ')	25	62.5
7.00-8.99 (' <i>Notable</i> ')	12	30.0
9.00-10.00 (' <i>Sobresaliente</i> ')	1	2.5
<i>Responses to Background Questionnaire items about oral classroom activities and oral tests</i>		
a) 'Mi rendimiento reflejará mi nivel en inglés' ( <i>'Performance will be indicative of my ability in English'</i> )		
Yes	33	82.5
No	7	17.5
b) 'Mi nerviosismo/ansiedad influirá en mi rendimiento' ( <i>'Performance will be affected by nervousness/anxiety'</i> )		
Yes	31	77.5
No	9	22.5

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## APPENDIX U

Frequency Tables for Selected Demographic, Academic,  
Cognitive, and Affective Variables

*Demographic Variable 1) Age*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18.84	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	19.25	2	5.0	5.0	7.5
	19.33	1	2.5	2.5	10.0
	19.42	1	2.5	2.5	12.5
	19.58	1	2.5	2.5	15.0
	19.67	2	5.0	5.0	20.0
	19.84	2	5.0	5.0	25.0
	19.92	1	2.5	2.5	27.5
	20.00	1	2.5	2.5	30.0
	20.08	1	2.5	2.5	32.5
	20.25	2	5.0	5.0	37.5
	20.33	1	2.5	2.5	40.0
	20.58	3	7.5	7.5	47.5
	20.84	1	2.5	2.5	50.0
	20.92	1	2.5	2.5	52.5
	21.00	1	2.5	2.5	55.0
	21.08	2	5.0	5.0	60.0
	21.25	1	2.5	2.5	62.5
	21.33	1	2.5	2.5	65.0
	21.75	1	2.5	2.5	67.5
	22.08	1	2.5	2.5	70.0
	22.17	1	2.5	2.5	72.5
	22.25	1	2.5	2.5	75.0
	22.33	1	2.5	2.5	77.5
	22.50	1	2.5	2.5	80.0
	22.58	1	2.5	2.5	82.5
	23.00	1	2.5	2.5	85.0
23.42	1	2.5	2.5	87.5	
23.75	1	2.5	2.5	90.0	
24.17	1	2.5	2.5	92.5	
24.92	1	2.5	2.5	95.0	
25.42	1	2.5	2.5	97.5	
25.58	1	2.5	2.5	100.0	
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Demographic Variable 2) Gender*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Female	28	70.0	70.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Demographic variable 3) Father's Educational Level*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Professional (MA, MS, ME, MD, PhD, LLD, and the like)	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Four-year college graduate (BA, BS, BM)	4	10.0	10.0	12.5
	One to three years college (also business schools)	2	5.0	5.0	17.5
	High school graduate	8	20.0	20.0	37.5
	Ten to 11 years of school (part high school)	21	52.5	52.5	90.0
	Seven to nine years of school	4	10.0	10.0	100.00
Total			100.0	100.0	

*Demographic variable 4) Mother's Educational Level*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Four-year college graduate (BA, BS, BM)	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	One to three years college (also business schools)	3	7.5	7.5	10.0
	High school graduate	8	20.0	20.0	30.0
	Ten to 11 years of school (part high school)	25	62.5	62.5	92.5
	Seven to nine years of school	3	7.5	7.5	100.00
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Demographic Variable 5) Father's Occupation*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Business managers, proprietors of medium-sizes businesses, and lesser professionals	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Administrative personnel, owners of small businesses, and minor professionals	8	20.0	20.0	32.5
	Clerical and sales workers, technicians, and owners of little businesses	7	17.5	17.5	50.0
	Skilled manual employees	6	15.0	15.0	65.0
	Machine operators, and semiskilled employees	5	12.5	12.5	77.5
	Unskilled employees	6	15.0	15.0	92.5
	Home-makers, and retired persons	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Demographic Variable 6) Mother's Occupation*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Business managers, proprietors of medium-sizes businesses, and lesser professionals	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Administrative personnel, owners of small businesses, and minor professionals	4	10.0	10.0	15.0
	Machine operators, and semiskilled employees	3	7.5	7.5	22.5
	Unskilled employees	4	10.0	10.0	32.5
	Home-makers, and retired persons	27	67.5	67.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Demographic Variable 7) Age at Which English Learning Started*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
	7	4	10.0	10.0	15.0
	8	5	12.5	12.5	27.5
	9	9	22.5	22.5	50.0
	10	6	15.0	15.0	65.0
	11	3	7.5	7.5	72.5
	12	6	15.0	15.0	87.5
	13	3	7.5	7.5	95.0
	14	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total		40	100.0	100.0

*Demographic Variable 8) Days Spent Visiting/Living in English-Speaking Countries*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	29	72.5	72.5	72.5
	1	7	17.5	17.5	90.0
	2	2	5.0	5.0	95.0
	4	1	2.5	2.5	97.5
	104	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Academic Variable 1) Months Spent Learning English in Schools (Primary, Secondary, and/or Private Language Schools)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	48	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	50	1	2.5	2.5	5.0
	60	1	2.5	2.5	7.5
	63	1	2.5	2.5	10.0
	84	2	5.0	5.0	15.0
	90	1	2.5	2.5	17.5
	96	5	12.5	12.5	30.0
	97	1	2.5	2.5	32.5
	98	1	2.5	2.5	35.0
	101	1	2.5	2.5	37.5
	108	6	15.0	15.0	52.5
	120	4	10.0	10.0	62.5
	132	4	10.0	10.0	72.5
	144	5	12.5	12.5	85.0
	149	1	2.5	2.5	87.5
	168	1	2.5	2.5	90.0
	192	1	2.5	2.5	92.5
	204	1	2.5	2.5	95.0
	240	1	2.5	2.5	97.5
	252	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Academic Variable 2) Years since English was Last Studied Formally*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
	1	10	25.0	25.0	30.0
	2	12	30.0	30.0	60.0
	3	8	20.0	20.0	80.0
	4	5	12.5	12.5	92.5
	5	1	2.5	2.5	95.0
	6	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Academic Variable 3) Another Language Spoken or Known*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	22	55.0	55.0	55.0
	Yes	18	45.0	45.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Academic Variable 4) Year of Study*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Second year	29	72.5	72.5	72.5
	Third year	11	27.5	27.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Cognitive Variable 1) Highest grade obtained in English as Pre-University Level*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.50	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	3.00	4	10.0	10.0	12.5
	3.50	1	2.5	2.5	15.0
	4.00	2	5.0	5.0	20.0
	4.50	2	5.0	5.0	25.0
	4.75	3	7.5	7.5	32.5
	5.00	6	15.0	15.0	47.5
	5.28	1	2.5	2.5	50.0
	5.30	1	2.5	2.5	52.5
	5.60	1	2.5	2.5	55.0
	6.00	3	7.5	7.5	62.5
	6.30	1	2.5	2.5	65.0
	6.50	4	10.0	10.0	75.0
	6.70	2	5.0	5.0	80.0
	6.75	1	2.5	2.5	82.5
	7.00	2	5.0	5.0	87.5
	7.50	3	7.5	7.5	95.0
8.00	1	2.5	2.5	97.5	
8.50	1	2.5	2.5	100.0	
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Cognitive Variable 2) Grade Point Average at Granada University*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.46	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	.61	1	2.5	2.5	5.0
	.95	1	2.5	2.5	7.5
	1.01	1	2.5	2.5	10.0
	1.02	1	2.5	2.5	12.5
	1.04	1	2.5	2.5	15.0
	1.05	1	2.5	2.5	17.5
	1.07	1	2.5	2.5	20.0
	1.10	2	5.0	5.0	25.0
	1.11	1	2.5	2.5	27.5
	1.13	1	2.5	2.5	30.0
	1.14	1	2.5	2.5	32.5
	1.16	1	2.5	2.5	35.0
	1.18	1	2.5	2.5	37.5
	1.20	3	7.5	7.5	45.0
	1.21	1	2.5	2.5	47.5
	1.23	1	2.5	2.5	50.0
	1.26	1	2.5	2.5	52.5
	1.29	1	2.5	2.5	55.0
	1.37	1	2.5	2.5	57.5
	1.39	1	2.5	2.5	60.0
	1.48	1	2.5	2.5	62.5
	1.50	1	2.5	2.5	65.0
	1.52	1	2.5	2.5	67.5
	1.69	1	2.5	2.5	70.0
	1.70	1	2.5	2.5	72.5
	1.77	1	2.5	2.5	75.0
	1.78	2	5.0	5.0	80.0
1.82	1	2.5	2.5	82.5	
1.89	1	2.5	2.5	85.0	
1.90	1	2.5	2.5	87.5	
1.93	1	2.5	2.5	90.0	
2.00	2	5.0	5.0	95.0	
2.74	1	2.5	2.5	97.5	
3.50	1	2.5	2.5	100.0	
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Cognitive variable 3) English Class Attendance*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	9	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
	10	2	5.0	5.0	12.5
	12	2	5.0	5.0	17.5
	13	1	2.5	2.5	20.0
	14	1	2.5	2.5	22.5
	15	2	5.0	5.0	27.5
	16	4	10.0	10.0	37.5
	17	3	7.5	7.5	45.0
	18	7	17.5	17.5	62.5
	19	4	10.0	10.0	72.5
	20	3	7.5	7.5	80.0
	21	6	15.0	15.0	95.0
	22	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total		40	100.0	100.0

*Cognitive variable 4) Hours of Study Out of Class per Week*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	11	27.5	27.5	27.5
	1	10	25.0	25.0	52.5
	2	14	35.0	35.0	87.5
	3	2	5.0	5.0	92.5
	4	2	5.0	5.0	97.5
	5	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total			100.0	100.0	

*Cognitive variable 5) To Enhance University Studies*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	2	1	2.5	2.5	5.0
	3	2	5.0	5.0	10.0
	4	13	32.5	32.5	42.5
	5	23	57.5	57.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Cognitive variable 6) To Obtain Credits*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
	2	17	42.5	42.5	67.5
	3	10	25.0	25.0	92.5
	4	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Cognitive variable 7) To Improve Future Professional Opportunities*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	16	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Yes	24	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Cognitive variable 8) For AnotherReason(s)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	2	1	2.5	2.5	5.0
	3	5	12.5	12.5	17.5
	4	7	17.5	17.5	35.0
	5	26	65.0	65.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Cognitive variable 9) Difficulty of Current English Subject*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	7	17.5	17.5	17.5
	2	22	55.0	55.0	72.5
	3	10	25.0	25.0	97.5
	4	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Cognitive variable 10) Estimation of Own English Proficiency*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	7	17.5	17.5	17.5
	2	12	30.0	30.0	47.5
	3	10	25.0	25.0	72.5
	4	6	15.0	15.0	87.5
	5	4	10.0	10.0	97.5
	7	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total		40	100.0	100.0

*Cognitive Variable 11) Self-Assessed Level in Listening*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
	2	6	15.0	15.0	45.5
	3	10	25.0	25.0	70.0
	4	6	15.0	15.0	85.0
	5	3	7.5	7.5	92.5
	6	1	2.5	2.5	95.0
	7	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total			100.0	100.0	

*Cognitive Variable 12) Self-Assessed Level in Speaking*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
	2	9	22.5	22.5	35.5
	3	10	25.0	25.0	60.0
	4	8	20.0	20.0	80.0
	5	4	10.0	10.0	90.0
	7	3	7.5	7.5	97.5
	8	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total			100.0	100.0

*Cognitive Variable 13) Self-Assessed Level in Reading*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	2	7	17.5	17.5	27.5
	3	3	7.5	7.5	35.0
	4	8	20.0	20.0	55.0
	5	5	12.5	12.5	67.5
	6	7	17.5	17.5	85.0
	7	2	5.0	5.0	90.0
	8	1	2.5	2.5	92.5
	9	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total			100.0	100.0	

*Cognitive Variable 14) Self-Assessed Level in Writing*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
	2	6	15.0	15.0	27.5
	3	4	10.0	10.0	37.5
	4	10	25.0	25.0	62.5
	5	5	12.5	12.5	75.0
	6	5	12.5	12.5	87.5
	7	3	7.5	7.5	95.0
	8	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Cognitive Variable 15) Expected Grade in this Subject*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4.0	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
	5.0	18	45.0	45.0	50.0
	5.5	2	5.0	5.0	55.0
	6.0	4	10.0	10.0	65.0
	6.5	1	2.5	2.5	67.5
	7.0	9	22.5	22.5	90.0
	7.5	2	5.0	5.0	95.0
	8.0	1	2.5	2.5	97.5
	9.0	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Affective Variable 1) Belief that Performance in Oral Activities in Class will Reflect English Level*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	7	17.5	17.5	17.5
	Yes	33	82.5	82.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

*Affective Variable 2) Belief that Anxiety/Nervousness will Influence Performance in Oral Activities in Class*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	9	22.5	22.5	22.5
	Yes	31	77.5	77.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

## APPENDIX V

## Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA of Three Anxiety Groups

(1 = Low, 2 = Moderate, 3 = High) Conducted on

(a) the Oral Test Grade, (b) the Fifth Oral Performance Criteria Variable, Average Length of Maze, and (c) the Sixth Oral Performance Criteria Variable, Percent of Total Words in Mazes

(a) Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA of Three Anxiety Groups (1 = Low, 2 = Moderate, 3 = High) Conducted on the Oral Test Grade

Anxiety group	Number of participants	Mean oral exam grade	Standard deviation	Standard error
1	10	67.60	10.752	3.400
2	20	60.10	9.564	2.138
3	10	50.60	8.409	2.659
Total	40	59.60	11.174	1.767

Anxiety group	95% confidence interval for mean		Minimum	Maximum
	Lower limit	Upper limit		
1	59.91	75.29	50	78
2	55.62	64.58	46	75
3	44.58	56.62	43	71
Total	56.03	63.17	43	78

(b) Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA of Three Anxiety Groups (1 = Low, 2 = Moderate, 3 = High) Conducted on the Fifth Oral Performance Criteria Variable: Average Length of Maze

Anxiety group	Number of participants	Mean length (= number of words) per maze	<i>SD</i>	Standard error
1	10	2.8220	.72346	3.400
2	20	2.3035	.70052	2.138
3	10	3.5280	1.20460	2.659
Total	40	2.7392	.97640	1.767

Anxiety group	95% confidence interval for mean		Minimum	Maximum
	Lower limit	Upper limit		
1	2.3045	3.3395	1.68	3.82
2	1.9756	2.6314	1.17	4.04
3	2.6663	4.3897	1.91	5.71
Total	2.4270	3.0515	1.17	5.71

(c) Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA of Three Anxiety Groups (1 = Low, 2 = Moderate, 3 = High) Conducted on the Sixth Oral Performance Criteria Variable: Percent of Total Words in Mazes

Anxiety group	Number of participants	Mean total of words in mazes	<i>SD</i>	Standard error
1	10	21.4620	9.95415	3.14778
2	20	18.9565	10.000618	2.23745
3	10	33.7610	15.56419	4.92183
Total	40	23.2840	12.88980	2.03806

Anxiety group	95% confidence interval for mean		Minimum	Maximum
	Lower limit	Upper limit		
1	14.3412	28.5828	11.2	40.4
2	14.2635	23.6395	5.20	47.7
3	22.6270	44.8950	16.5	63.5
Total	19.1616	27.4064	5.20	63.5

## APPENDIX W

## Summary in Spanish/ Resumen en Español

## Introducción

Como profesora de inglés desde hace años, he observado en muchas ocasiones el nerviosismo y la preocupación experimentados por los estudiantes a la hora de aprender y hablar el idioma extranjero. A mi juicio, estos problemas pueden agravarse en las asignaturas de inglés que imparto en varias Facultades de la Universidad de Granada, por las siguientes razones:

Primero, aunque el nivel de estas asignaturas es aproximadamente intermedio, el nivel lingüístico de los alumnos suele ser inferior. Esto puede deberse a la falta de contacto con el inglés desde hace varios años (desde los estudios secundarios) o al hecho de que los estudiantes estén poco familiarizados con los contenidos temáticos, con el vocabulario especializado, con el material auténtico o semi-auténtico o con las situaciones comunicativas simuladas relacionadas con la especialidad de la asignatura.

Segundo, aunque las cuatro destrezas lingüísticas (comprensión oral, producción oral, comprensión escrita y producción escrita) se desarrollan en las asignaturas, se enfatiza sobre todo la producción oral en clase y en los exámenes. Este hecho quizás provoque inquietud, ya que no se suele prestar mucha atención a la destreza oral en la educación secundaria, teniendo en cuenta que el examen de Selectividad no contiene componente oral.

Tercero, puede ser que los estudiantes perciban que el conocimiento del inglés es de gran importancia para su profesión futura y esta percepción también puede causar preocupación.

Estas ideas sobre la ansiedad o «una experiencia de inquietud general, un mal presentimiento, una sensación de tensión» (Hansen, 1997, p. 91) y sobre las posibles relaciones entre la misma y el aprendizaje del inglés en general y la producción oral en particular, han inspirado esta tesis. Intuitivamente, he supuesto que quizás la ansiedad influya negativamente en el nivel de dominio lingüístico y en el rendimiento oral, e igualmente intuitivamente, que los resultados no satisfactorios quizás den lugar a aun más ansiedad.

Mis objetivos han sido verificar si estas intuiciones están bien fundadas o no, explorando las complejas conexiones entre la ansiedad, el nivel global de dominio lingüístico y el rendimiento oral en un grupo de estudiantes de inglés (N = 40) de la Facultad de Ciencias del Trabajo de la Universidad de Granada. Además, he profundizado en la investigación de estos fenómenos, averiguando por un lado, qué características demográficas, académicas, cognitivas y afectivas de los estudiantes pueden estar asociadas con: (a) sus niveles de ansiedad, (b) su nivel global de dominio lingüístico y (c) su rendimiento en una prueba oral y, por otro, cuáles de estas características predicen estas tres variables principales.

#### Antecedentes de esta Investigación

Para lograr estos objetivos inicié una búsqueda de material bibliográfico en las bibliotecas de tres Facultades de la Universidad de Granada: Psicología, Filosofía y Letras y Ciencias de la Educación y en dos bibliotecas de Inglaterra: la Biblioteca Robinson de la Universidad de Newcastle y la Biblioteca Británica de Londres. Las bases de datos PsychInfo y Eric, disponibles en la página web de la Biblioteca de la Universidad de Granada, el servicio de préstamo interbibliotecario e Internet suministraron gran cantidad de artículos, libros, tesis, resúmenes y otra información.

Muchos compañeros de la Universidad de Granada y autores en este campo hicieron sugerencias muy útiles, además de facilitarme libros y artículos. Además, mi Trabajo de Investigación, realizado hace dos años, y que contiene resúmenes detallados de 22 artículos sobre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de las lenguas extranjeras y segundas lenguas, ha resultado ser una importante fuente de ideas y de inspiración.

Mis ideas, mi experiencia en el aula universitaria y mi deseo de ahondar más en la ansiedad y en su posible influencia afectiva e intelectual en los estudiantes de inglés, además de las investigaciones, los resultados y las sugerencias de multitud de autores, han moldeado este proyecto de investigación.

Se verá en la Revisión de la Literatura Empírica y Seleccionada que describo estudios que han aportado información básica, ideas novedosas, procedimientos metodológicos, además de escalas y tests encaminados todos a la investigación de la ansiedad: en general, en ámbitos académicos y sobre todo en contextos de aprendizaje de las lenguas. Se verá como hace veinte años, Horwitz, Horwitz y Cope (1986) identificaron la ansiedad que a menudo padecen los estudiantes de lenguas extranjeras como una ansiedad que no se parece a otros tipos de ansiedad, definiéndola como «un complejo diferenciado autopercepciones, de creencias, de sensaciones y de comportamientos, relacionados con el aprendizaje de las lenguas en el aula, que surge de la unicidad del proceso del aprendizaje de las lenguas» (p. 128) y como estos mismos autores elaboraron una escala para la medición de este tipo de ansiedad, llamada '*Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale*' (Escala de la Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras en el Aula), que se viene utilizando en la mayoría de las investigaciones desde esa fecha hasta el día de hoy en todo el mundo, ya sea en su versión original inglesa, o bien traducida o adaptada.

Supuse que este tipo de ansiedad tal vez ejerciera una mala influencia en el aprendizaje de los idiomas y en el rendimiento lingüístico y, efectivamente, descubrí que numerosos autores habían indagado en esta faceta de la ansiedad, averiguando que en muchos casos se han observado asociaciones desfavorables entre ella y los resultados de los exámenes de fin de curso (Aida, 1994; Saito, Horwitz y Garza, 1999; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey y Daley, 2000), el aprendizaje del vocabulario (MacIntyre y Gardner, 1994b), las competencias lingüísticas autoevaluadas (MacIntyre, Noels y Clément, 1997) y el progreso lingüístico en diferentes tipos de aulas (Pappamihiel, 2001).

Teniendo en consideración que la metodología de la asignatura de inglés impartida en la Facultad de Ciencias del Trabajo se basa en la enseñanza y en el aprendizaje de las llamadas cuatro destrezas (escuchar, hablar, leer y escribir) y suponiendo que esto pudiera producir ansiedad en algunos alumnos, leí trabajos de investigadores que habían buscado conexiones entre la ansiedad y el aprendizaje de estas cuatro destrezas: entre la ansiedad y la comprensión oral (Vogely, 1998; Kim, 2000), entre la ansiedad y la comprensión escrita (Sellers, 2000; Saito, Horwitz y Garza, 1999) y entre la ansiedad y la producción escrita (Cheng, 2002). Muchos estudios han sugerido que la destreza oral da lugar a niveles de ansiedad altos (Cheng et al., 1999; Gregersen y Horwitz, 2000; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre y Gardner, 1991b) y que frecuentemente ocasiona más ansiedad que las otras tres destrezas (MacIntyre y Gardner, 1991b; Kim, 1998; Cheng et al., 1999).

He visto también que varios escritores han examinado las relaciones entre la ansiedad y los exámenes en lengua extranjera (Phillips, 1992; Young, 1991) y que muchos se han interesado en los posibles vínculos entre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y las características de los mismos estudiantes, siguiendo la

recomendación de Aida (1994) de que «tener en cuenta [estas características] nos ayudará a comprender el aprendizaje desde el punto de vista del estudiante» (p. 165). Estas características pueden ser demográficas (por ejemplo, edad, género), académicas (por ejemplo, número de años que lleva estudiando la lengua extranjera), cognitivas (por ejemplo, notas obtenidas o esperadas) o afectivas (por ejemplo, autoestima).

La mayoría de los autores han utilizado técnicas cuantitativas, tales como las correlaciones de Pearson, los análisis de varianza o los análisis de regresión múltiple, para investigar las asociaciones entre la ansiedad, el rendimiento lingüístico y las variables personales y que estos métodos ofrecen información más bien general acerca de los grupos de participantes. Por otro lado, varios especialistas se han servido de técnicas más cualitativas, tales como las entrevistas, para poder descubrir reacciones de nerviosismo individuales que de otra manera no saldrían a la luz. Otros han realizado estudios combinando las dos técnicas (cualitativa y cuantitativa), ofreciendo a mi juicio una visión más equilibrada de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera o segunda lengua experimentada por los participantes en sus investigaciones.

Así, he estudiado de modo empírico estas tres vertientes dentro de mi proyecto de investigación, es decir, (a) examinando las relaciones entre la ansiedad y el nivel global de dominio del inglés y entre la ansiedad y la destreza oral, (b) explorando algunas características de los estudiantes que pudieran influir en estas relaciones y (c) evaluando estas asociaciones tanto cuantitativamente, mediante escalas, tests y exámenes, como cualitativamente, a través de entrevistas personalizadas.

### Organización

Esta tesis consta de dos Partes. En la primera parte, se hace una revisión de la literatura seleccionada y empírica. La literatura se ha «seleccionado» en el sentido de

que se trata de trabajos cuyo enfoque es la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de segundas lenguas o lenguas extranjeras, elegidos para dilucidar diferentes aspectos de la presente investigación. Teniendo en cuenta que este proyecto es de naturaleza eminentemente práctica, los trabajos incluidos en la revisión ofrecen principalmente conocimientos «empíricos», es decir, conocimientos que se han «obtenido mediante la interacción con el mundo real, la observación de los fenómenos y extrayendo conclusiones basadas en la experiencia» (Seliger y Shohamy, 1989, p. 15).

La revisión de la literatura se ha diseñado para guiar e informar al lector acerca de las facetas de la ansiedad relacionadas con el proyecto de investigación de esta tesis y se ha organizado de una manera original en el sentido de que las descripciones más generales llevan a aspectos más específicos que se tratarán en la segunda parte. Se relata cómo los autores la han considerado históricamente, desde las perspectivas de la ansiedad tanto en general como en contextos académicos y se traza cómo han distinguido diferentes tipos de ansiedad, tales como la ansiedad estado, ansiedad rasgo, ansiedad específica de la situación (*situation-specific*) o las ansiedades facilitadora y debilitadora. En el ámbito del aprendizaje de las lenguas, se informa de los esfuerzos realizados por los investigadores para diseñar instrumentos que midieran adecuadamente la ansiedad en los estudiantes y del estudio fundamental de Horwitz et al. (1986), que aporta la escala '*Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale*', FLCAS, (Escala de la Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras en el Aula), que es el instrumento que se ha observado que la mide más fehacientemente hasta el día de hoy. Se describen las posibles fuentes y las manifestaciones de la ansiedad, propuestas por los investigadores, además de sus asociaciones con los logros en el estudio de los idiomas y específicamente con el aprendizaje del vocabulario y de las cuatro destrezas (escuchar, hablar, leer y escribir). Se apuntan, además, las conexiones observadas entre

la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y numerosas variables de los participantes en los estudios. Por último, se aportan consejos dados por los autores para reducir los niveles de ansiedad en los alumnos.

En la segunda parte de la tesis, se plantean los objetivos específicos, formulados como cinco preguntas (*research questions*) y se dan definiciones operativas de los términos utilizados, estrictamente ligadas al motivo central del trabajo.

A continuación se describe el método, que se desglosa de la manera siguiente: se describen los participantes, los instrumentos y el procedimiento. Después, se definen las variables seleccionadas, se informa del diseño de la investigación y de los análisis de los datos obtenidos. Se presentan los resultados y seguidamente se ofrece una discusión de los mismos, por sí solos y en comparación con los de otros estudios existentes. Por último, se perfilan las limitaciones del estudio, se ofrecen recomendaciones pedagógicas derivadas de los resultados y de la discusión y se sugiere que en el futuro se realicen más investigaciones en ciertas áreas.

En lo referente a los aspectos formales de la tesis, se ciñen al estilo aconsejado por la *American Psychological Association* (2001), por la claridad de sus sugerencias y porque este estilo ha sido adoptado por numerosas revistas académicas pertenecientes a los campos del aprendizaje de los idiomas, por ejemplo, *Language Learning*, la educación, por ejemplo, *The Journal of Educational Research* o la psicología, por ejemplo, *Psicothema*.

A lo largo de este resumen, se han traducido al español las citas originales en lengua inglesa.

### La Importancia de este Trabajo

Esta tesis hace una aportación valiosa al estado actual de los conocimientos de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de idiomas. Informa sobre un estudio en el que se han evaluado los efectos de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje del inglés experimentada por estudiantes hispanohablantes en relación con su rendimiento en una prueba oral y con su nivel de dominio del inglés utilizando mediciones cuantitativas, tales como los tests y las escalas, informes cualitativas tales como las entrevistas abiertas, y datos personales y de formación previa aportados por los mismos participantes en un cuestionario. Tiene importancia en el sentido de que se han analizado múltiples variables correspondientes a los participantes, examinando sus relaciones con las tres variables principales (es decir, con la ansiedad, con el nivel global de dominio lingüístico y con el rendimiento en una prueba oral) y averiguando cuáles entre las variables correspondientes a los participantes mejor las predicen. Que sepamos, hasta la fecha no se ha llevado a cabo ningún estudio sobre las interrelaciones entre las variables de los participantes, la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera, el nivel global de dominio lingüístico y el rendimiento en una prueba oral de inglés.

### Definiciones y Explicaciones de Términos

*Lengua extranjera* se define en el *Diccionario de lingüística aplicada y enseñanza de lenguas* (Richards, Platt y Platt, 1992, versión española y adaptada de Muñoz Lahoz y Pérez Vidal, 1997) como una «lengua que no es la nativa en un país. Una lengua extranjera se suele estudiar ya sea para comunicarse con los extranjeros que hablan la lengua, o para leer material impreso en dicha lengua» (p. 240).

Una *segunda lengua* es «aquella que no es la lengua nativa en un país, pero que se usa ampliamente como medio de comunicación (p.ej. en la educación y en la

administración) y que suele usarse paralelamente a otra lengua o lenguas. El inglés se describe como una segunda lengua en países como las Fiji, Singapur, y Nigeria» (Muñoz Lahoz y Pérez Vidal, 1992/1997, pp. 240-241).

El *nivel de dominio lingüístico*, es «la habilidad que tiene una persona para utilizar la lengua con un propósito específico. Mientras que el *rendimiento lingüístico* describe la capacidad lingüística como resultado del aprendizaje, el nivel de dominio lingüístico se refiere al grado de destreza con la que una persona sabe utilizar una lengua, por ejemplo, hasta qué punto una persona sabe leer, escribir, hablar o comprender una lengua. El nivel de dominio lingüístico puede medirse mediante una *prueba de nivel de dominio lingüístico*» (Richards et al., 1992, p. 204).

Una *prueba lingüística* es «cualquier modo de evaluación formal en cualquier área del idioma, administrada bajo condiciones que aseguren la medición del rendimiento individual» (Harris y McCann, 1994, p. 93).

El uso de los términos *ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera* (*foreign language anxiety*) o *ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la segunda lengua* (*second language anxiety*) depende de la definición operativa de cada autor. De esta manera, la definición de Horwitz et al. (1986) de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la *lengua extranjera*, a saber, «un complejo diferenciado de autopercepciones, de creencias, de sensaciones y de comportamientos, relacionados con el aprendizaje de las lenguas en el aula, que surge de la unicidad del proceso del aprendizaje de las lenguas» (p. 128), comprende el quedarse tenso y bloqueado en clase, quedarse en blanco antes de los exámenes y reacciones fisiológicas tales como los temblores o la sudoración excesiva (pp. 128-129). La definición de MacIntyre y Gardner (1994a) de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la *segunda lengua* incluye dos de las cuatro destrezas lingüísticas: «La ansiedad en el aprendizaje de las lenguas se puede definir como la sensación de tensión

y de aprensión asociada específicamente a los contextos de la segunda lengua, incluyendo el hablar, el escuchar y el aprender» (p. 284). En esta tesis frecuentemente se usa los términos más concisos ‘la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de las lenguas’ o ‘la ansiedad’.

Una *variable* es una «propiedad o cualidad de una persona, de un fragmento de texto o de un objeto, que puede variar o que se observa que varía a través de estas personas, de estos textos o de estos objetos» (Porte, 2002, p. 237).

### Revisión de la Literatura Seleccionada o Empírica

En los campos de la antropología, de la psicología y de la educación, se han propuesto numerosas perspectivas sobre la ansiedad, que en la mayoría de los casos se han relacionado con la idea del miedo o amenaza para la seguridad física o psicológica de las personas en sus interacciones con el entorno. En el siglo XIX Darwin (1872) consideró la ansiedad como una reacción emocional que surge cuando un organismo se siente físicamente amenazado. Twenge (2002), refiriéndose a la teoría de la evolución de Darwin afirma que «las emociones ... sirven a los propósitos de la supervivencia del individuo. La ansiedad y el miedo sirven para advertir del peligro potencial y activan reacciones psicológicas y fisiológicas» (p. 1008). Ya a principios del siglo XX Freud (1920) consideraba que el término «ansiedad se usa en relación con una condición que carece de objetivo, mientras que el miedo se dirige esencialmente hacia un objeto» (p. 343).

Más tarde, la ansiedad se consideraba como un estado de «aprensión, un miedo indeterminado que sólo se asocia indirectamente a un objeto» (Scovel, 1978, p. 134). May (1977) creía que era una «respuesta emocional a la amenaza hacia algún valor que para el individuo es esencial a su existencia como personalidad» (p. 205).

Beck y sus colaboradores (Beck, 1985; Beck y Emery, 1985) afirmaron que la ansiedad es una reacción emocional que tiene su origen en una percepción defectuosa del peligro presente en el entorno, mientras que en otras investigaciones se sugiere que la reacción ansiosa puede ser una respuesta exagerada ante la amenaza real, es decir, que la «intensidad de la reacción emocional es desproporcionadamente mayor que la magnitud del peligro objetivo» (Spielberger, 1976, p. 6).

Los componentes de la *ansiedad en general* se han considerado como «la preocupación y lo emocional» (*emotionality*) (Morris, Davis y Hutchings, 1981, p. 541) y para Spielberger (1983), la ansiedad puede definirse como la «sensación subjetiva de tensión, aprensión, nerviosismo y preocupación asociada a la activación del sistema nervioso autónomo» (p. 1).

En el *ámbito académico*, se han descrito varios tipos de ansiedad. Dos de los tipos más conocidos son la ansiedad estado (*state anxiety*) y la ansiedad rasgo (*trait anxiety*). La ansiedad estado es fugaz y no constituye una característica permanente de la personalidad. Es «un estado o condición transitorio del organismo que varía en intensidad y que fluctúa en el tiempo» (Spielberger, 1966, p. 12). Spielberger (1983) da como ejemplo de ansiedad estado la aprensión experimentada antes de hacer un examen. La ansiedad rasgo, por el contrario, se ha descrito como «una condición constante que no se limita en el tiempo» (Levitt, 1980, p. 11) y constituye una característica estable de la personalidad o una «disposición del comportamiento adquirida que predispone al individuo a percibir una amplia gama de circunstancias objetivamente inocuas como amenazadoras» (Spielberger, 1966, p. 16). Las ansiedades estado y rasgo se han medido por el Inventario de la Ansiedad Estado-Rasgo (*State-Trait Anxiety Inventory*, STAI, Spielberger, 1983), que consta de una escala de Ansiedad Estado y de otra de Ansiedad Rasgo.

Algunos autores han criticado el concepto de la ansiedad rasgo, ya que «los rasgos no tienen sentido a no ser que se consideren desde el punto de vista de sus interacciones con las situaciones» (MacIntyre y Gardner, 1991a, p. 88). Morris et al. (1981), en su definición de la ansiedad rasgo subrayaron la importancia de la «situación»: «la ansiedad rasgo se refiere a una variable de personalidad propensa a la ansiedad, la tendencia a experimentar la ansiedad estado en diferentes situaciones» (p. 543).

Estas ideas originaron el concepto de ansiedad vinculada a una situación específica (*situation-specific anxiety*), que «puede ser considerada como la probabilidad de llegar a sentirse ansioso en determinados tipos de situaciones, tales como exámenes y pruebas, llamada ansiedad ante las pruebas (*test anxiety*), cuando se realizan operaciones matemáticas, [llamada] ansiedad ante las operaciones matemáticas (*math anxiety*) o cuando se habla una segunda lengua, [llamada] ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la segunda lengua o la lengua extranjera (*language anxiety*)» (MacIntyre y Gardner, 1994b, p. 2).

En el ámbito de la ansiedad en el *aprendizaje de las lenguas*, Oh (1990) la consideraba como una «ansiedad vinculada a la situación de aprender un idioma en el aula que se caracteriza por pensamientos enfocados a uno mismo, por sensaciones de incapacidad, por miedo al fracaso y por reacciones emocionales» (p. 56). MacIntyre y Gardner (1989) propusieron la idea de que la ansiedad vinculada a la situación «se solidifica» (p. 272) en los estudiantes de idiomas como resultado de sufrir la ansiedad estado en muchas ocasiones. En lo que se refiere a la investigación de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de los idiomas, MacIntyre y Gardner (1991a) creían que el enfoque de la ansiedad vinculada a la situación específica (*situation-specific approach*) «aporta más a

la comprensión de la ansiedad porque a los participantes se les pide información acerca de varios aspectos de la situación» (p. 91).

Otros enfoques han distinguido dos tipos de ansiedad: la ansiedad facilitadora y la ansiedad debilitadora (Alpert y Haber, 1960; Kleinmann, 1977; Scovel, 1978). Se cree que la primera mejora el aprendizaje y el rendimiento, mientras que se cree que la segunda merma el aprendizaje y el rendimiento.

Alpert y Haber (1960) sugirieron que cantidades diferentes de ambos tipos de ansiedad pueden estar presentes en una persona al mismo tiempo: «un individuo puede poseer gran cantidad de ambas ansiedades, o de una pero no de otra, o ninguna» (p. 213). Scovel (1978) propuso que la ansiedad facilitadora y la ansiedad debilitadora tal vez funcionen juntas, «trabajando en tándem, sirviendo simultáneamente para motivar y para advertir, al tiempo que el individuo se esfuerza para aprender una secuencia siempre cambiante de nuevos hechos en su entorno» (pp. 138-139). En el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera, la ansiedad se suele considerar como un fenómeno «debilitador» (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 129) que los estudiantes deben superar para sacar pleno provecho de la enseñanza de los idiomas. Alpert y Haber (1960) elaboraron dos escalas para medir estos tipos de ansiedad: la Escala de Ansiedad Facilitadora (*Facilitating Anxiety Scale*) y la Escala de Ansiedad Debilitadora (*Debilitating Anxiety Scale*).

La ansiedad ante las pruebas (*test anxiety*) ha sido considerada como una especie de ansiedad rasgo o una «característica relativamente estable de la personalidad que induce al individuo a reaccionar a veces ante las situaciones amenazantes con respuestas debilitadoras de carácter psicológico, fisiológico y del comportamiento» (Hancock, 2001, p. 284). En algunos exámenes o pruebas, se cree que un ambiente muy competitivo puede influir negativamente en el rendimiento. Al investigar los efectos de la ansiedad ante las pruebas y de la metodología usada por los profesores en el

rendimiento y en la motivación, Hancock (2001) descubrió que los estudiantes que tenían niveles elevados de ansiedad ante las pruebas eran «significativamente más sensibles a los ambientes en los que se enfatizaban la competitividad y en los que el control del profesor era evidente» (p. 288) que los estudiantes menos ansiosos. El mismo autor afirmó que todos los estudiantes, ansiosos o no ante las pruebas, obtuvieron peores resultados si sentían miedo al fracaso o «bajo condiciones de amenaza evaluativa» (p. 288). Los límites de tiempo en las pruebas y en los exámenes también producen ansiedad en algunos estudiantes (Hill y Eaton, 1977).

Algunos autores han constatado que la ansiedad puede influir negativamente en diferentes etapas del proceso del aprendizaje y por lo tanto en los resultados de las pruebas y de los exámenes. Tobias (1986) afirmó que la ansiedad representaba un escollo en tres etapas del aprendizaje: (a) en la etapa de recepción del material (*input stage*), (b) en la etapa de procesamiento (*processing stage*) y (c) en la etapa de producción (*output stage*). Desde este punto de vista, se van acumulando déficits de comprensión, de asimilación y de recuperación, que finalmente resultan en un rendimiento inferior en las pruebas y en los exámenes, tales como en las «puntuaciones de las pruebas, en la producción verbal o en las cualidades del habla libre» (MacIntyre y Gardner, 1994a, p. 287).

Numerosos investigadores han intentado describir y categorizar las *manifestaciones* de la ansiedad. En un contexto académico, Leary (1982) describió las «respuestas mediadas por la excitación» (*arousal-mediated responses*), tales como «moverse nerviosamente en el asiento, jugar con el pelo ... y tartamudear al hablar» (Leary, 1982, p. 110), además del «comportamiento desasociativo» (*disaffiliative behaviour*) que «reduce las interacciones sociales» y también el «comportamiento encaminado a proteger la imagen propia» (*image-protection behaviour*) en el que el

individuo «sonríe y asiente con la cabeza con frecuencia [y] apenas interrumpe a los demás» (citas de Young, 1991, p. 429). Mandler y Sarason (1952) informaron de reacciones descritas por estudiantes durante un examen, a saber: «inquietud, latidos de corazón acelerados, transpiración, interferencia emocional y “preocupación”» (p. 167).

En el campo del aprendizaje de las segundas lenguas y las lenguas extranjeras, se sabe desde hace décadas que muchas personas se sienten angustiadas a la hora de aprender y hablar una lengua. Stengal (1939), citado en Arnold y Brown (1999, p. 21), utilizó el término «choque lingüístico» (*language shock*) para describir el recelo de los estudiantes ante el temor que con las palabras y frases de la lengua extranjera no puedan expresar adecuadamente lo que quieren decir, aseverando que el «uso de la lengua nueva puede causar ... vergüenza que tiene sus orígenes en sentirse incapacitado» para usarla (1939, p. 211).

En las décadas de los sesenta y de los setenta del siglo pasado, los investigadores especulaban con la idea de que la ansiedad podría ejercer una influencia perjudicial en el aprendizaje de las lenguas, pero hallaron unos resultados contradictorios. Scovel (1987), en su revisión de la literatura sobre este tema, informó de estudios en los que efectivamente se había encontrado una relación negativa, de otros en los no se había descubierto asociación alguna y de otros en los que se había hallado una relación positiva (Backman, 1976; Chastain, 1975; Kleinmann, 1977; Tucker, Hamayan y Genesee, 1976). Concluyó Scovel que estos resultados contrapuestos se debían a los diversos conceptos de la ansiedad que tenían los investigadores (por ejemplo, ansiedad facilitadora/debilitadora, ansiedad ante las pruebas) y a las diferentes medidas que habían empleado para evaluarla. Scovel recomendó que los investigadores tuvieran las ideas claras acerca de qué tipos de ansiedad iban a examinar y en cuanto a «cómo éstos podrían estar relacionados con variables pertenecientes a los estudiantes: factores

intrínsecos/extrínsecos [y] las variables afectivas/cognitivas» (1978, p. 140). Este autor sugirió además que sería provechoso que los investigadores profundizaran aun más en el enfoque propuesto por Alpert y Haber (1960) de la ansiedades facilitadora/debilitadora, pero los estudios posteriores se han concentrado principalmente en sus efectos debilitadores (Aida, 1994; Phillips, 1992; Cheng, 1994; 1986; MacIntyre y Gardner, 1991a; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000).

En lo que se refiere a *la medición de la ansiedad* en el aprendizaje de los idiomas, mientras que en la mayoría de los estudios se han usado mediciones cuantitativas para evaluarla mediante escalas y cuestionarios (Ely, 1986; Horwitz et al., 1986; Gardner et al., 1997; Cheng, et al., 1999; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000; Cheng, 2002), en algunos casos se han empleado técnicas más cualitativas, tales como las entrevistas o la investigación de los diarios (Bailey, 1983; Price, 1991; Spielmann y Radnofsky, 2001).

Uno de los instrumentos más célebres que se ha elaborado para evaluar la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de los idiomas es el Conjunto de Tests de Actitud y Motivación (*Attitude and Motivation Test Battery*, AMBT) (Gardner, 1985; Gardner, Clément, Smythe y Smythe, 1979), que se creó para determinar las características que distinguen a los individuos los unos de los otros en sus formas de aprender un idioma. Este conjunto de pruebas incluye un componente que mide la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la segunda lengua. El modelo propuesto por estos autores incluye (a) la empatía (*integrativeness*), (b) las actitudes hacia el ambiente del aprendizaje, que abarca el aula, los libros y el profesor, (c) la motivación y (d) la ansiedad específica a la situación del aprendizaje de un idioma. Esta última se mide mediante dos escalas: la Escala del Aprendizaje del Francés en el Aula (*French Class Anxiety Scale*) y la Escala del Uso del

Francés (*French Use Anxiety Scale*). Ambas escalas constan de diez ítems y cada una tiene un índice de fiabilidad de .88 (Gardner, Tremblay y Masgoret, 1997, p. 348).

En algunos trabajos se observa que los autores se han servido de técnicas tanto cuantitativas como cualitativas para intentar evaluar la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua (Gregersen y Horwitz, 2002; Pappamihiel, 2002; Phillips, 1992). Por ejemplo, Gregersen y Horwitz (2002) investigaron las reacciones de ocho estudiantes chilenos con niveles de ansiedad elevados tras visionar su propia prueba oral en inglés grabada en vídeo. Primero, se midieron los niveles de ansiedad cuantitativamente mediante una escala de ansiedad (Horwitz et al. 1986) y a continuación de una manera cualitativa mediante entrevistas. La medición de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua que combina varios métodos (por ejemplo, mediante escalas, pruebas y entrevistas) me parece más fiable que un método que dependa de una sola técnica. Por esta razón he usado varias maneras de medición en mi estudio.

El estudio que tal vez haya influido más en la investigación en el área de las lenguas extranjeras es «La Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de la Lengua Extranjera en el Aula» (*Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety*) de Horwitz et al. (1986). Los autores propusieron que este tipo de ansiedad lo constituye tres componentes: «la aprensión comunicativa, la ansiedad ante las pruebas y el miedo a la evaluación negativa» (p. 129), aportando a la vez una escala para su medición, la Escala de la Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de la Lengua Extranjera en el Aula (*Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale*, FLCAS), descrita más detalladamente en el apartado de los Instrumentos. Dado que esta escala se ha empleado con frecuencia en estudios llevados a cabo en numerosos países en su forma original, traducida o adaptada y ha mostrado unos índices de fiabilidad muy altos (Horwitz, 1986; Aida, 1994; Rodríguez y Abreu, 2003), he querido usarla en mi proyecto de tesis.

Después de la publicación de la escala FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986), que se utilizó en primer lugar en una investigación con estudiantes anglófonos de español de primer curso, se ha empleado con frecuencia en estudios que han tenido diferentes enfoques de investigación. En algunos trabajos, se ha examinado la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y sus asociaciones con el *rendimiento lingüístico a diferentes niveles*: principiante, intermedio y avanzado (Saito y Samimy, 1996), con el rendimiento en estudiantes que exhibían *diferentes niveles de ansiedad*: ansiedad baja, ansiedad moderada y ansiedad alta (Ganschow, Sparks, Anderson, Javorshy, Skinner y Patton, 1994) y en la investigación de la *estabilidad de la ansiedad* en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera en personas que estudiaban dos idiomas simultáneamente (Rodríguez y Abreu, 2003). Se ha explorado la ansiedad sirviéndose de la FLCAS en relación con el aprendizaje de las cuatro destrezas: en la *comprensión oral* (Elkafaifi, 2005; Kim, 2000), en la *producción oral* (Phillips, 1992), en la *comprensión escrita en la lengua extranjera* (Saito, Horwitz y Garza, 1999), en la *comprensión escrita en español* (Sellers, 2000), en la *producción escrita* (Cheng, 2002) y en *diferenciar elementos de la producción oral y de la producción escrita* (Cheng, Horwitz y Schallert, 1999). Algunos investigadores han empleado esta escala en la búsqueda de asociaciones entre la *ansiedad y variables cognitivas, demográficas, afectivas y de personalidad* (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey y Daley, 1999, 2000). Otros han indagado en la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de las lenguas extranjeras medida por la FLCAS y sus conexiones con los *estilos de aprendizaje* (Bailey, Daley y Onwuegbuzie, 1999), con el *perfeccionismo* (Gregeren y Horwitz, 2002) y con los errores lingüísticos (Gregersen, 2003). En muchos estudios se ha utilizado la FLCAS en su lengua original (inglés) para participantes anglófonos que estudiaban diversas lenguas meta (Aida, 1994; Bailey et al., 1999; Elkafaifi, 2005; Gregersen y Horwitz, 2000; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000; Saito et al.,

1999; Sellers, 2000), traducida a la lengua materna de los estudiantes (Cheng, 2002; Cheng et al., 1999; Rodríguez y Abreu, 2003) o bien adaptada a las necesidades de la investigación (Pappamihiel, 2001).

La lectura de estos estudios que han arrojado luz a la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y a sus asociaciones con el rendimiento lingüístico y con las características de los estudiantes, ha servido de inspiración en esta tesis.

### Preguntas Formuladas

1) ¿Qué asociaciones hay entre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y el rendimiento en una prueba oral en inglés realizada por estudiantes universitarios, evaluada por la calificación y por ciertos criterios de rendimiento que miden su precisión y sus cualidades comunicativas?

2) ¿Qué características demográficas, académicas, cognitivas y afectivas están asociadas con el nivel de dominio del inglés, medida por la *Quick Placement Test* (Oxford University Press y Universidad de Cambridge, 2001) y mejor lo predicen?

3) ¿Qué características demográficas, académicas, cognitivas y afectivas están asociadas con la calificación de una prueba de inglés (Phillips, 1992) y mejor la predicen?

4) ¿Qué características demográficas, académicas, cognitivas y afectivas están asociadas con la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera, medida por la escala *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (Horwitz et al., 1986), y mejor la predicen?

5) ¿Cómo describen estudiantes con niveles de ansiedad elevados los pensamientos y las sensaciones que experimentaron durante una prueba oral en inglés?

### Definiciones Operativas

En este apartado se ofrecen definiciones de los términos principales usados en adelante en el estudio empírico de esta tesis.

*Estudiantes.* Se refiere sólo a los estudiantes matriculados en la asignatura de Inglés para Fines Específicos en la Facultad de Ciencias del Trabajo de la Universidad de Granada que participaron en el estudio.

*Lengua Extranjera.* En esta tesis, se refiere al inglés.

*Nivel de dominio del inglés.* Se refiere exclusivamente a la habilidad para utilizar el inglés, medida por la *Quick Placement Test* (Oxford University Press y Universidad de Cambridge, 2001).

*Rendimiento oral.* Se refiere solamente a la capacidad en la destreza oral, en tanto que resultados de una prueba oral (Hunt, 1965; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Loban, 1967; Phillips 1990, 1992), que se realizó coincidiendo con parte del examen parcial de febrero de 2005 de la asignatura de Inglés de la Facultad de Ciencias de Trabajo.

*Unidades de Comunicación* (basadas en Hunt, 1965; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Loban, 1976; Phillips, 1990, 1992). Se refiere únicamente a las proposiciones independientes con todos sus modificadores, producidas por los estudiantes durante la prueba oral.

*Laberinto.* (Loban, 1976; Phillips, 1990, 1992). Se refiere sólo a una palabra, fragmento de palabra o grupo de palabras incorrectas, superfluas, repetitivas o en español, producidas por los estudiantes durante la prueba oral.

*Prueba escrita.* (Naunton, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c). Se refiere exclusivamente a la prueba que consta de cinco componentes: (a) comprensión oral (*listening*), (b) dictado, (c) comprensión escrita (*reading*), (d) redacción y (e) comunicación en el aula, pronunciación, gramática y vocabulario, que se administró coincidiendo con parte del

examen parcial de febrero de 2005 de la asignatura de Inglés de la Facultad de Ciencias de Trabajo.

*Ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera* (llamada también más concisamente ‘*ansiedad*’). Se refiere solamente a la aprensión e inquietud experimentadas por los participantes en este estudio a la hora de aprender inglés, medida mediante la versión española de la *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (Horwitz et al., 1986).

*Características demográficas, académicas, cognitivas y afectivas*. Éstas se basan exclusivamente en los datos demográficos, académicos, cognitivos y afectivos aportados por los estudiantes en el *Background Questionnaire* (Cuestionario de Datos Personales y Formación Previa, DFPF) (Stephenson y Hewitt, 2006).

*Entrevistas*. Se refieren únicamente a las entrevistas individuales entre la profesora y seis estudiantes con niveles de ansiedad elevados llevadas a cabo inmediatamente después de la prueba oral.

*Nivel Intermedio*. Se refiere únicamente al nivel de inglés de la asignatura Inglés para Fines Específicos impartida en la Facultad de Ciencias de Trabajo, basada en el método *Head for Business* (Naunton, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c), descrito por el autor como «un curso de destrezas integradas de nivel intermedio» (2000b, p. 4).

*Variables*. Las variables seleccionadas para esta tesis están relacionadas exclusivamente con este proyecto de investigación. No se basan en ninguna otra habilidad lingüística ni en ningún otro rasgo demográfico, académico, cognitivo ni afectivo pertenecientes a los participantes fuera del ámbito de este proyecto de tesis.

### Participantes

Cuarenta estudiantes participaron en el estudio. Veintiocho eran mujeres (70%), y 12 (30%) hombres. La media de edad de los participantes era 21.27 años al inicio del estudio.

Todos cursaban estudios en la Facultad de Ciencias del Trabajo de la Universidad de Granada durante el curso académico 2004-2005, estando matriculados en la Diplomatura de Relaciones Laborales. Veintinueve participantes (72.5%) estaban matriculados en segundo curso y 11 (27.5%) estaban en tercer curso. La calificación media de la carrera de estos estudiantes al inicio del estudio era 1.44.

Cursaron la asignatura de Inglés para Fines Específicos impartida en la Facultad de Ciencias del Trabajo durante ese curso académico. Esta asignatura es de Libre configuración, es anual y equivale a seis créditos. En clase se usa una metodología de enfoque *'four skills'* (de las cuatro destrezas lingüísticas: escuchar, hablar, leer y escribir) y la asignatura se basa en el libro *Head for Business, Intermediate Student's Book* (Naunton, 2000a), cuyos temas incluyen la comunicación en el trabajo, las actitudes hacia el trabajo, la organización de las compañías, los sectores del empleo, las llamadas telefónicas, la elaboración de un currículum vitae, petición de información por carta y solicitud de trabajo.

### Instrumentos

En este estudio se utilizaron varios instrumentos, descritos más detalladamente a continuación:

(1) una escala de ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera en el aula (versión en español de la *'Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale'*, FLCAS, Horwitz et al., 1986)

- (2) un instrumento de rendimiento oral (la Prueba Oral, basada en Phillips, 1992)
- (3) ocho Criterios de Rendimiento Oral (basados en Hunt, 1965; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Loban, 1976; Phillips, 1990, 1992)
- (4) dos instrumentos de habilidad lingüística:
  - (a) Posición en Clase Estimada por la Profesora (*Teacher ranking*), llamada en adelante Posición en Clase
  - (b) Nota Media de la Prueba Escrita (Naunton, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c), llamada en adelante Prueba Escrita,
- (5) un instrumento de nivel global de dominio lingüístico del inglés (*Quick Placement Test, QPT, Oxford University Press y University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2001*)
- (6) un Cuestionario de Datos Personales y Formación Previa, DFPF (*Background Questionnaire*) (Stephenson y Hewitt, 2006)
- (7) dos preguntas empleadas en las entrevistas con participantes con niveles de ansiedad elevados (basadas en Phillips, 1992).

(1) La *FLCAS* original en lengua inglesa, elaborada por Horwitz et al. (1986), evalúa la ansiedad relacionada con la experiencia de aprender una lengua extranjera en el aula, «tal como la evidencian las expectativas de bajo rendimiento, las comparaciones sociales, los síntomas psicofisiológicos y los comportamientos de evitación» (Horwitz, 1986, p. 559). La *FLCAS* está compuesta por 33 ítems con los que los participantes expresan su acuerdo o su desacuerdo con afirmaciones sobre la experiencia de aprender una lengua extranjera en el aula, eligiendo una opción entre cinco: TA (5): Totalmente de Acuerdo; A (4): De Acuerdo; N (3): Ni de Acuerdo Ni en Desacuerdo, D (2): En Desacuerdo; D (1): Totalmente en Desacuerdo. Los ítems reflejan los tres componentes

de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera en el aula propuestos por estos autores, a saber, «la aprensión comunicativa, la ansiedad ante las pruebas y el miedo a la evaluación negativa» (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 129). Se puede obtener una puntuación de entre 33 y 165 en esta escala. Se presenta una copia de la FLCAS en lengua inglesa en el Apéndice B y en lengua española en el Apéndice G.

En el presente proyecto doctoral se empleó una traducción al español del instrumento original, realizada por la autora de la tesis y verificada mediante la *back translation*, o la técnica de volver a traducir un instrumento ya traducido a la lengua de origen. Se puso a prueba con la ayuda de estudiantes de la asignatura de Inglés para Fines Específicos II de la Facultad de Biblioteconomía y Documentación en mayo de 2004. La FLCAS traducida al español mostró un índice de fiabilidad de .93, índice idéntico al de la versión original inglesa (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 129).

(2) La *Prueba Oral* en su versión original francesa fue empleada por Phillips (1992). Esta autora la había usado en un estudio que investigaba el aprendizaje del francés en unos estudiantes anglófonos. La prueba es una entrevista individual entre profesor y alumno y consta de dos partes: una en la que el alumno habla libremente sobre un tema cultural elegido aleatoriamente entre varios, tales como el turismo o los viajes en tren, y otra que está compuesta por un *role-play* (juego de roles), elegido al azar entre tres diálogos a desarrollar (entre dos hermanos, entre dos amigos o entre dos estudiantes) en el que se espera que el alumno desempeñe el papel principal durante la conversación. La prueba oral se evaluó empleando una escala entre 00.0 y 100.0 puntos. Véase copia de la Prueba Oral en el Apéndice H.

Las dos partes de esta prueba (los temas culturales y los tres juegos de roles, con la correspondiente información para el estudiante e instrucciones para el profesor, fueron traducidas y adaptadas del inglés/francés al español/inglés por la autora de la

tesis y verificadas mediante la *back translation*. Con la ayuda de un grupo de estudiantes de la Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociología se realizó una evaluación inicial de la prueba oral en septiembre de 2004.

(3) Para evaluar diversos elementos del rendimiento en la prueba oral, se emplearon ocho *Criterios de Rendimiento Oral*, que están basados en técnicas propuestas por Hunt (1965), por Larsen-Freeman (1983) y por Loban (1976) y que fueron utilizadas por Phillips (1990, 1992). Estos elementos son: (a) '*Communication Units*', CUs, o Unidades de Comunicación. Una CU es «básicamente una proposición independiente con todos sus modificadores» (Phillips, 1992, p. 16), (b) «*mazes*» (Loban, 1976) o laberintos, que son palabras, grupos de palabras o fragmentos de palabras no correctas, superfluas o en español que no contribuyen a una comunicación satisfactoria, (c) las estructuras meta y (d) las proposiciones dependientes. Los ocho Criterios de Rendimiento Oral son: 1) Número total de palabras en las Unidades de Comunicación (CU) emitidas en la prueba, 2) El promedio de palabras por CU, 3) Porcentaje de CUs correctas, 4) Porcentaje de palabras contenidas en las CUs correctas, 5) Promedio de palabras por laberinto, 6) Porcentaje de palabras totales de la prueba contenidas en los laberintos, 7) Número de estructuras meta y 8) Número de proposiciones dependientes (Phillips, 1992, pp. 16-17). Con la colaboración de una evaluadora (*rater*) se comprobó que los ocho criterios de este instrumento tenían índices de fiabilidad (*inter-rater reliability*) aceptables.

(4a) La *Posición en Clase Estimada por la Profesora* (Phillips, 1990, 1992) es una medida de evaluación informal por parte de la profesora de la posición en clase (*rank ordering*) de cada estudiante en relación con sus compañeros. La profesora no se fijó en las calificaciones, sino que reflejó en esta ordenación su estimación personal de la habilidad de cada alumno en las cuatro destrezas (escuchar, hablar, leer y escribir).

(4b) La *Prueba Escrita* (Naunton, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c) se basó en los temas y en las destrezas desarrolladas en la asignatura de Inglés para Fines Específicos impartida en la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación. La mayoría de los componentes de la prueba se basaron en actividades y exámenes del manual del profesor, del libro del estudiante y del cuaderno de actividades usados en la asignatura (Naunton, 2000b, 2000a, 2000c) y en otros componentes elaborados por la autora de la tesis. La prueba consistía en cinco partes: (1) comprensión oral, (2) dictado, (3) comprensión escrita, (4) redacción y (5) comunicación en el aula, pronunciación, gramática y vocabulario. La puntuación de la prueba escrita se calculó a partir de la nota media de sus cinco componentes. Se adjunta copia de la prueba en el Apéndice J.

(5) La *Quick Placement Test* (Oxford University Press y University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2001), QPT, es una «prueba flexible de nivel de dominio del inglés» (Manual de la QPT, p. 2). Antes de su publicación, esta prueba fue «validada en 20 países por más de 5.000 estudiantes» (p. 14).

Ambas versiones (la de pluma y papel y la informatizada) de la QPT evalúan por medio de preguntas tipo-test (*'multiple-choice'*) la comprensión escrita, el vocabulario y la gramática. La prueba de 40 ítems, en versión pluma y papel, usada en esta investigación doctoral, categoriza a los estudiantes en cuatro niveles de dominio lingüístico: principiante (0-15 puntos), elemental (16-23 puntos), pre-intermedio (24-30 puntos), intermedio alto (31-40). Se realiza en 30 minutos. La QPT fue evaluada inicialmente en septiembre de 2004 en la Facultad de Biblioteconomía y Documentación con dos grupos de estudiantes.

(6) Mediante el Cuestionario de Datos Personales y Formación Previa, DPF (Background Questionnaire, Stephenson y Hewitt, 2006), se recogen datos demográficos, académicos, cognitivos y afectivos. Se garantiza la confidencialidad

absoluta de cualquier información aportada y se agradece al estudiante su participación. Los ítems 1 a 9 recogen datos personales, tales como el nombre, dirección o teléfono; los ítems 10 a 13 solicitan datos de la familia; los ítems 14 a 19 piden información del historial del participante como estudiante de inglés y de la autovaloración del nivel de habilidad en inglés, en general y en las cuatro destrezas; en los ítems 20 a 21 se pregunta si el estudiante sabe o habla otras lenguas extranjeras; en los ítems 22 a 27 se pide información sobre el historial académico en general y sobre titulaciones en inglés obtenida en el pasado (si las hubiera); en los ítems 28 a 34 se solicita al estudiante su opinión de la asignatura de Inglés y que estime su nota final. En el ítem 35 se pregunta al participante por sus proyectos para el futuro; en el ítem 36 se pide que describa sus sentimientos y actitudes hacia las actividades orales y exámenes orales en el aula de inglés (este ítem se basa en dos preguntas formuladas en un estudio de Phillips, 1990). Finalmente, el estudiante puede aportar cualquier otro dato o hacer cualquier otro comentario que desee. Este cuestionario fue sometido a estudios piloto en dos Facultades: una versión preliminar en la Facultad de Ciencias del Trabajo, con la colaboración de estudiantes de la Diplomatura de Relaciones Laborales en mayo de 2004 y la versión definitiva en la Facultad de Biblioteconomía y Documentación con estudiantes de la asignatura de Inglés para Fines Específicos II en mayo de 2004. En el Apéndice L se presenta una copia del Cuestionario de Datos Personales y Formación Previa (*Background Questionnaire*).

(7) *Dos preguntas realizadas en las entrevistas con participantes con niveles de ansiedad elevados.* Durante las entrevistas individuales llevadas a cabo inmediatamente después de la prueba oral con seis participantes con niveles de ansiedad elevados (tres de nivel lingüístico alto y tres de nivel lingüístico bajo) la profesora planteó dos preguntas a las que las participantes podían contestar como desearan: «Describe tus

pensamientos durante la prueba oral» y «¿Cómo te sentiste durante la prueba oral?» (basadas en Phillips, 1992, p. 17).

### Procedimiento

Se llevaron a cabo estudios piloto de los instrumentos y escalas utilizados durante los meses de mayo y de septiembre de 2004. La investigación comenzó el día 24 octubre de 2004. Participaron 40 estudiantes de la asignatura de Inglés para Fines Específicos de la Facultad de Ciencias del Trabajo de la Universidad de Granada. Realizaron a la prueba de nivel de dominio lingüístico QPT y completaron el cuestionario DFPF. El día 10 de noviembre de 2004 los participantes completaron la escala de ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera en el aula FLCAS. A finales de noviembre de 2004 se eligieron seis estudiantes con niveles de ansiedad elevados altos (tres de nivel lingüístico alto y tres de nivel lingüístico bajo) para una entrevista individual inmediatamente después de la prueba oral. Este grupo de estudiantes eran mujeres en su totalidad.

A mediados de enero de 2005, la investigadora ordenó según su propio criterio a los 40 participantes por niveles de habilidad lingüística. Los días 24 y 26 de enero de 2005 se realizó la prueba escrita: el dictado y la redacción el día 24 y la comprensión oral, la comprensión escrita y la comunicación, la pronunciación, la gramática y el vocabulario el día 26. Los días 9, 10 y 11 de febrero de 2005 se llevaron a cabo las pruebas orales, que eran entrevistas individuales entre la profesora y los alumnos. Cada alumno eligió al azar un tema cultural (de entre unas tarjetas puestas boca abajo en la mesa), desarrollándolo en inglés durante unos minutos. A continuación eligió

aleatoriamente un tema para el juego de roles, entablando con la profesora un diálogo en inglés siguiendo las instrucciones del juego de roles elegido. Todas las pruebas se grabaron en cinta de casete. Después de la prueba oral, las seis estudiantes con niveles de ansiedad elevados hablaron en español de cómo se habían sentido durante la prueba. Estas entrevistas también fueron grabadas.

Se hicieron transcripciones de todas las pruebas orales y también de las entrevistas post-prueba con las seis participantes seleccionadas. A continuación se identificaron las Unidades de Comunicación y los laberintos producidos en todas las pruebas transcritas. Una evaluadora (*rater*) recibió formación para evaluar los ocho criterios de rendimiento oral y tanto ella como la investigadora evaluaron por separado nueve transcripciones seleccionadas al azar con el objeto de determinar el índice de fiabilidad (*inter-rater reliability*).

#### Selección y Descripción de las Variables

A partir de los datos obtenidos de las puntuaciones de las escalas, de las calificaciones de las pruebas y de la información aportada en los cuestionarios, se seleccionaron las siguientes variables para su posterior análisis. Se describen a continuación.

Las variables fueron:

*Prueba Oral.* Para esta variable se usó la nota global de la prueba oral (basada en Phillips, 1992, y traducida por la autora de la tesis). Se puntuó empleando una escala entre 00.0 y 100.0.

Ocho *Variables de Criterios de Rendimiento Oral* correspondientes a la prueba oral (basadas en Hunt, 1976; Larsen-Freeman, 1983, Loban 1976; usadas en Phillips, 1990, 1992). Son: 1) Número Total de Palabras en las Unidades de Comunicación

(CU); 2) Promedio de Palabras por Laberinto; 3) Porcentaje de CUs Correctas; 4) Porcentaje del Número Total de Palabras Contenidas en las CUs Correctas; 5) Promedio de Palabras Por Laberinto; 6) Porcentaje del Número Total de Palabras de la Prueba Contenidas en los Laberintos; 7) Número de Estructuras Meta; 8) Número de Propositiones Dependientes.

*Prueba Escrita* (Naunton, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c). Se empleó la nota media de sus cinco componentes: (1) comprensión oral, (2) dictado, (3) comprensión escrita, (4) redacción y (5) comunicación en el aula, pronunciación, gramática y vocabulario. Se puntuó empleando una escala entre 00.0 y 100.0.

*Posición en Clase Estimada por la Profesora* (Phillips, 1990, 1992), llamada también más concisamente *Posición en Clase*, consiste en asignar a cada alumno un número según la evaluación personal de la profesora de sus habilidades lingüísticas en comparación con los demás compañeros de clase. Al alumno considerado mejor se le asigna el número 1, al segundo se le asigna el 2, etc. Se permite que dos alumnos ocupen la misma posición. En el estudio actual los alumnos ocuparon 16 niveles.

*Posición en Clase y Prueba Escrita* (Phillips, 1990, 1992) es una variable combinada que consiste en la suma de las dos variables anteriormente descritas.

*Escala de Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de la Lengua Extranjera en el Aula*, versión traducida de la *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale*, FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986). Según su grado de acuerdo o de desacuerdo con cada uno de los 33 ítems de la FLCAS, los participantes eligen una opción de la siguiente manera: Totalmente de Acuerdo, 5; De Acuerdo, 4; Ni de Acuerdo Ni en Desacuerdo, 3; En Desacuerdo, 2; Totalmente en Desacuerdo, 1. A la hora de puntuar esta escala, se suman los puntos asignados a cada ítem, excepto los asignados a los ítems 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28 y 32. Para estos últimos, es preciso invertir la puntuación de la siguiente forma: 5 = 1; 4 = 2;

3 mantiene el mismo valor; 2 = 4; 1 = 5. La puntuación puede oscilar entre 33 a 165 puntos.

A partir del Cuestionario de Datos Personales y Formación Previa, DPFPP (Stephenson y Hewitt, 2006), se obtuvieron las siguientes variables demográficas: *Edad*, *Género*, *Nivel Educativo del Padre*, *Nivel Educativo de la Madre*, *Profesión del Padre*, *Profesión de la Madre*, *Edad de Inicio de Estudio del Inglés* (llamada en adelante *Edad de Inicio*) y *Estancias en Países Anglófonos*. Se recogieron datos que se convirtieron en las siguientes variables académicas: *Meses Dedicados al Estudio de Inglés en Escuelas* (*Primaria*, *Secundaria* y *Academias*), *Años Desde que se Estudió Inglés por Última Vez*, *Otra Lengua Hablada o Conocida* y *Curso Académico*. Se obtuvo información acerca de las variables cognitivas siguientes: *Nota en Inglés más Alta Obtenida antes de Llegar a la Universidad*, *Nota Media en la Universidad de Granada*, *Asistencia a Clase*, *Horas Dedicadas Semanalmente al Estudio del Inglés Fuera de Clase*, razones por las que se estudia esta asignatura, (a) *Para Realzar los Estudios Universitarios*, (b) *Para Obtener Créditos*, (c) *Para Mejorar Perspectivas Profesionales*, (d) *Por Otras Razones*, *Dificultad de la Asignatura*, *Autovaloración del Nivel Global en Inglés*, *Autovaloración de Nivel en la Comprensión Oral (listening)*, *Autovaloración de Nivel en la Producción Oral (speaking)*, *Autovaloración del Nivel en la Comprensión Escrita (reading)*, *Autovaloración del Nivel en la Producción Escrita (writing)* y *Nota Final Esperada en esta Asignatura*. Fueron dos las variables afectivas: *Convicción de que el Rendimiento en las Actividades Orales Reflejará mi Nivel de Inglés* y *Convicción de que la Ansiedad/el Nerviosismo Influirá en mi Rendimiento en las Actividades Orales en Clase*.

### Análisis de Datos

Empleando las variables descritas anteriormente, se llevaron a cabo análisis estadísticos durante los meses de abril y de junio de 2005. Para la primera pregunta formulada, los datos fueron sometidos a las técnicas analíticas siguientes: correlaciones de Pearson, correlaciones parciales y análisis de varianza. Para las preguntas segunda, tercera y cuarta se computaron correlaciones de Pearson y se realizaron análisis de regresión múltiple lineal. Para la quinta pregunta formulada se analizaron las transcripciones de las entrevistas post-prueba llevadas a cabo con las seis estudiantes con niveles de ansiedad elevados seleccionadas.

### Resultados

En cuanto a la *primera pregunta formulada*, que planteó la búsqueda de relaciones entre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera, medida por la FLCAS, y el rendimiento oral (considerando tanto la nota global obtenida en la prueba oral como los ocho criterios de rendimiento), se llevaron a cabo análisis de correlación y de correlación parcial, además de un análisis de varianza.

Se observó una correlación negativa y estadísticamente significativa entre la nota de Prueba Oral y la puntuación de FLCAS ( $r = -.494, p = .001^{**}$ ) ( $^{**}p < .01$ ). Al realizar correlaciones parciales controlando las tres variables de habilidad lingüística Posición en Clase, Prueba Escrita, Posición en Clase y Prueba Escrita, sólo al controlar la variable combinada Posición en Clase y Prueba Escrita se observó que la correlación entre Prueba Oral y FLCAS seguía siendo negativa y estadísticamente significativa ( $r = -.491, p = .002^{**}$ ). Se realizó un análisis de varianza para comprobar si existían diferencias en las puntuaciones medias de la prueba oral en tres grupos de ansiedad (de ansiedad baja,  $n = 10$ ; de ansiedad moderada,  $n = 20$ ; de ansiedad alta,  $n = 10$ ). Este

análisis reveló que había diferencias estadísticamente significativas entre los tres grupos ( $F = 7.883^{**}$ ,  $gl = 2$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Una prueba a posteriori de Tukey indicó que el grupo de ansiedad alta obtuvo una nota media significativamente más baja que los grupos de ansiedad moderada y de ansiedad baja. La puntuación media del grupo de ansiedad baja fue de 67.60 sobre 100.0. La puntuación media del grupo de ansiedad moderada fue 60.10 y la del grupo de ansiedad alta fue 50.60.

En cuanto a las correlaciones de Pearson entre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje del inglés en el aula medida por la FLCAS y las ocho variables de rendimiento oral, se detectó una correlación negativa y estadísticamente significativa entre la primera variable de rendimiento oral (Número Total de Palabras en las Unidades de Comunicación) y FLCAS ( $r = -.381$ ,  $p = .015^{*}$ ) ( $*p < .05$ ) y se observó una correlación positiva y estadísticamente significativa entre la sexta variable de rendimiento oral (Porcentaje de Palabras Totales de la Prueba Contenidas en los Laberintos) y FLCAS ( $r = .341$ ,  $p = .031^{*}$ ).

Al realizar correlaciones parciales controlando las variables Posición en Clase, Prueba Escrita, Posición en Clase y Prueba Escrita, sólo al controlar la variable combinada Posición en Clase y Prueba Escrita se observó que la correlación entre la primera variable de rendimiento, Número Total de Palabras en las Unidades de Comunicación, y FLCAS seguía siendo negativa y estadísticamente significativa ( $r = -.377$ ,  $p = .018^{*}$ ) y que la correlación entre la sexta variable de rendimiento, Porcentaje de Palabras Totales de la Prueba Contenidas en los Laberintos, y FLCAS seguía siendo positiva y estadísticamente significativa ( $r = .342$ ,  $p = .033^{*}$ ).

Se realizó un análisis de varianza para comprobar si existían diferencias en las puntuaciones medias correspondientes a los ocho criterios de rendimiento oral entre los tres grupos de ansiedad (de ansiedad baja,  $n = 10$ ; de ansiedad moderada,  $n = 20$ ; de

ansiedad alta,  $n = 10$ ). Este análisis reveló que había diferencias significativas entre los tres grupos en cuanto al quinto criterio de rendimiento oral, Promedio de Palabras por Laberinto, y al sexto, Porcentaje del Número Total de Palabras Contenidas en los Laberintos. En cuanto al quinto criterio el análisis reveló que había diferencias estadísticamente significativas entre los tres grupos ( $F = 6.888^{**}$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = .003$ ). Una prueba a posteriori de Tukey indicó que el grupo de ansiedad moderada emitió laberintos significativamente más cortos que el grupo de ansiedad alta (un promedio de 2.3 palabras comparadas con un promedio de 3.5 palabras por laberinto). El promedio de palabras por laberinto emitido por el grupo de ansiedad baja fue 2.8. En cuanto al sexto criterio, el ANOVA demostró diferencias estadísticamente significativas entre los tres grupos ( $F = 5.599^{**}$ ,  $gl = 2$ ,  $p = .008$ ). Una prueba a posteriori de Tukey indicó que el grupo de ansiedad alta emitió en la prueba oral un porcentaje de laberintos significativamente mayor que el grupo de ansiedad moderada, es decir, un promedio del 33.76% en comparación con un promedio del 18.96%. El porcentaje medio de laberintos emitido por el grupo de ansiedad baja fue del 21.46%

En cuanto a la segunda pregunta formulada, que sondeó las posibles asociaciones entre variables demográficas, académicas, cognitivas y afectivas pertenecientes a los participantes y el nivel global de dominio del inglés, medido por la prueba QPT, se realizaron análisis de correlación de Pearson y de regresión lineal.

En cuanto a las asociaciones entre QPT y las variables demográficas, se observaron una correlación positiva y estadísticamente significativa con Estancias en Países Anglófonos:  $r = .387$ ,  $p = .014^*$  y correlación negativa y estadísticamente significativa con Edad de Inicio:  $r = -.480$ ,  $p = .002^{**}$ . Hubo una correlación positiva y estadísticamente significativa entre QPT y la variable académica Meses Dedicados al Estudio de Inglés en Escuelas (Primaria, Secundaria y Academias):  $r = .360$ ,  $p = .022^*$ .

Se detectaron correlaciones positivas y estadísticamente significativas entre QPT y diez variables cognitivas: Nota en Inglés más Alta Obtenida antes de Llegar a la Universidad ( $r = .498, p = .001^{**}$ ), Nota Media en la Universidad de Granada ( $r = .415, p = .008^{**}$ ), Autovaloración del Nivel Global en Inglés ( $r = .495, p = .001^{**}$ ), Autovaloración del Nivel en Comprensión Oral ( $r = .503, p = .001^{**}$ ), Autovaloración del Nivel en Producción Oral ( $r = .410, p = .009^{**}$ ), Autovaloración del Nivel en Comprensión Escrita ( $r = .543, p = .001^{**}$ ), Autovaloración del Nivel en Producción Escrita ( $r = .531, p = .001^{**}$ ), Nota Final Esperada en esta Asignatura ( $r = .537, p < .001^{**}$ ) y también entre QPT y la nota de otras dos pruebas de inglés: Prueba Oral ( $r = .549, p < .001^{**}$ ) y Prueba Escrita ( $r = .662, p < .001^{**}$ ). Se detectaron correlaciones negativas y estadísticamente significativas entre QPT y una variable cognitiva, Para Obtener Créditos ( $r = -.401, p = .010^*$ ) y entre QPT y una variable afectiva, Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de la Lengua Extranjera en el Aula ( $r = -.442, p = .004^{**}$ ).

Los resultados de la regresión múltiple lineal,  $F(3, 36) = 8.433, p < .001$ , señalaron tres variables independientes como predictoras del nivel de dominio del inglés, medida por la QPT. Las tres variables independientes, todas de coeficiente negativo, eran Edad de Inicio, Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de la Lengua Extranjera en el Aula y Para Obtener Créditos, que explicaron el 10%, el 9% y el 7% de la varianza, respectivamente. Juntas, estas tres variables independientes explicaron más del 26% de la varianza.

Para responder a la *tercera pregunta formulada*, que buscó interrelaciones entre variables demográficas, académicas, cognitivas y afectivas pertenecientes a los participantes y el rendimiento oral evaluado por la Prueba Oral, se llevaron a cabo análisis de correlación de Pearson y de regresión lineal.

En cuanto a las asociaciones entre la Prueba Oral y las variables demográficas, se observaron correlaciones negativas y estadísticamente significativas en Edad ( $r = -.464, p = .003^{**}$ ), en Edad de Inicio ( $r = -.410, p = .009^{**}$ ) y en Nivel Educativo del Padre ( $r = -.349, p = .028^*$ ). Hubo correlaciones positivas y estadísticamente significativas entre Prueba Oral y dos variables académicas: Meses Dedicados al Estudio del Inglés en Escuelas (Primaria, Secundaria y Academias) ( $r = .435, p = .005^{**}$ ) y Otra Lengua Hablada o Conocida ( $r = .329, p = .038^*$ ). Se detectaron correlaciones estadísticamente significativas entre Prueba Oral y once variables cognitivas: una correlación negativa en Dificultad de la Asignatura ( $r = -.460, p = .003^{**}$ ) y diez positivas: en Nota en Inglés más Alta Obtenida antes de Llegar a la Universidad ( $r = .555, p < .001^{**}$ ), en Autovaloración del Nivel Global en Inglés ( $r = .424, p = .006^*$ ), en Autovaloración del Nivel en las cuatro destrezas (Comprensión Oral,  $r = .393, p = .012^*$ ; Producción Oral,  $r = .328, p = .039^*$ ; Comprensión Escrita:  $r = .350, p = .027^*$ ; Producción Escrita,  $r = .341, p = .031^*$ ), en Nota Esperada en esta Asignatura ( $r = .464, p = .003^{**}$ ), en Otras Razones ( $r = .331, p = .037^*$ ) y en puntuaciones de otras pruebas de inglés (QPT:  $r = .549, p < .001^{**}$ ; Prueba Escrita:  $r = .619, p < .001^{**}$ ). Dos de las tres correlaciones afectivas resultaron estadísticamente significativas: Convicción de que el Rendimiento en las Actividades Orales Reflejará mi Nivel de Inglés ( $r = .341, p = .031^*$ ) y Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de la Lengua Extranjera en el Aula ( $r = -.494, p = .001^{**}$ ).

Los resultados de la regresión múltiple lineal,  $F(4, 35) = 9.274, p < .001$ , revelaron que cuatro variables independientes eran predictoras de Prueba Oral. Las cuatro variables independientes eran Edad (de coeficiente negativo), Por Otras Razones (de coeficiente positivo), Meses Dedicados al Estudio del Inglés en Escuelas (Primaria, Secundaria y Academias) (de coeficiente positivo) y Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de la

Lengua Extranjera en el Aula (de coeficiente negativo), que explicaban el 13%, el 7%, el 6% y el 5% de la varianza, respectivamente. Juntas, estas variables independientes explicaron más del 31% de la varianza.

La *cuarta pregunta formulada* trató posibles asociaciones entre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera en el aula, medida por la FLCAS, y variables demográficas, académicas, cognitivas y afectivas de los participantes, mediante correlaciones de Pearson y análisis de regresión múltiple.

Se observó una correlación positiva y estadísticamente significativa entre FLCAS y Género ( $r = .494, p = .001^{**}$ ). Dos variables académicas se correlacionaron negativamente con la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera: Meses Dedicados al Estudio del Inglés en Escuelas (Primaria, Secundaria y Academias) ( $r = -.329, p = .038^*$ ) y Otra Lengua Hablada o Conocida ( $r = -.341, p = .031^*$ ).

Tal como ocurrió con la Prueba Oral, se observaron correlaciones estadísticamente significativas entre FLCAS y once variables: una correlación positiva con Dificultad de la Asignatura ( $r = .422, p = .007^{**}$ ) y diez negativas: Nota en Inglés más Alta Obtenida antes de Llegar a la Universidad ( $r = -.607, p < .001^{**}$ ), Autovaloración del Nivel Global en Inglés, ( $r = -.694, p < .001^{**}$ ), Autovaloración del Nivel en las cuatro destrezas (Comprensión Oral:  $r = -.504, p = .001^{**}$ ; Producción Oral:  $r = -.429, p = .006^{**}$ ; Comprensión Escrita:  $r = -.476, p = .002^{**}$ ; Producción Escrita:  $r = -.460, p = .003^{**}$ ), Nota Esperada en esta Asignatura ( $r = -.404, p = .010$ ) y puntuaciones de pruebas de inglés (QPT:  $r = -.442, p = .004^{**}$ ; Prueba Oral:  $r = -.494, p = .001^{**}$ ; Prueba Escrita:  $r = -.506, p = .001^{**}$ ). Una de las tres correlaciones afectivas resultó estadísticamente significativa y positiva: Convicción de que el Nerviosismo/Ansiedad Reflejará mi Rendimiento en las Actividades Orales en Clase ( $r = .606, p < .001^{**}$ ).

Los resultados de la regresión múltiple lineal,  $F(3, 36) = 20.970$ ,  $p < .001$ , revelaron que tres variables independientes eran predictoras de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera en el aula medida por la FLCAS. Las tres variables independientes eran Autovaloración del Nivel Global en Inglés (de coeficiente negativo), Otra Lengua Conocida o Hablada (de coeficiente negativo) y Género (de coeficiente positivo), que explicaban el 34%, el 6% y el 4% de la varianza, respectivamente. En conjunto, estas variables independientes explicaron más del 45% de la varianza.

En cuanto a la *quinta pregunta formulada*, que se respondió mediante entrevistas realizadas inmediatamente después de la prueba oral con seis estudiantes de niveles de ansiedad elevados (tres de nivel lingüístico alta y tres de nivel lingüístico bajo) se obtuvieron los siguientes resultados. La selección se hizo teniendo en cuenta la puntuación de la escala FLCAS y los comentarios escritos en el cuestionario DFPF. El nivel lingüístico dependía de la nota más alta en inglés obtenida antes de llegar a la universidad y de la puntuación obtenida en la prueba QPT. La totalidad de estos estudiantes eran mujeres. Los resultados de la selección se dan a continuación.

#### *Las tres estudiantes de nivel lingüístico alto*

Estudiante 1. Comentarios predictores de ansiedad dados en el DFPF: «El examen reflejará mis conocimientos, lo que he estudiado durante el curso de la asignatura, pero en los exámenes orales, el nerviosismo siempre está presente, y juega malas pasadas, con lo que, a lo mejor, no puedes demostrar todo lo que realmente sabes.» Puntuación de la FLCAS: 119. Puntuación de la QPT: 26/40 (Pre-intermedio). Posición en clase, basada en la puntuación de la QPT: 2. Nota más alta en inglés obtenida antes de llegar a la universidad: 7.0/10.0

Estudiante 2. Comentarios predictores de ansiedad dados en el DFPF: «... me suelo poner bastante nerviosa en estas pruebas por lo que a lo mejor no demuestre mi verdadero nivel de inglés.» Puntuación de la FLCAS: 108. Puntuación de la QPT: 24/40 (Pre-intermedio). Posición en clase, basada en la puntuación de la QPT: 5. Nota más alta en inglés obtenida antes de llegar a la universidad: 7.5/10.0.

Estudiante 3. Comentarios predictoras de ansiedad dadas en el DFPF: «Me pongo muy nerviosa en los exámenes... me cuesta relajarme... mi capacidad de concentración se disminuye.» Puntuación de la FLCAS: 105. Puntuación de la QPT: 20/40 (Elemental). Posición en clase, basada en la puntuación de la QPT: 12. Nota en inglés más alta obtenida antes de llegar a la universidad: 7.5/10.0.

#### *Las tres estudiantes de nivel lingüístico bajo*

Estudiante 4. Comentarios predictores de ansiedad dados en el DFPF: «Me suelo poner nerviosa cuando me preguntan en inglés, por lo que las respuestas no pueden ser muy buenas.» Puntuación de la FLCAS: 136. Puntuación de la QPT: 14/40 (Principiante). Posición en clase, basada en la puntuación de la QPT: 36. Nota más alta en inglés obtenida antes de llegar a la universidad: 3.0/10.0

Estudiante 5. Comentarios predictores de ansiedad dados en el DFPF: «... y el nerviosismo, cuando me preguntan en inglés me bloqueo y no pongo atención en el significado y sentido de lo que se me pregunta.» Puntuación de la FLCAS: 130. Puntuación de la QPT: 11/40 (Principiante). Posición en clase, basada en la puntuación de la QPT: 39. Nota más alta en inglés obtenida antes de llegar a la universidad: 3.0/10.0

Estudiante 6. Comentarios predictores de ansiedad dados en el DFPF: «... me influirán mucho los nervios y tal vez también el miedo a la hora de rendir en clase. Necesito adaptarme a la clase y coger una cierta confianza para poder leer y expresarme

con claridad. Me costará mucho hacerlo por miedo a hacerlo mal, nervios, vergüenza ...» Puntuación de la FLCAS: 130. Puntuación de la QPT: 15/40 (Principiante). Posición en clase, basada en la puntuación de la QPT: 33. Nota en inglés más alta obtenida antes de llegar a la universidad: 3.0/10.0

Se apuntan a continuación comentarios de estas seis estudiantes de niveles de ansiedad elevados después de oír la grabación de su prueba oral, agrupando en primer lugar reacciones parecidas entre las estudiantes de los dos niveles lingüísticos, en segundo lugar reacciones diferentes y finalmente reacciones individuales notables. (La letra «a» indica que se trata de un comentario de una estudiante de nivel lingüístico alto; la letra «b» indica que se trata de un comentario de una estudiante de nivel lingüístico bajo.)

En cuanto a similitudes, muchas reacciones fueron muy parecidas en estudiantes de ambos niveles. En la primera frase de todas las estudiantes, usaron la palabra «nervios» o «nerviosa»: «...*me he sentido muy nerviosa*» (a); «*Estaba muy nerviosa*» (a); «...*parece... bastante nerviosa...*» (a); «*me pongo muy nerviosa...*» (b); «*Pues, muy nerviosa*» (b); «... *fueron muchos nervios...*» (b). Una estudiante habló incluso de su «miedo» (b).

Hubo reacciones psicológicas/cognitivas tales como el no poder pensar o recordar las cosas: «...[los nervios] no me dejan pensar bien las cosas» (b); «...me quedo en blanco mucho tiempo.» (a); «...me bloqueo mucho...» (a); «...me bloqueo y se me olvida...» (a); «...me atranco...» (b); «...[cómo decirlo en inglés] se me va de la cabeza...» (b); «...me quedo encasquillada...» (a).

Estudiantes de ambos niveles lingüísticos mencionaron síntomas fisiológicos tales como tensión, manos sudorosas o voz nerviosa: «...estás como más tenso...» (a); «...me sudan las manos...» (b); «...estaba nerviosa porque me lo noto en la voz» (a).

Sin embargo, se notaron algunas diferencias en sus reacciones. Al escuchar la grabación de la prueba que acababan de realizar, todas las estudiantes de nivel lingüístico alto comentaron que podrían haber hablado más o mejor y que se habían equivocado diciendo cosas «fáciles» o «conocidas»: «...creo que lo podría haber hecho mejor...» (a); «...escuchándome me he dado cuenta también de que tengo muchos fallos» (a); «...había palabras que son fáciles, pero no me acordaba...» (a); «... cuando he oído la grabación, me he dado cuenta que no está bien» (a); «...tenía muchas más cosas que decir, pero...» (a). Ninguna de las tres estudiantes seleccionadas de nivel lingüístico bajo dijo que hubiera tenido ninguna reacción parecida.

Los comentarios revelaron diferencias en las estrategias de aprendizaje y de producción oral usadas por las seis estudiantes de niveles de ansiedad elevados. Las tres estudiantes de nivel lingüístico bajo hablaron de estrategias de memorización y de traducción: «...intento pensarlo primero en español ... para luego decirlo en inglés...» (b); «...y primero lo tengo que pensar en español, para después traducirlo» (b); «... no todo viene en la hoja ...» (b); «...he intentado aprendérmelo de memoria...» (b); «...tienes que ... entenderlo en español, porque si no, no sabría decirlo» (b).

Sólo una de las estudiantes de nivel lingüístico alto dijo que había traducido literalmente del español al inglés durante la prueba oral, aclarando que ésta no era la mejor manera de hacerlo, y aparentemente atribuyendo esta estrategia a su nerviosismo: «Hay veces que se utiliza el genitivo sajón y lo decía literalmente, y ahora cuando he oído la grabación, me he dado cuenta que no está bien, que estaba muy nerviosa...» (a).

Se constató además que había una diferencia de actitud entre los dos grupos de estudiantes seleccionadas. Las pertenecientes al nivel lingüístico bajo informaron que les parecía que no podían hacer nada para remediar su nerviosismo ni sus efectos nefastos en el rendimiento oral: «...para mi es imposible. Es que es imposible» (b);

«...siempre, es que es lo de siempre, nervios, miedo a que no sea capaz de hacerlo y ya está» (b). Por otra parte, una estudiante de nivel lingüístico alto consideró que podría sacar provecho de esta experiencia desagradable: «Supongo que luego será bueno, porque si tienes contacto con la gente y te vas acostumbrando más que nada, a hablar y no a ponerte tan nervioso. Espero, vamos, que [la prueba oral] sirva de algo» (a).

En cuanto a las reacciones individuales de las seis participantes seleccionadas, una de las estudiantes de nivel lingüístico bajo destacó su distracción, que resultó en la imposibilidad de responder a las preguntas de la profesora: «...en el momento que me, me preguntas, me pongo muy nerviosa ... y los nervios no me dejan pensar bien las cosas .... haces la pregunta, no le presto atención a, a lo que me preguntas y entonces pues no me entero» (b). Una de las estudiantes de nivel lingüístico alto señaló la diferencia que para ella supondría hablar en la prueba oral o hablar con un nativo en una situación menos formal: «[en la prueba] estás ... más nervioso, que a lo mejor, estar, conocer a algún, a alguien de fuera que es inglés. Estás hablando y lo tienes como con más naturalidad y como que te sale todo más fluido» (a). Esta misma estudiante se refirió a una aparente falta de tiempo (aunque no se impuso límite de tiempo en la prueba) que no le dejaba pensar claramente lo que estaba diciendo ni preparar adecuadamente lo que iba decir a continuación: «...parece que, que no, no sé, que no te da tiempo. Estás como pensando ‘¿Qué quiero decir después?’, pero no terminas de decir la, lo que estás diciendo. Entonces ni te sale bien lo que estás diciendo, ni lo que vas a decir después» (a).

La reacción individual más notable se observó durante la primera parte de una de las pruebas orales. Una de las estudiantes de nivel lingüístico alto empezó a llorar. La profesora se vio obligada a detener la grabación y esperar que se tranquilizara. Una vez acabada la prueba oral, cuando la estudiante empezó a describir en español sus

reacciones a la prueba, estuvo a punto de llorar de nuevo, explicando que había reaccionado así durante la prueba porque «estaba muy nerviosa» y porque «yo soy así, en los exámenes orales me pongo muy nerviosa».» Durante la prueba creía que la podría realizar mejor («pensaba: Lo puedo hacer mejor, lo puedo hacer mejor») y se lamentaba de que no recordaba las cosas («no me acordaba»), y de que tenía muchas cosas que decir pero que se había «bloqueado» («tenía muchas cosas que decir, pero me bloqueo y se me olvida»). Esta estudiante no había asistido a su cita para la prueba oral el día anterior (el día 10 de febrero de 2005) y sólo hizo la prueba el día 11 porque le había persuadido un amigo de que lo hiciera.

### Discusión y Conclusiones

Es interesante que el coeficiente de fiabilidad (alpha de Cronbach) de la traducción española de la FLCAS realizada por la investigadora fuera idéntica a la fiabilidad encontrada por Horwitz (1986, p. 560) en una investigación preliminar sobre esta escala de ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera en el aula (.93). Compárese con la fiabilidad observada por otros autores que aplicaron la FLCAS en sus investigaciones. En sendos estudios donde se empleó la versión inglesa, Aida (1994, p. 158) y Gardner y MacIntyre (1993b, p. 168) hallaron una fiabilidad de .94. La traducción en lengua china de la FLCAS utilizada por Cheng et al. (1999) arrojó un coeficiente de .95 (p. 424) y las dos versiones en lengua española de Rodríguez y Abreu (2003), enfocadas para estudiantes de francés y de inglés, demostraron una fiabilidad de .90 (p. 367).

En lo que concierne a la *primera pregunta formulada*, la *correlación de Pearson* negativa y estadísticamente significativa entre la nota de la prueba oral y la puntuación obtenida en la FLCAS ( $r = -.494$ ,  $p = .001$ ) indica que cuanto más ansiosos se sentían

los participantes a la hora de aprender una lengua extranjera en el aula, tanto peor tendían a puntuar en la prueba oral. Este resultado concuerda con los hallazgos de numerosos otros autores, por ejemplo, Young (1986), que informó que «para tres de las cuatro medidas de ansiedad, hubo una correlación significativa y negativa entre el rendimiento oral evaluado por la OPI [*Oral Proficiency Interview*] y la ansiedad» (p. 443).

Sin embargo, no se sabía si esta tendencia hacia el rendimiento oral inferior se debía a la influencia de la ansiedad o simplemente a una habilidad lingüística inferior. Las *correlaciones parciales* contribuyeron a elucidar esta cuestión. El hecho de que el coeficiente de correlación entre la nota de la prueba oral y FLCAS seguía siendo negativo y estadísticamente significativo ( $r = -.491, p = .002$ ) incluso cuando se eliminó el efecto de la variable combinada Posición en Clase y Prueba Escrita, sugiere que la ansiedad, y no sólo la habilidad lingüística, desempeñó un papel, aunque modesto, en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera. Phillips (1992) informó sobre un resultado parecido: en su estudio, la correlación negativa y estadísticamente significativa hallada entre las puntuaciones de un examen oral y de la FLCAS persistían sólo cuando se controló el efecto de la nota de un examen escrito. Por otra parte, Young (1986), que en un principio había observado correlaciones negativas y estadísticamente significativas entre el rendimiento oral y tres medidas de ansiedad, al llevar a cabo correlaciones parciales, constató que «ya no había ninguna correlación significativa entre la OPI y las medidas de ansiedad» (p. 443). Estos resultados le llevaron a concluir que la ansiedad no había influido significativamente en el rendimiento oral: en su opinión, al no ser oficial el examen, los participantes no estaban realmente ansiosos, y que «bajo estas condiciones, la OPI puede haber sido realmente sólo una medida de dominio lingüístico de los sujetos» (p. 443). Por contraste, en el estudio actual, la prueba oral sí era oficial ya que

coincidía con el examen parcial de la Universidad de Granada y este hecho puede haber contribuido a ocasionar mayor ansiedad en los participantes, de ahí la persistencia de la correlación negativa y estadísticamente significativa aun cuando se eliminó el efecto de la variable de habilidad lingüística Posición en Clase y Prueba Escrita.

Los resultados de la correlación de Pearson y de las correlaciones parciales que apuntan a la presencia de una asociación entre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y la nota de la prueba oral, fueron apoyados por los resultados del *análisis de varianza*, que reveló que el grupo de mayor ansiedad obtuvo de media puntuaciones significativamente inferiores a las del grupo de ansiedad moderada y a las del grupo de ansiedad baja, siendo las notas 50.60, 60.10 y 67.60, respectivamente. Estos resultados implican que era significativamente más probable que el grupo de mayor ansiedad obtuviera una puntuación menor en la prueba oral que los otros dos grupos. Este hallazgo recuerda el de Aida (1994), que dividió a sus estudiantes en dos grupos (de ansiedad alta y de ansiedad baja) y cuyo ANOVA reveló que «el grupo de ansiedad alta recibió notas significativamente inferiores ... a las del grupo de ansiedad baja» (p. 162), es decir, 85.6 y 89.9, respectivamente.

En lo que refiere a las *correlaciones entre las ocho variables de rendimiento oral y la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera*, la correlación negativa y estadísticamente significativa observada para la variable *primera* (es decir, entre el número total de palabras usadas en las unidades de comunicación y la FLCAS) sugiere que cuanto más ansiosos se sentían los participantes a la hora de aprender el idioma extranjero, tanto menores tendían a ser la cantidad y la complejidad de la producción oral de estos estudiantes. En cuanto a la *sexta* variable de rendimiento oral (el porcentaje de palabras laberinto emitidas en la prueba), la correlación positiva y estadísticamente significativa hallada sugiere que cuanto más altos eran los niveles de

ansiedad experimentados por estos participantes, tanto mayor era la cantidad de palabras incorrectas o de fragmentos desconectados emitidos en la prueba. Estos dos hallazgos estadísticamente significativos indican que la ansiedad se asociaba con aspectos tanto favorables (cantidad de elementos de comunicación) como desfavorables (proporción de elementos que no contribuían a la comunicación).

Cuando se llevaron a cabo *correlaciones parciales* para averiguar si las correlaciones entre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y las variables primera y sexta seguían siendo estadísticamente significativas después de eliminar el efecto de las tres variables de habilidad lingüística (Posición en Clase, Prueba Escrita, Posición en Clase y Prueba Escrita), se observó que las correlaciones estadísticamente significativas registradas anteriormente se disiparon excepto en el caso de la variable combinada Posición en Clase y Prueba Escrita. Esto implica que el efecto de las dos primeras variables de habilidad lingüística, por separado, no bastaba para mantener el resultado estadísticamente significativo observado anteriormente.

Son interesantes los resultados de los *análisis de varianza* llevados a cabo sobre las ocho variables de rendimiento oral. En lo que concierne a la quinta variable, Promedio de Palabras por Laberinto, la diferencia estadísticamente significativa registrada entre los grupos de ansiedad moderada y de ansiedad alta es notable. Aunque el grupo de ansiedad alta produjo por término medio los laberintos más largos, (3.52 palabras), tal como se especulaba, el grupo de ansiedad baja produjo por término medio laberintos más largos que el grupo de ansiedad moderada (2.82 palabras y 2.30 palabras, respectivamente). Tal vez se debieran estos resultados a una tendencia por parte de los estudiantes más relajados a prestar menos atención a su intervención oral y a sentirse menos preocupados ante la posibilidad de cometer errores. Este hallazgo recuerda el estudio de Gregersen y Horwitz (2002) sobre el rendimiento oral, en el que los

«participantes no ansiosos reconocían que su producción lingüística no era perfecta pero no exigían el mismo nivel de perfección que sus compañeros más ansiosos» (p. 566). O, por otro lado, puede ser que los laberintos más cortos (indicando una intervención más precisa) emitidos por término medio por los estudiantes de ansiedad moderada fueran fruto de una mayor atención y de la ansiedad facilitadora (Alpert y Haber, 1960).

En cuanto al sexto criterio de rendimiento oral, Porcentaje del Número Total de Palabras Contenidas en los Laberintos, el ANOVA reveló diferencias estadísticamente significativas ente los grupos de ansiedad moderada y de ansiedad alta. Mientras que los estudiantes del grupo de ansiedad alta produjeron el porcentaje medio más alto de palabras de laberinto en sus pruebas orales (poco más de la tercera parte), como era de esperar, un resultado sorprendente fue que el grupo de ansiedad baja produjo una proporción significativamente mayor de palabras de laberinto (21.46%) que el grupo de ansiedad moderada (18.96%), lo cual indica que la producción oral del grupo de ansiedad moderada fue significativamente más comprensible que la del grupo de ansiedad baja. Tal y como ocurrió en el caso de la quinta variable de rendimiento oral, esto quizá se debiera a que el grupo de ansiedad moderada tuviera más cuidado durante su intervención y que la ansiedad facilitadora tendiera a beneficiar a este grupo.

Teniendo en cuenta la especulación de Horwitz (2001) que quizás «alguna variable no controlada fuese responsable de cualquier relación observada» (p. 117) entre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y los logros lingüísticos, el objetivo de las *preguntas formuladas número dos, número tres y número cuatro* fue descubrir qué variables pertenecientes a los participantes pudieron influir en su nivel global de dominio del inglés, en su rendimiento en una prueba oral y en su ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera.

En lo que se refiere a los vínculos entre el nivel de dominio lingüístico, medido por la *Quick Placement Test* (Oxford University Press y Universidad de Cambridge, 2001) y las características demográficas, académicas, cognitivas y afectivas de los participantes, los resultados de las *correlaciones de Pearson* indicaron que cuanto mayor había sido el contacto con el inglés gracias a visitas a países anglófonos, tanto mejor era su nivel de dominio lingüístico. Este hallazgo contrasta con el de Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000), quienes no encontraron ninguna correlación significativa entre el nivel de dominio lingüístico de sus participantes y el número de países extranjeros visitados. Los resultados del estudio actual sugieren además que cuanto más tiempo acumulado llevaban los participantes matriculados en escuelas y cuanto más jóvenes eran cuando empezaron a estudiar inglés, tanto más alta tendía a ser su habilidad global.

Sin embargo, no se apreció ninguna relación entre la edad y el nivel de dominio lingüístico medido por la QPT. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000) registraron un resultado parecido, aunque habían anticipado que habría una asociación estadísticamente significativa entre estas dos variables.

Las correlaciones positivas y estadísticamente significativas entre QPT y la autovaloración del nivel de inglés, en general y en las cuatro destrezas y entre QPT y la nota esperada, sugieren que cuanto mayor era la autovaloración del nivel de dominio lingüístico y cuanto más alta la nota esperada, tanto mejor era la puntuación de la QPT. Estos resultados son comparables con los de Gardner et al. (1997), quienes informaron de correlaciones positivas y estadísticamente significativas entre la autovaloración del nivel de dominio del francés y Medidas Objetivas y Nota Final (p. 352). De igual manera Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000) observaron una correlación positiva y estadísticamente significativa entre el dominio lingüístico de la lengua extranjera y las

expectativas de rendimiento además del rendimiento real en estudiantes matriculados en cursos de francés, de alemán, de español o de japonés (p. 9).

La correlación negativa y estadísticamente significativa hallada entre el nivel global de inglés y la idea de cursar la asignatura para obtener créditos parece sugerir que cuanto menos interés en sacar beneficios tenían, mejor puntuación obtenían los participantes en la *Quick Placement Test*. Esta tendencia quizás refleje la presencia de motivación intrínseca en los estudiantes o tal vez sugiera que simplemente les gustaba el inglés y creían que aprobarían fácilmente esta asignatura. La falta de correlación estadísticamente significativa entre la puntuación de la QPT y los hábitos de estudio (asistencia a clase y horas de estudio fuera del aula) recuerda un resultado similar de Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000), quienes tampoco hallaron ninguna correlación estadísticamente significativa en este sentido.

Es interesante la correlación negativa y estadísticamente significativa hallada entre el nivel de dominio lingüístico medido por la *Quick Placement Test* y la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera medida por la versión española de la *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale*, porque indica que cuanto más ansiedad experimentaban los participantes a la hora de aprender inglés, tanto menos exitosos tendían a ser los resultados de la QPT. Este hallazgo es similar al de Gardner et al. (1997), quienes incluyeron en sus Medidas Objetivas una prueba parecida a la QPT en el sentido de que era una «versión de la prueba de nivel de la *Université Laval*» y que era una «prueba de 100 ítems tipo-test ... usada para determinar el conocimiento de verbos, adjetivos, pronombres y preposiciones en francés de los participantes» (p. 349). Al igual que la QPT, la prueba de la *Université Laval* se realiza en 30 minutos.

Los resultados del *análisis de regresión lineal* apuntaron a Edad de Inicio, Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de la Lengua Extranjera y Para Obtener Créditos como

variables independientes predictoras del nivel global de dominio del inglés. Este modelo sugiere que los participantes que tenían un nivel superior de inglés habían empezado a estudiar el inglés a edades más tempranas, experimentaban niveles de ansiedad más bajos y mostraban menor interés en obtener créditos. Considerando que la contribución de cada una de estas tres variables independientes a la predicción del nivel de dominio del inglés era del 10% o menos, puede decirse que el tamaño de efecto fue pequeño (Cohen, 1988).

El hallazgo de que la variable independiente Edad de Inicio explicara la mayor proporción de la varianza (poco más del 10%) no es del todo sorprendente. Si tenemos en cuenta que la QPT evalúa la comprensión escrita, el vocabulario y la gramática, es decir, aspectos del estudio de inglés que se enfatizan en el sistema educativo español, parece lógico que el inicio a edad temprana de estudio del inglés predijera resultados favorables en la QPT. La detección de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera como segunda mejor predictora sugiere que aun en presencia de muchos años de experiencia en el estudio del inglés, el nerviosismo y la aprensión todavía tienden a ejercer una mala influencia sobre el nivel de dominio lingüístico. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000) también afirmaron que la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera era la segunda mejor predictora del nivel de dominio lingüístico (tras el rendimiento académico), al igual que Ehrman y Oxford (1995), quienes aseveraron que «los factores afectivos ... ocupan claramente el segundo nivel» (p. 82). Saito y Samimy (1996) observaron una tendencia más sutil. Los resultados de su análisis de regresión mostraron que la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera no predecía la nota final en estudiantes principiantes, pero sí era «la mejor predictora» (p. 245) en estudiantes de niveles intermedio y avanzado (p. 245).

La tercera mejor variable independiente predictora del nivel de dominio lingüístico global, Para Obtener Créditos, sugiere que la motivación intrínseca puede tener un efecto favorable. Este tipo de motivación «se evidencia siempre que la curiosidad natural de los estudiantes energiza su aprendizaje» (Deci y Ryan, 1985, p. 245) y además se ha relacionado con la «retención a largo plazo» (Arnold y Brown, 1999, p. 14).

Al indagar en la *tercera pregunta formulada*, busqué vínculos entre el rendimiento oral, medida por la nota de la prueba oral, y características demográficas, académicas, cognitivas y afectivas. Los resultados de las *correlaciones de Pearson* mostraron una asociación negativa y estadísticamente significativa entre el rendimiento oral y el nivel educativo del padre, que nos lleva a pensar que un nivel educativo superior del padre quizás condujera a que se diera mayor importancia en casa a hablar en inglés, con la consiguiente mejora en los resultados de la prueba oral. Tal y como ocurrió con los resultados de correlación de la QPT, parece que cuanto más jóvenes eran los estudiantes cuando empezaron a estudiar inglés, mejor hablaron en la prueba oral. En este sentido, Domínguez y Pessoa (2005), en su estudio de alumnos de primaria de alrededor de 11 años, comprobaron que los niños que habían empezado a estudiar el español como lengua extranjera en preescolar «obtuvieron mejores resultados que los estudiantes nuevos [es decir, los que llevaban estudiando el español durante un año] en la destreza oral en español» (p. 477).

El indicio de que la variable demográfica Edad fuese la que más se correlacionara con el rendimiento oral sugiere que cuanto mayores eran los estudiantes, peor tendían a ser sus resultados de la prueba oral. Esto tal vez pueda explicarse teniendo en cuenta que varios estudiantes eran bastante mayores (la edad más alta fue de 25.58 años al inicio del estudio) y que de este modo pueden haber tenido poco o ningún

contacto con el estudio formal del inglés en varios años, es decir, desde antes de empezar la carrera universitaria. De modo parecido, Ehrman y Oxford (1995), cuyos participantes tenían una edad media de 39 años, detectaron una asociación parecida, afirmando que «los estudiantes más jóvenes consiguieron mejores resultados» (p. 81) en la destreza oral.

En lo referente a las correlaciones con variables cognitivas, cuanto más tiempo habían estudiado el inglés en escuelas y en academias y cuantas más lenguas extranjeras hablaban o conocían los participantes, mejor tendían a realizar la prueba oral. La primera asociación indica una relación más cuantitativa, mientras la segunda apunta a un vínculo más cualitativo.

En cuanto a las variables cognitivas, los participantes que esperaban obtener una nota más alta en la asignatura de inglés, tendían a obtener mejor nota en la prueba oral. Se notó una tendencia parecida con las notas reales de las pruebas, no sólo las esperadas: los participantes que habían obtenido mejor nota en inglés antes de llegar a la universidad (típicamente en el examen de Selectividad) y en la *Quick Placement Test* hicieron mejor la prueba oral.

Cuanto más difícil les parecía la asignatura de inglés a los participantes, tanto peores notas obtuvieron en la prueba oral. Por otro lado, cuanto más se estudiaba la asignatura por razones que no fueran directamente académicas ni profesionales, tales como los viajes o la pasión por el inglés, tanto mejores resultados se registraban en esta prueba.

Tal como ocurrió en el caso del nivel de dominio lingüístico, la correlación negativa y estadísticamente significativa entre la nota de la prueba oral y la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera sugiere que cuanto más ansiedad experimentaban los participantes a la hora de estudiar el inglés, tanto peores notas obtuvieron en la

prueba. Este hallazgo ratifica los de otros autores que igualmente encontraron una relación desfavorable entre la ansiedad y la destreza oral (Cheng et al., 1999; Gregersen y Horwitz, 2002; MacIntyre y Gardner, 1994a; MacIntyre et al., 1997; Phillips, 1992; Young, 1986).

Los resultados del *análisis de regresión múltiple* revelaron como predictoras principales Edad, Por Otras Razones, Meses Dedicados al Estudio del Inglés en Escuelas (Primaria, Secundaria y Academias) y Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de la Lengua Extranjera en el Aula. Este hallazgo sugiere el siguiente modelo: los participantes en el presente estudio que obtuvieron mejores puntuaciones en la prueba oral mostraban una tendencia a ser más jóvenes, a haber dedicado más meses acumulados de estudio matriculados en escuelas y en academias y a experimentar menos ansiedad a la hora de aprender la lengua extranjera. Las contribuciones respectivas a la varianza de Por Otras Razones, de Meses Dedicados al Estudio del Inglés en Escuelas (Primaria, Secundaria y Academias) y de Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de la Lengua Extranjera en el Aula, que eran todas de menos del 8%, representan tamaños de efecto pequeños (Cohen, 1988), mientras que la de Edad (más del 13%) se puede considerar de efecto moderado (Cohen, 1988).

La constatación de que la edad predecía mejor el rendimiento oral (a mayor edad peor rendimiento) puede explicarse de la siguiente manera: puede ser que los participantes de más edad llevaran estudiando asignaturas de Ciencias del Trabajo sin relación con el inglés durante más tiempo que los participantes más jóvenes y por eso rindieran menos en la prueba oral. Puede tener que ver además con el declive de facultades orales que se asocian con edades más avanzadas, sugerido en algunas investigaciones (Lieberman, 1984; Newport, 1986). Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000, refiriéndose a estas investigaciones, afirmaron que «la fonología y la morfología,

además de la capacidad de hablar una segunda lengua sin acento, se deterioran ... severamente con la edad» (p. 6).

La segunda mejor variable predictora, Por Otras Razones, aportadas por los alumnos en el Cuestionario de Datos Personales y Formación Previa, sugiere la importancia de cuatro tipos de motivación (intrínseca, tal como el estudio del inglés por razones desinteresadas o en aras de la realización personal; extrínseca, tal como la importancia que tiene el inglés para algunos participantes; integrativa, demostrada en el deseo de comunicar con personas anglófonas o de viajar; instrumental, revelada en la necesidad de saber manejar el inglés para poder usar el Internet). La detección de Meses Dedicados al Estudio del Inglés en Escuelas (Primaria, Secundaria y Academias) como tercera mejor variable predictora apunta a una conexión cuantitativa entre el tiempo dedicado a los estudios y mejor rendimiento oral. Es notable que la Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de la Lengua Extranjera en el Aula fuera la cuarta mejor predictora de la nota de la prueba oral. Este hallazgo difiere del de Cheng et al. (1999), cuyo análisis de regresión múltiple reveló que la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera era la variable que mejor predecía las notas del examen oral. El resultado que en el grupo de alumnos del presente estudio la edad, las motivaciones y la formación previa en el aprendizaje del inglés aparentemente desempeñaron un papel más importante que la ansiedad en el rendimiento oral sugiere que las asociaciones entre ansiedad y destreza oral son aun más complejas que las observadas en la primera pregunta formulada.

En cuanto a la *cuarta pregunta formulada*, que examinó las asociaciones entre las puntuaciones de la escala de ansiedad FLCAS y las variables demográficas, académicas, cognitivas y afectivas, los resultados de las *correlaciones de Pearson* mostraron una asociación positiva y estadísticamente significativa entre Ansiedad en el Aprendizaje de la Lengua Extranjera y Género, indicando que las mujeres de este

estudio presentaban mayores niveles de ansiedad que los hombres. Este hallazgo es parecido al de Padilla, Cervantes, Maldonado y García (1988), quienes afirmaron las mujeres tendían a mostrar más ansiedad en cuanto al estudio de las lenguas que los hombres y al de Cheng (2002), que observó en las mujeres mayores niveles de ansiedad a la hora de escribir en la lengua extranjera que los hombres. Además, en el ámbito de la educación secundaria, Pappamihiel (2002) descubrió mayores niveles de ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la segunda lengua en las alumnas mejicanas al pasar del aula en que el inglés era la segunda lengua al aula regular y monolingüe. Sin embargo, los resultados del presente estudio contrastan con los de algunos autores que no encontraron ningún vínculo estadísticamente significativo entre ansiedad y género (Aida, 1994; Dawaele, 2002, Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999).

En lo que se refiere a las variables académicas, los resultados de las *correlaciones de Pearson* revelaron una asociación negativa y estadísticamente significativa entre las puntuaciones de FLCAS y Meses Dedicados al Estudio del Inglés en Escuelas (Primaria, Secundaria y Academias), indicando que cuanto más tiempo habían estado matriculados en escuelas, en institutos y en academias, tanto menor era la ansiedad que experimentaban los participantes a la hora de aprender una lengua extranjera en el aula. Este resultado recuerda en cierto modo el de Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999), que encontraron una correlación negativa y estadísticamente significativa entre la ansiedad y el número de asignaturas en lengua extranjera cursadas en secundaria y el de Rodríguez y Abreu (2003), que apreciaron niveles de ansiedad ligeramente más altos, aunque no estadísticamente significativos, en estudiantes de francés que llevaban estudiando esa lengua durante menos tiempo.

Al igual que ocurrió en el caso de las correlaciones de la prueba oral, el hablar o el conocer otra lengua se asociaba con niveles más bajos de ansiedad en el aprendizaje

de la lengua extranjera. Las correlaciones negativas y estadísticamente significativas entre las puntuaciones de FLCAS y la nota de las varias pruebas lingüísticas sugiere que cuanto mayores eran los niveles de ansiedad exhibidos, tanto peores notas obtenían los participantes en las pruebas de inglés. Por tanto, no es de extrañar que cuanto más difícil les parecía a los estudiantes la asignatura de inglés, tanto mayor era la ansiedad que experimentaban a la hora de aprender una lengua extranjera en el aula.

Las correlaciones negativas y estadísticamente significativas entre las puntuaciones de la FLCAS y la autovaloración del nivel de dominio lingüístico, tanto en general como en las cuatro destrezas, indica que cuanto más ansiedad experimentaban, tanto peor estimación tenían los estudiantes de su propio nivel de inglés. De igual modo, mayores niveles de ansiedad se asociaban con más pesimismo sobre la nota final en la asignatura de inglés. Este último hallazgo es parecido al de Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999), que encontraron una correlación negativa y estadísticamente significativa entre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua y la nota final esperada.

Hemos visto que en los participantes del presente estudio la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua se ha asociado negativa y significativamente tanto con las notas reales como con las esperadas, resultados que concuerdan con los de un estudio de Horwitz (1986), que observó que «en el primer estudio en el que se utilizó la FLCAS ... había una modesta correlación negativa y significativa entre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y las notas esperadas por los estudiantes ... y [entre la ansiedad] y las notas finales reales, indicando que los estudiantes con mayores niveles de ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera no sólo esperaban, sino que también obtuvieron notas más bajas que sus compañeros menos ansiosos» (Horwitz, 2001, p. 115).

Los resultados del *análisis de regresión múltiple* detectaron como variables independientes predictoras de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera la Autovaloración del Nivel Global en Inglés, Otra Lengua Hablada o Conocida y Género, indicando el siguiente modelo: los participantes que exhibían mayores niveles de ansiedad tendían a una estimación más desfavorable de su propio nivel de dominio del inglés, a un desconocimiento de otras lenguas y a ser mujeres. La contribución a la varianza de Autovaloración del Nivel Global en Inglés era de más del 26%, por lo que se puede considerar su tamaño de efecto como grande (Cohen, 1988). Las contribuciones de Otra Lengua Hablada o Conocida y Edad, ambas de menos del 8%, representan tamaños de efecto pequeños (Cohen, 1988).

El hallazgo de la autovaloración del nivel global en inglés como variable mejor predictora de la ansiedad está en línea con el de otros investigadores. Cheng (2002) descubrió que la confianza en sí mismo era la variable mejor predictora de la ansiedad relacionada con la producción escrita. El tamaño de efecto en nuestro estudio apunta a la importancia de las autopercepciones en la capacidad lingüística propia, importancia resaltada en la observación hecha por MacIntyre et al. (1997) que «la competencia real, la competencia percibida y la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la [segunda] lengua están todas interrelacionadas» (p. 274).

Otra Lengua Hablada o Conocida, que resultó ser la segunda mejor variable predictora de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera, se ha observado, a pesar de su tamaño de efecto pequeño, como una variable importante de nuestro estudio, ya que también estuvo relacionada con un mejor rendimiento oral. En este sentido, Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) descubrieron que la «experiencia previa de lenguas extranjeras en el instituto» (p. 226) predecía menor ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera.

La detección de Género como la tercera mejor variable predictora de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera refleja los resultados de otros autores que registraron niveles de ansiedad más altos en las alumnas que en los alumnos (Cheng, 2002; Elkhafafi, 2005; Pappamihel, 2002). Aun teniendo en cuenta que la mayoría de los participantes del presente estudio eran mujeres, es notable que las seis participantes de niveles de ansiedad elevados seleccionadas para las entrevistas post-prueba oral eran todas mujeres.

En cuanto a las *entrevistas con las seis participantes de niveles de ansiedad elevados seleccionadas* (tres de nivel lingüístico alto y tres de nivel bajo), al considerar las *similitudes* en sus reacciones cuando escucharon la grabación de su prueba oral, me llamó la atención lo parecidas que habían sido sus reacciones *afectivas* durante la prueba. La profesora no guió el contenido de las entrevistas para enfocarlas sobre el nerviosismo o la aprensión y, sin embargo, todas las estudiantes mencionaron sin excepción la palabra «*nerviosa*» o «*nervios*» en su primera frase. Esto implicaría tal vez que la sensación más global o sobresaliente de las estudiantes de ambos niveles fuera el nerviosismo. El «miedo» mencionado por una estudiante de nivel lingüístico bajo ilustra la sensación de «miedo» a comunicarse en la lengua extranjera que es omnipresente en la literatura que trata este tipo de ansiedad (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986; Oh, 1990; von Wörde, 2003; Vogely, 1998). De hecho, el «miedo a la evaluación negativa» fue propuesto como uno de los tres componentes principales del constructo original de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127).

Se observaron también reacciones *cognitivas* muy similares en estudiantes de ansiedad alta de ambos niveles lingüísticos, relacionadas con obstáculos para la consecución de la comunicación exitosa, causados aparentemente por el nerviosismo. Compárese, por ejemplo, «[los nervios] no me dejan pensar bien las cosas...»,

comentario hecho por una estudiante de nivel lingüístico bajo (b) con «...me quedo en blanco mucho tiempo», comentario de una estudiante de nivel lingüístico alto (a). Fíjese en la similitud que hay entre «...me bloqueo mucho...» (b) y «...me quedo encasquillada...» (a).

Se registraron menos síntomas *fisiológicos* relacionados con la ansiedad, tales como tensión, manos sudorosas o voz temblorosa, pero las estudiantes de ambos niveles lingüísticos los padecieron. Reacciones similares se describen ampliamente en la literatura (Horwitz et al., 1986; Price, 1991; von Wörde, 2003).

En lo que refiere a las *diferencias* entre las participantes de ansiedad elevada y nivel lingüístico alto y las de ansiedad elevada y nivel lingüístico bajo en sus reacciones al escuchar la grabación de la prueba oral, se observaron diferencias *afectivas* y *cognitivas*. Las participantes de nivel lingüístico bajo parecían más resignadas a no hablar bien en la prueba, lamentándose de la «imposibilidad» de hacerlo mejor y de no poder prestar más atención a la profesora debido al nerviosismo. En contraste con estas reacciones, una estudiante de nivel lingüístico alto reaccionó de un modo más positivo, considerando que la experiencia desagradable de hablar en inglés en la prueba sería ventajosa a la hora de hablar con nativos fuera del aula.

Los comentarios sobre reacciones cognitivas también revelaron diferencias entre las estudiantes de diferentes niveles lingüísticos. Las tres estudiantes de nivel lingüístico bajo parecían depender más de estrategias «de abajo a arriba», tales como la traducción literal y la memorización, a la hora de estudiar y de hacer exámenes.

En conclusión, considerando los hallazgos de este estudio empírico, mientras no podemos afirmar con certeza, tal como lo hicieron MacIntyre y Gardner (1991b), que la «ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua ... afectó negativamente el aprendizaje y la producción de la lengua» (p. 302), consideramos que nuestros resultados nos permiten

concluir que los niveles más altos de ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera sí estaban relacionados con el nivel global de dominio lingüístico y con el rendimiento oral inferiores.

Una aportación importante del estudio ha sido la investigación de la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera en relación al rendimiento en general, sin limitarse a los resultados de una sola prueba. Otra contribución notable ha sido la exploración de múltiples variables pertenecientes a los participantes con vistas a desentrañar las complejas relaciones observadas entre el rendimiento oral, el nivel de dominio lingüístico y la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera.

Se ha observado que (a) la ansiedad estaba asociada negativamente con la nota de la prueba oral y con algunos criterios correspondientes a esa prueba; (b) en estudiantes moderadamente ansiosos se halló alguna evidencia de ansiedad facilitadora; (c) se detectó la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera como predictora tanto del rendimiento oral como del nivel global de dominio del inglés, aparentemente ejerciendo una influencia negativa; (d) parece que tanto el rendimiento oral como el nivel de dominio lingüístico se vieron favorecidos por una falta de interés en obtener créditos universitarios y por tener una serie de razones por las que se estudiaba el inglés, incluyendo diferentes tipos de motivación; (e) el haber empezado a estudiar inglés a una edad temprana parecía estar ligado a un nivel lingüístico global superior, mientras que meses de estudio formal de inglés en escuelas, institutos y academias parecían realzar el rendimiento oral; (f) los estudiantes mayores tendían a obtener notas inferiores en la prueba oral; (g) en general las mujeres que participaron en este estudio padecían niveles de ansiedad más altos que los hombres; (h) aparentemente el hablar o el conocer otra lengua atenuaba los niveles de ansiedad; (i) las percepciones positivas sobre la capacidad lingüística propia estaban estrechamente relacionadas con niveles de ansiedad

más bajos; (j) las estudiantes seleccionadas muy ansiosas de nivel lingüístico bajo y de nivel lingüístico alto reaccionaron a la prueba oral de una manera similar en muchos aspectos, tales como sentirse nerviosas o con miedo o quedarse en blanco; (k) las participantes seleccionadas de nivel lingüístico bajo parecían emplear más estrategias «de abajo a arriba», debido tal vez al nerviosismo o a una falta de conocimientos lingüísticos.

Teniendo en cuenta las conclusiones principales expuestas en los párrafos anteriores, sería conveniente hacer unas *recomendaciones pedagógicas* con el objeto de reducir la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera en los alumnos.

(a) Sería ventajoso introducir el estudio de las lenguas extranjeras a edades muy tempranas en el colegio, sugerencia hecha también por Aida (1994) y por Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999).

(b) En vista de que las autopercepciones favorables de las habilidades lingüísticas parecen asociarse con niveles de ansiedad más bajos, parece que realzar estas autopercepciones tendría un efecto beneficioso. Sin embargo, es difícil llevar a cabo esta sugerencia en las aulas donde los alumnos tienden a tener un nivel lingüístico más bajo que el nivel establecido en la asignatura, tal como ocurre en muchas aulas universitarias. En este sentido el profesor debería elegir y explotar con sumo cuidado los textos a utilizar, sobre todo los auténticos, tal como aconsejaron Saito et al. (1999).

(c) Los resultados de nuestro estudio apuntan a la posible presencia de una mayor ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera en las mujeres. El profesor tendrá que ser consciente de estas tensiones potenciales en las alumnas, sobre todo durante las actividades comunicativas (Pappamihiel, 2001), tensiones que tal vez puedan reducirse mediante el apoyo del profesor y el «trabajo en grupo más seguro» (p. 35).

(d) Las entrevistas parecieron revelar la presencia de la inquietud y del nerviosismo en participantes muy ansiosas tanto de nivel lingüístico bajo como de nivel lingüístico alto durante la prueba oral. Teniendo en cuenta la incomodidad experimentada por muchos alumnos durante las actividades orales, los profesores no deben olvidar que éstos pueden estar sufriendo los efectos de diferentes aspectos de la ansiedad en clase, tales como la aprensión comunicativa o el miedo a la evaluación negativa (Horwitz et al., 1986). Para contrarrestar estos efectos perjudiciales, el profesor debería esforzarse para establecer un ambiente «cálido» en clase en el que el alumno se sienta apoyado, siguiendo los consejos de Elkhafaifi (2005). Además, el profesor debería organizar las actividades orales cuidadosamente, dando instrucciones claras y permitiendo que los alumnos preparen sus intervenciones orales con suficiente tiempo, enseñando directamente aspectos de la pronunciación, tales como los símbolos fonéticos, según la propuesta de Ganschow et al. (1994). Las actividades orales realizadas por parejas o en grupos pequeños aportan muchas oportunidades para practicar y desarrollar la destreza oral (Pappamihiel, 2001), sin la amenaza de sentirse observados por todos los demás compañeros.

(e) En las entrevistas post-orales se vio como las alumnas de nivel lingüístico más bajo tendían a usar estrategias «de abajo a arriba» al escuchar la intervención de la profesora, estrategias que no habían funcionado bien en la prueba. Sería conveniente, por lo tanto, enseñar el uso de las estrategias «de arriba a abajo», tales como el intentar captar el mensaje global sin la necesidad de traducir palabra por palabra (Vogely, 1998). Sería útil, además, que el profesor suministrara en todo momento input comprensible, asegurándose de que los alumnos han entendido lo que tienen que hacer en las actividades auditivas y dándoles «feedback positivo» (Elkhafaifi, 2005, p. 215).

Esta investigación tiene numerosas *limitaciones*. (a) El número de participantes era pequeño ( $N = 40$ ) y, por tanto, se ha restringido su generalización a otras poblaciones más grandes. (b) El estudio se realizó en un período de tiempo relativamente corto (un cuatrimestre): un estudio de más duración habría permitido llevar a cabo una investigación longitudinal que tal vez hubiera revelado más vicisitudes en los niveles de ansiedad experimentada por los alumnos. (c) La naturaleza pre-experimental de la investigación nos permitió observar tendencias pero no generalizar los hallazgos. (d) Hay que recordar también que los datos aportados en el cuestionario DFPF no podían ser verificados y que, en ocasiones, los participantes podrían haber respondido de una manera que para ellos fuese más aceptable socialmente. Además, tanto en el cuestionario como en las entrevistas post-orales puede haberles costado trabajo a los estudiantes dar información precisa acerca de las actitudes y de las emociones. (e) El procedimiento estadístico de la correlación no nos permite hablar de causa y efecto entre las variables que han sido el centro de interés en esta tesis: la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera, el nivel global de dominio del inglés, el rendimiento en una prueba oral y las características demográficas, académicas, cognitivas y afectivas de los participantes, aunque el análisis regresión múltiple arrojó alguna luz sobre la predicción de las tres variables principales.

Basándonos en los hallazgos de este estudio, sería conveniente llevar a cabo *más investigaciones* relacionadas con este tema.

(a) Sería provechoso realizar un experimento verdadero que examinara la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera en dos grupos de estudiantes, por ejemplo, de inglés para fines específicos y de inglés general, con el fin de comparar y contrastar sus posibles influencias en los dos ámbitos de aprendizaje. Otra posibilidad sería intervenir en el tratamiento de uno de los grupos, para comprobar si diferentes

tipos de actividades (más tradicionales o comunicativas) o de ambiente en el aula (personalizado/distendido o frío/estricto) podrían influir en la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera o en el rendimiento lingüístico.

(b) Replicar este estudio con participantes cuya lengua materna no fuera el español o que estudiaran otras lenguas y a otros niveles, principiante o avanzado, por ejemplo, apoyaría o cuestionaría sus resultados.

(c) Las asociaciones entre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y el rendimiento podrían examinarse a intervalos a lo largo del período de estudio de los participantes, para comprobar si fluctúa la ansiedad, por ejemplo, a principios de curso o antes de los exámenes.

(d) La ansiedad facilitadora, que observamos que quizás estuviese relacionada favorablemente con el rendimiento de los participantes de ansiedad moderada, se podría investigar más, para comprobar si podría contribuir positivamente al rendimiento en estudiantes de ansiedad alta.

(e) Con el mismo propósito, se podrían llevar a cabo entrevistas con estudiantes cuyo nivel de ansiedad fuera moderado o bajo, para descubrir más acerca de sus estilos y estrategias de aprendizaje, con vistas a instar a los estudiantes de ansiedad alta a adoptar en lo posible estos estilos y estrategias para mejorar su propio aprendizaje y rendimiento.

(f) En vista de que diferentes tipos de motivación desempeñaron aparentemente un papel favorable en el nivel global de dominio lingüístico y en el rendimiento oral, sería interesante explorar más esta dimensión afectiva del aprendizaje de los idiomas, enfocando la investigación en la reducción de la ansiedad.

La investigación debería seguir explorando y clarificando los vínculos que hemos discernido entre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera, el nivel de

dominio lingüístico, el rendimiento en la destreza oral y las características académicas, demográficas, cognitivas y afectivas de los estudiantes de los idiomas. Los nuevos descubrimientos aumentarán los conocimientos de los profesores y de los investigadores sobre la incomodidad, la aprensión y el miedo que los estudiantes a menudo experimentan y esperamos que esta comprensión más profunda redunde en la reducción de la ansiedad de los estudiantes y en beneficio de su aprendizaje de las lenguas.

The typing of the text, the design and setting of the tables, and the data analyses were carried out by the author of the thesis.