Revisited: Language Learning Anxiety & L1 as a Classroom Tool

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How much is too much?

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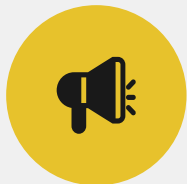| Intro, Rationale & Research	Who I am, What is this talk about?, My own body of research
Language Anxiety	What is it?, What are the main causes?
Using L1 in the classroom	The history of L2 classrooms, Your experience, Pros & Cons
How Much is too Much?	Group work: Classroom management implications, Conclusion

What this talk is NOT

An account of quantitative effects on academic achievement, grades, etc

A call to revert to Grammar-Translation methodology

A prescription for the use of L1 in the classroom. Every classroom is different!
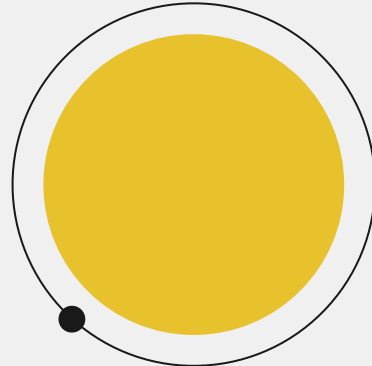
1

Introduction, Rationale & Research

Who I am and why I do what I do.

- Alyson Greville

- B.A International , Maynooth University

- Work Experience in Germany

- M.A Applied Linguistics, MIC

- Future Learning Language School, Dublin
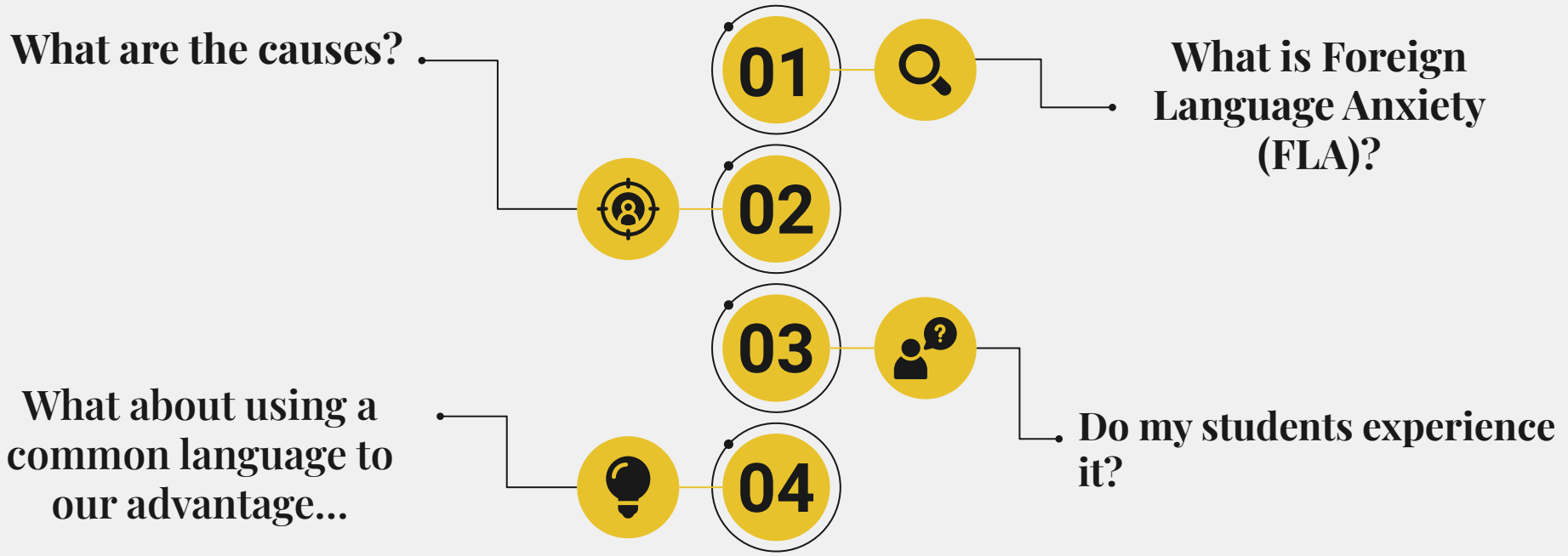
- A very anxious language learner

My research

Investigating differing foreign language anxiety levels experienced by both monolingual and multilingual adult learners of English, identifying the causes of this anxiety, and assessing potential effects of the use of a common language during instruction

by Alyson Mary Greville, B.A International

BRIATHAR DÉ MO LÓCHRANN
MIC
MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
COLÁISTE MHUIRE GAN SMÁL

- Research carried out in Bremen, Germany over 6 weeks in 2021

- A small class group of adult students with various L1s with a rocky start

- Identified self-claimed causes of language anxiety to varying degrees (Age)

- Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

- Explored potential of using a common language in the classroom during instruction as a tool

- The use of the common language (LC) was planned, controlled and recorded

- Results & Limitations of the study

The research methodology in stages

What are the causes?

01

What is Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)?

02

03

Do my students experience it?

What about using a common language to our advantage...

04

2

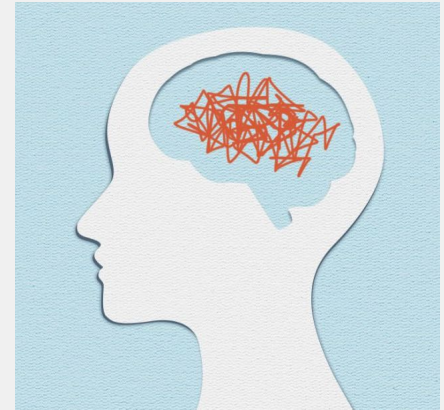# Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)

2 Anxiety is..

- **"the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system"**

  (Spielberger, 1983)

-situational
-trait
-temporary psychological state (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991: 86–91)

- from an evolutionary standpoint, the remainder of survival instincts to stay away from dangerous places & situations
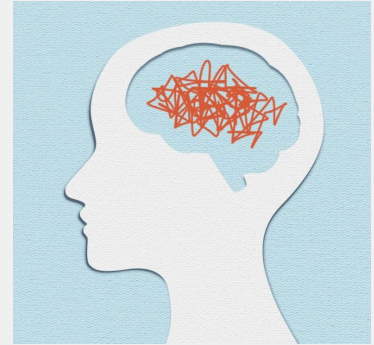
Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is..

- a situation-specific (situational) form of anxiety

★ *language anxiety, n* : **subjective** feelings of apprehension and fear associated with **language learning and use**. Foreign language anxiety may be a situation-specific anxiety, similar in that respect to public speaking anxiety. **Issues** in the study of language anxiety include whether anxiety is a **cause, or an effect,** of poor achievement, anxiety under **specific instructional conditions**, and the relationship of general language anxiety to more specific kinds of anxiety associated with speaking, reading, or examinations.

–Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics
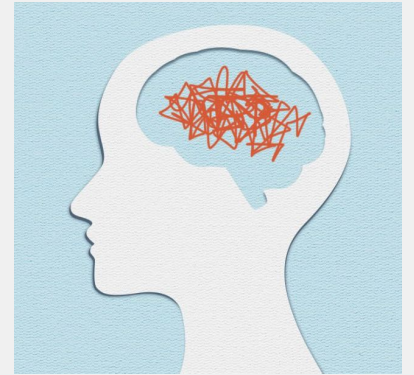
Foreign Language Anxiety is..

- "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the **uniqueness** of the language learning process" (Horwitz et al., 1986: 128).

- **affective** factor (i.e, needs, emotions, feelings, etc (Krashen, 1982)

- 3 main categories as proposed by Horwitz et al:

  1. **Communication apprehension**
  2. **Fear of negative evaluation** (peer or instructor)
  3. **Test anxiety** (can be facilitative or debilitative)

  ...can manifest in avoidance tactics

FLCAS

- FLA can be measured using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al. , 1986)

- 3 categories (Communication apprehension, test anxiety & fear of negative evaluation)

- 33 statements & Likert scale (range of 33-165 points)

  (14) I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.

  (15) I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.

- My research included a survey with open ended questions to compliment this, to identify the individual needs of the students & their attitudes towards learning.
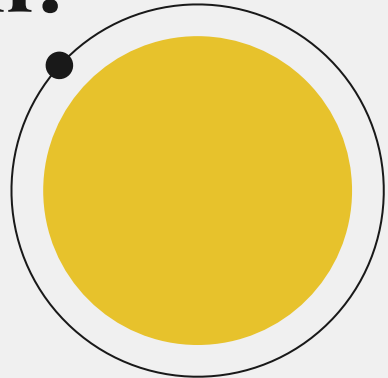
SCAN ME

Show of hands

- Have you ever seen signs of any of the 3 categories or FLA?

  1. Communication apprehension

  2. Fear of negative evaluation (peer or instructor)

  3. Test anxiety (can be facilitative or debilitative)

What, in *your* experience & your opinion, are the **main causes** of reluctance and FLA in your classroom?

Go to www.menti.com & use code 8409 4912
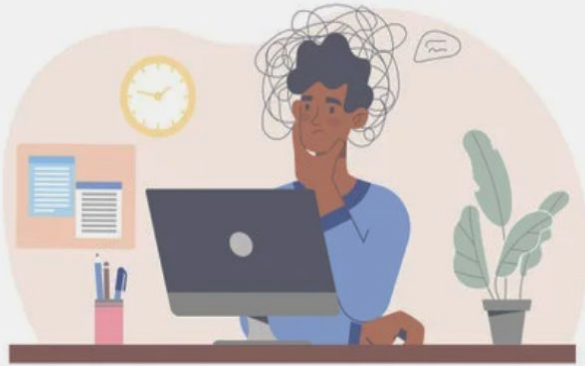
What causes FLA?

6 potential sources (Young, 1991)

1. Personal & interpersonal difficulties

2. Learner beliefs about language learning

3. Teacher beliefs about language learning

4. Instructor-learner interactions

5. Classroom procedures (instructional conditions)

6. Language testing

What causes FLA?

- learners **do not** enter the language learning process with FLA, (MacIntyre and Gardner) (see speaker notes)

- Preconceived ideas about learning as an **adult** & the "Critical Period" hypothesis.

- Language ego & linguistico-cultural identity

- **Combination** of fear of public speaking and limited linguistic abilities in L2.

What can be done about FLA?

- Teacher plays a very important role in this

- 2 main options (Horwitz et al., 1986)

  -Equip learners with the tools to deal with FLA

  -Work on creating a low anxiety learning environment

- L1 can be used in the classroom...

3

Using L1 in the L2 classroom

Using L1 in the L2 classroom: the literature

3

- All theories of L2 acquisition require **existing awareness of the role of the L1** in the learning of the L2 (Ellis, 2008, Kroll & Stewart, 1994, Zhao & Macaro, 2016).

- Many languages have **structures, words, roots and skills** in common. Drawing awareness to this can promote successful learning and faster processing (Lo, 2015)

- Does not only support cognitive skills- also supports **social and affective skills** (reduces anxiety, boosts confidence (de la Campa and Nassaji, 2015)

3 Using a common language in the classroom

- Collaborated with students at the beginning of the study to establish **rules & boundaries** for the **amount & frequency** of L1/LC use

-**both** teacher & students use LC, as usual teacher will model in English, students will repeat in English once more

-LC for **clarifying** questions (instructions, grammar, etc)

-LC for examples of grammar **comparison**

-**reinforcement** using code-switching

eg: "<English word A>, <German translation of A>, that's right, <English word A>"

Using a common language in the classroom

3

reinforcement using code-switching: "False friends"

I: What does 'I will go to Ireland' mean?... What does... 'I WILL go to Ireland... mean?" Yes?

L3: Ich will nach Irland. *(I want to go to Ireland)*

I: No, it-

L3: No? Hä? *(Huh?)*

I: Nope! 'Ich will' heißt "I want". Wollen. To want. Aber "I WILL" ...heißt "ich werde" oder ich mache etwas... im Zukunft. Tomorrow, Morgen. Or next week, nächste Woche. Next week. *(No. 'Ich will' means 'I want', but 'I WILL' ... means 'Ich werde' or 'I do something'...in the future...)*

The results..

- Implications have been a topic of **debate** in Applied Linguistics- shift in opinion recently

- Macaro (2001), proved that the amount of teacher L1 use **did not** have any effect on the amount of student L1 use, diverging from the theory that L1 use undermines or interrupts the learning process.

- My results were similar:

  -**All** students reported decreased FLA (G2 change was less)

  -Built rapport and added **humour** to the class (non-native LC speaker)

  -Students were more **relaxed and productive** in class, took more **risks**

  -Students felt that they **fully understood** the foundations of English grammar

  -

And then...

- I moved back to Ireland..
- No longer had a LC that wasn't English , but definitely signs of a **LC among students**
- While my approach had to change, some factors were further reinforced :

-students find **comfort** in having access to a LC or L1 (ISL)

-**Non-Nativism** - There's something to it!

-opportunity for **self- and peer- assessment, negotiation of meaning**, etc,

(especially in mixed-level classrooms)

4

L1: How much is too much?

Discuss: How much is too much?

In groups of ca. 5, discuss your experience of students using L1 in the classroom

-Do your students display any signs of FLA? How does it present itself?

-Do you think the use of L1 is a positive or negative influence on the learning process? Why?

-If you share a LC or L1 with your students: Do you use it as a tool in your classroom or do you prefer to avoid this and keep your classroom exclusively L2?

-Do you have strategies to control and monitor the amount and frequency of L1 in your classroom?

-In your opinion, how much is too much?

Implications for language classrooms

- particularly effective in countries where the target language is not the local language

- Using the L1 selectively and appropriately has many benefits:

  -Useful to scaffold learning

  -Abstract vocabulary & concepts/specialist or technical terms

- The success of this strategy depends on the teacher's ability to carry out individual needs analysis on their students

- our emotions & feelings play an important role in how we live our lives, which is often ignored in teaching methodologies (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015: 9)

- Requires good classroom management skills

- Throughout the learning process, the amount of L1 use will decrease

Thanks!

Any questions?

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in **Connect with me on LinkedIn (Alyson Greville)**

📷 **Follow me on Instagram: alysongreville95**

LinkedIn