

L2 ANXIETY IN SPANISH-SPEAKING ADULT ESL POPULATIONS:
POSSIBLE CAUSES AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

by

SCOTT B. FREIBERGER
B.A. Queens College of CUNY, 1997
M.P.I.A. University of California, San Diego, 2004

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Major Professor: Florin Mihai

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety has been identified as a plausible factor affecting second language (L2) acquisition. However, more research is needed on how anxiety may influence Spanish-speaking adult English as a Second Language (ESL) populations. Determining precisely what causes anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL populations should be of interest not only to L2 researchers but also to ESL instructors who may have adult Spanish-speaking English language learners (ELLs) in their classes.

This study researched L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL learners. Specifically, it considered possible causes and cultural influences of L2 anxiety in 10 Spanish-speaking adult ESL students at a university English language institute (ELI). Participants were given a choice of completing an English or Spanish version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and then participated in follow-up interviews. Results were documented and evaluated. A total of 14 causes of L2 anxiety were identified, including incompatible goals, using English in professional contexts, the native country, and the need for error correction. Finally, contrary to the literature, collaborative group work was found to cause L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Second language (L2) anxiety has been identified as an anxiety specific to learning a second or foreign language (FL) (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986), and other researchers in the field have supported this notion (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a). While learning a second or FL, students may feel “tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system” (Spielberger, 1983, p. 1). Various studies (as cited in Gardner, Smyth, Clement, & Glikman, 1976; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994b) demonstrated that L2 anxiety may have a profound influence on proficiency in the target language.

A marked increase in L2 anxiety may also result in inadequate English language proficiency (Krashen, 1985). When students fail to understand assignments and what teachers and classmates are saying in English, they may become unmotivated to learn; consequently, a vicious cycle of depression, low self-esteem and perennial feelings of failure may result (Crookall & Oxford, 1991). L2 anxiety may also create “an emotionally and physically uncomfortable experience” for Spanish-speaking adult ESL students (Tallon, 2008, p. 2).

Anxious students are generally not engaged in learning. Consequently, L2 anxiety may lower academic achievement (course grades) (Krashen, 1985; Horwitz, 1986), cognitive processes (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994b), and general communication in the target language (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b). Failure in classes where English is used to communicate may further increase feelings of anxiety and helplessness in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students. It

is therefore important to determine what may cause L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL populations.

Background of the Study

L2 anxiety has been identified as a key influence on L2 acquisition (Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002; Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004; Gardner, 1991; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) in a variety of educational contexts (Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999). L2 anxiety generally develops when negative feelings are associated with performance in learning an L2 (Aida, 1994; Cheng et al., 1999; Horwitz, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b).

This topic may also be of interest to instructors who teach Spanish-speaking ESL students in K-12 educational contexts because over the past two decades there has been a steady increase in Spanish-speaking ESL students in the United States. In 2005-2006 the number of English language learners (ELLs) grew to nearly 50 million nationwide, a 60% increase over the past decade (NCELA, 2007). In 2004-2005, 79% of all ELLs were Spanish speakers (Payán & Nettles, 2008), and from 2006-2007 nearly 200,000 Spanish-speaking ELLs (PK-12) received Title III language instruction educational program services in the state of Florida alone (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Yet in spite of ample studies that researched L2 anxiety in K-12 contexts, relatively little research proposes how anxiety may influence Spanish-speaking adult ESL populations. Determining what may influence L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL populations should be of interest not only to second language acquisition (SLA) researchers but also to ESL instructors who teach at English language institutes.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore possible causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL populations and determine how culture may influence L2 anxiety. This study considered demographic information, participants' perceptions of self and same-level peer proficiency, language and cultural differences, and circumstances both inside and outside the classroom.

Design of the Study

Based on numerical data, quantitative research methods introduce “in numerical terms a setting and the things going on in it” (Brown & Rodgers, 2002, p. 118). In contrast, qualitative research, a type of survey research technique for gathering data, incorporates interviews and questionnaires (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). Since quantitative research tends to be limited in that it focuses mainly on numerical rather than non-numerical research (Brown & Rodgers, 2002), qualitative methods, including a survey and follow-up interviews, form the basis of the current study.

Survey research techniques include formulating research goals, determining the population to be studied, choosing an interview methodology, creating or finding an established questionnaire, conducting interviews, and finally, analyzing the data (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). Survey research that includes interviews and questionnaires provide “common ground between the qualitative and quantitative approaches” (Brown & Rodgers, 2002, p. 16). At the same time, face-to-face interviews help to improve “the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability” of the research study (Brown, 2002, p. 242).

This study was undertaken to better determine what may cause anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students. The research questions central to this study were:

- What are the causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute?
- What role might culture play in causing L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students?

The data analyzed were collected from 10 Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at an English language institute (ELI) located on a large public Florida university. Participants first received the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), an instrument designed specifically to measure anxiety found in a FL setting (Horwitz et al., 1986). The FLCAS instrument has been used in a variety of studies (Aida, 1994; Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004; Horwitz, 1986; Goshi, 2005) and results have indicated that it is a valid construct for assessing communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and general feeling of anxiety (Horwitz, 1986). Other studies have also shown the FLCAS to be a sound, rigorously tested instrument designed specifically to measure anxiety related to FL learning in a classroom setting (Aida, 1994; Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989).

Face-to-face interviews were used to record cultural and personal information, ensure that participants understood the FLCAS, and triangulate the data. After a thorough examination of the FLCAS and relevant literature, 23 interview questions were formed to arrive at possible causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students. Each interview started with 3 basic warm-up questions to relax participants, similar to those that may appear on standardized

speaking examinations to relax test takers. Interview questions were based on information contained in the FLCAS but were not based on any previously published interviews.

Since the FLCAS measures communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and general feeling of anxiety, the interview questions were structured so that these three areas of L2 anxiety could also be assessed. For instance, Question 11, “What is the hardest thing about learning English? (grammar, reading, sentence structure, speaking, writing)” measured communication apprehension. Question 20, “How does your English level compare with your classmates?” measured fear of negative evaluation, and Question 21, “What do you think about tests? How easy or hard are they in English?” measured general feeling of anxiety.

It was determined by the principle researcher that Spanish-speaking adult ESL students at intermediate or higher levels of English language proficiency were capable of conducting interviews in English. Since 7 out of 10 students in this study were placed at intermediate, high-intermediate or advanced proficiency levels, these 7 students were interviewed in English. The 7 students that elected to be interviewed in English commented that they appreciated an opportunity to practice the target language outside of the classroom environment. Then, 3 participants at beginner and low-intermediate levels were interviewed in Spanish by a native Spanish-speaking graduate student.

To offer students a choice in answering the questionnaire, the FLCAS had been translated by two native speakers who use Spanish in professional contexts and approved by a faculty member fluent in Spanish at a large public Florida university. Since this study deals specifically with English, the word “English” was used and the words “foreign language” were replaced with the words “English language” on the FLCAS. In addition, the word “English” was placed prior

to the words “language class” to specifically refer to the English language rather than a general language class.

At the school site, students first received a Consent Form available in both English and Spanish. The Consent Form explained in detail the purpose of the study, procedures, rights of research subjects, possible risks, confidentiality as well as participation and withdrawal information, and identification of investigators. The Spanish version was translated by the aforementioned two native Spanish speakers and approved by a faculty member fluent in the language at a large public Florida university. Students had ample time to review the Consent Form.

The Consent Form also asked whether students would agree to a brief follow-up face-to-face interview to learn more about L2 anxiety. After the signed Consent Forms were returned, a date and time was arranged to distribute the FLCAS survey questionnaires and conduct follow-up interviews with the Spanish-speaking adult ESL students who had agreed to participate in them. All students were given the choice of declining to be interviewed individually.

Although all 10 students were given the choice of taking the surveys and not participating in interviews, each chose to participate in both. The FLCAS survey instrument was then distributed during regular ESL classroom hours after a total of 10 adult Spanish-speaking adult ESL students had agreed to participate. The instructions were explained verbally before the survey began. It was explained to the students that the survey results would be kept entirely confidential.

This research study is concerned with the perceptions of respondents. Students took between 10 to 15 minutes to complete the 33 questions on the FLCAS and were then asked

demographic information. For interviews conducted in Spanish, questions were translated by two native Spanish speakers and approved by a faculty member fluent in the language. Each interview lasted approximately 15 minutes.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 provides a detailed background, purpose, and study design. Research questions, along with the importance and limitations of this study, follow shortly hereafter. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth review of the literature. Chapter 3 describes in further detail the methodology used, which includes data analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 presents the findings. Chapter 5 provides an in-depth discussion and set of conclusions.

Importance of the Study

Understanding what may cause L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL populations could help educators who teach ESL populations. When ESL instructors understand some of the causes and influences of L2 anxiety, they are better able to plan collaborative activities, guide participation and scaffold knowledge in a non-threatening environment to improve academic performance in the classroom (Folse, 2006).

Since this information could be transferred to K-12 environments, both ESL and mainstream teachers who have English language learners (ELLs) in their classes may benefit from this knowledge. Understanding the causes of L2 anxiety may help both ESL and mainstream teachers create a classroom environment more conducive to L2 acquisition; perhaps as a result, educators may ensure that language acquisition occurs more smoothly for their students.

Limitations

There were several limitations in this study. First, there were a limited number of participants. Second, the author, fluent in several Asian languages and familiar with many Asian cultural norms, had a limited understanding of Spanish language and Latino cultures. Third, the FLCAS survey instrument and a limited number of interviews were used; a wider variety of survey instruments and a greater number of observable measures such as grades, journal entries, as well as progress and student reports, may have strengthened the findings.

Principle Assumptions

This study assumed that Spanish-speaking adult ESL students would respond accurately to questions on the FLCAS and in interviews. For this reason, this study assumed that only truthful data would be recorded. This study was explained thoroughly in both English and Spanish in a Consent Form that participants had ample time to review. Further, participants had the option of using either an English or Spanish version of the FLCAS and had access to both English and Spanish versions to verify meaning while completing the questionnaires.

Participants were also provided with precise Spanish translations of interview questions (i.e., students had access to Spanish questions during interviews conducted in English). Instructions were clearly explained prior to the start of this study, a rating scale appeared at the top of the survey and below each item, and precise Spanish translations of interview questions were provided. Therefore, this study further assumed that all participants understood the meaning of the items in the FLCAS and interview questions prior to responding.

This study also assumed that participants would respond to items in the FLCAS and during interviews according to their own feelings and thoughts. Since the results of this study

were based on honest responses, the principle interviewer did not attempt to influence the participants to respond in any particular manner.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

L2 Anxiety

A number of studies indicate that L2 anxiety is unique to language learning and that it influences the ability to process information in classroom settings (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). L2 anxiety is also associated with negative beliefs about learning English as a foreign language (Goshi, 2005). Programs that do not have “a well-articulated framework” (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004, p. 24), or curricula that does not overly “repeat information and skill development” (Wellinger, 2006/2007, p. 32), may increase L2 anxiety. In addition, educational systems that do not require students to begin learning an L2 at an early age may also be responsible for creating higher levels of L2 anxiety at a later age (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004).

Language classes, particularly those taught within a communicative language teaching (CLT) framework, tend to require active participation (Richard-Amato, 2010). This entails a high degree of risk-taking and self-exposure (Arnold, 2000). ELLs in the U.S. may feel anxiety in classroom settings because their ability to communicate in the target language has not developed to a level that they feel comfortable with. Being forced to speak English aloud when students are not ready may lead to negative experiences, and persistent negative experiences may lead to L2 anxiety.

Anxiety has been shown to increase or decrease according to target language and level of difficulty (Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999). ESL students may feel more anxious when they are forced to use an unfamiliar language. In addition, being unfamiliar with the target culture could also provoke feelings of anxiety. The classroom learning environment has also been identified

as a possible contributing factor in L2 anxiety (Richard-Amato, 2010). ESL students therefore require a safe learning environment where they do not feel embarrassed making mistakes.

Argaman and Abu-Rabia (2002) studied the influence of language anxiety on English reading and writing tasks. Participants were 68 students aged 12-13 who were learning English as a foreign language and spoke Hebrew as their mother tongue (L1). Each student was given a version of the FLCAS with modified questions. After completing their questionnaires, students received an unfamiliar English passage. They were instructed to complete another questionnaire on the text and respond true or false to 10 questions before writing a 15-line response about the text.

Results showed a significant but negative correlation between language anxiety and the researchers' two measures of language achievement, reading comprehension ($r = -0.25$) and writing achievement ($r = -0.35$). The researchers concluded that "different variables like mother-tongue abilities, general cognitive abilities, and language anxiety...will be able to point out the relevant reasons for difficulties in foreign language" (Argman & Abu-Rabia, 2002, p. 158).

In another study related to language anxiety and reading, Saito, Horwitz, & Garza (1999) set out to demonstrate that FL reading anxiety diverges from general FL anxiety. Participants were 383 first-semester American university students enrolled in French, Japanese and Russian language classes. More males than females were enrolled in Japanese (67%) and Russian (53%) than French classes (45%). Textbooks were analyzed and distributed in each language class and students completed both a FLCAS and a new instrument developed by the researchers based on the FLCAS called the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS). Participants also completed a brief survey to anonymously self-identify.

The researchers used a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ($r = .64$, $n = 383$, $p < .01$) to establish construct validity between the FLCAS and FLRAS. The results showed that FL reading anxiety is distinguishable from general FL anxiety and that “the FLRAS shows good internal reliability” (Saito et al., 1999, p. 204). Results showed that most students felt less anxious reading in a FL than they did with general FL anxiety. In addition, students who felt more anxious in general tended to feel more anxious about reading in a FL; the same correlation held true for students who felt generally less anxious, those students also felt less anxious about FL reading for the course.

How Language Anxiety may Originate

There are many theories about how language anxiety may originate. A genetic explanation is that language anxiety is inherited. Another is related to personal history (negative experiences during childhood). The third is “learned helplessness” (Argamon & Abu-Rabia, 2002, p. 144). Learned helplessness may develop if “there is nothing the individual can do to increase the occurrence of a positive outcome or to decrease the occurrence of a negative outcome” (Mikulincer, 1994, p. 8). In an L2 context, students with learned helplessness may develop persistent apprehension over communication (Argamon & Abu-Rabia, 2002).

The age at which a child first begins to communicate may also play a role. Children that develop communication skills early, in relaxed environments and in a natural progression without being forced, may be less likely to develop communication anxiety (Argamon & Abu-Rabia, 2002). Another explanation relates to modeling. “Children who are exposed to normal and healthy communication patterns” may develop far fewer anxious emotional states (Argamon & Abu-Rabia, 2002, p. 145). An extreme example would be the now-famous case of Genie, a severely abused feral child (Curtiss, 1977).

Language anxiety could be situational or characteristic (Argamon & Abu-Rabia, 2002). Characteristic anxiety is a general anxiety not linked to any specific situation, whereas situational anxiety is “tension, concern and activity of the autonomous nervous system” linked to a specific emotional situation (Argamon & Abu-Rabia, 2002, p. 144). Situational anxiety is determined by higher perceived threat levels in the environment and is typically linked to oral communication (Argamon & Abu-Rabia, 2002).

Another common type of situational language anxiety relates to testing. Test anxiety is said to have two components, cognitive and emotional, which negatively affect performance (Arnold, 2000). Failure to do well on tests may lead to anxiety and, consequently, students perform poorly because they expect to (Arnold, 2000). In addition, certain assessment measures may provoke heightened feelings of anxiety (Richard-Amato, 2010), and increased anxiety may lead to invalid academic test scores (Purmensky, 2009). In a study regarding assessment methods, the author suggested that “a highly anxiety-provoking test can actually underestimate students’ attained proficiency level [because] anxiety is believed to lower students’ concentration on, and commitment toward, the task at hand” (Oh, 1992).

Low self-esteem and negative views about ability to learn English have also been found to be possible causes of L2 anxiety. In a correlational study, Goshi (2005) collected data from 63 non-English major students at a private university in Shizuoka, Japan during 2003 to measure overall anxiety scores and beliefs about English language learning. The FLCAS was translated from English to Japanese, and since Japanese students tend to give neutral answers (Goshi, 2005), a six-point rather than five-point scale was used. Three extra statements concerning general beliefs about learning English were also added to account for neutral responses.

The theoretical range was from 33 to 198, and a high score represented high anxiety. Item 7, “I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am,” received the highest average (4.6), which showed that 76% of participants constantly felt inferior to their peers. Item 11, “I worry about the consequences of failing my English class,” received the second-highest average (4.4).

Many students felt anxious about failing since English was a required course for academic advancement. Students also answered negatively to Item 20, “I’m not good at studying English” and Item 26, “I hate studying English,” which suggested that subjects with negative beliefs about learning English tend to feel more anxious. Goshi (2005) concluded that Japanese students with low self-esteem tend to feel more anxious about learning English than those with high self-esteem.

Two possible causes of L2 anxiety also identified were the classroom environment (Richard-Amato, 2010; Young, 1991) and individual teaching methodologies (Young, 1991). L2 anxiety has been found to develop in ESL settings when students encounter insensitive instructors that constantly correct them in front of the class (Arnold, 2000). Teachers that are curt, insensitive and brazenly correct ELL errors in front of the class “may lead students to associate anxiety with language learning itself” (Arnold, 2000, p. 778). Teachers that have not established a non-threatening environment may thus find it is difficult to elicit participation from ELLs and improve academic performance in the classroom (Folse, 2006).

Three Components of FL Anxiety

Horwitz et al. (1986) outlined three components of foreign language anxiety; the three components, communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and general anxiety, may

correlate with foreign language anxiety (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004). Students reluctant to speak in a foreign language demonstrate high levels of communication apprehension. Students who fear making mistakes and being mocked by fellow students show high levels of fear of negative evaluation. Finally, students who are generally apprehensive, even if they are prepared, demonstrate high levels of general anxiety towards a foreign language.

In an exploratory comparative study, anxiety in first-semester university students in both the U.S. and Spain was investigated and measured by a series of FL anxiety scales (Casado, & Dereshiwsky, 2004). Participants were 114 students at Northern Arizona University (NAU) and 154 first-semester students at Spain's Universidad de Murcia (UM). All subjects completed the FLCAS, translated into Spanish for UM students. Students were told that the purpose of the study was to measure levels of apprehension in taking L2 classes. Data were assessed using one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) at a .05 level.

To ensure independence, three summated scores were created by computing together individual survey items (Communication Apprehension, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and General Feeling of Anxiety). "A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was [then] used to test the significance of between-group differences...and preserve the overall alpha Type 1 error rate in the between-group difference testing" (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004, p. 29). In 13 of the 33 questions, NAU students reported feeling more anxious. The UM students were more apprehensive in 20 of the 33 questions. "Twenty-three values were statistically significant at the .05 probability level" (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004, p. 29).

Results indicated that students at UM reported higher levels of anxiety. The authors caution, however, that this anxiety could be attributed to a number of factors, including lack of

exposure to the L2, “classroom methodologies or other intrinsic or extrinsic factors” (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004, p. 34). The authors conclude that starting to learn an L2 at an earlier age as well as a clear framework could mitigate anxiety levels (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004). They point out from this study, however, that although L2 learning is not compulsory in the United States and “is imparted universally since age eight” in Spain, starting to learn a language at an earlier age may not inherently lead to lower anxiety levels (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004, p. 35).

Instruments for Measuring Anxiety

Throughout the literature, L2 anxiety, also called foreign language anxiety, communication anxiety, language anxiety, and communication apprehension (Argamon & Abu-Rabia, 2002), has been directly linked to oral expression and interpersonal communication (Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002; Arnold, 2000; Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004; Saito et al., 1999). During the 1980s, a unique survey questionnaire, the FLCAS, was developed to measure L2 anxiety in classroom settings (Horwitz et al., 1986). On the FLCAS, 20 of 33 survey questions deal specifically with speaking and listening (Saito et al., 1999), two of the four areas of language arts (listening, reading, speaking and writing).

The FLCAS instrument has been used in a variety of studies (Aida, 1994; Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004; Horwitz, 1986; Goshi, 2005) and results have indicated that it is a valid construct for assessing communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and general feeling of anxiety (Horwitz, 1986). Other studies have also shown the FLCAS to be a sound, rigorously tested instrument designed specifically to measure anxiety related to foreign language learning in a classroom setting (Aida, 1994; Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989).

Saito et al. (1999) later developed the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS). FLRAS, a 5-point Likert-scale based on the FLCAS, has “good internal reliability, which suggests the scale is eliciting a single construct” (Saito et al., 1999). The authors conclude that, as a result of their study, foreign language (FL) reading anxiety can be distinguished from general foreign language anxiety and general foreign language anxiety linked to oral performance (Saito et al., 1999).

Argaman & Abu-Rabia (2002) also used the FLRAS to demonstrate a relationship between language anxiety and writing ability and prove that one does not exist between language anxiety and reading comprehension. The authors conclude by discussing different kinds of language-related anxiety and possible causes. They mention specific research which has influenced the field such as Daly and Miller’s (1975) idea of “writing apprehension, which is different from language anxiety or a general communication inhibition, and concerns only writing” (Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002, p. 157-158).

The authors also mention that further study that includes “different variables like mother-tongue abilities, general cognitive abilities, and language anxiety...will be able to point out the relevant reasons for difficulties in foreign language” (Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002, p. 158). Implied from this study is that language anxiety may not be a cause of failure in learning a foreign language but a consequence.

FLCAS and FLRAS are not without detractors. Sparks, Ganschow, & Javorsky (2000) questioned the original FLCAS because they considered anxiety a consequence rather than a cause of FL learning. Since the FLRAS is adapted from the FLCAS, Sparks et al. (2000) called

Saito et al.'s (1999) efforts "premature" and contended that the new scale may not be "measuring FL reading anxiety, FL reading skill, or both" (Sparks et al., 2000, p. 252).

Another valuable instrument for measuring anxiety is the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (SLWAT), which measures a language-skill-specific anxiety, the general apprehension or anxiety associated with writing situations (Daly & Miller, 1975). While not related to anxiety, per se, the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) may also be a useful instrument in that it measures "a student's probable degree of success in learning a foreign language" (Sparks & Ganschow, 2007, p. 283).

The use of interviews has been demonstrated to be another effective measure to gauge anxiety (Dell'Osso, Rucci, Cassano, Maser, Endicott, Shear, Sarno, Saettoni, Grochocinski, & Frank, 2002; Lader, 1977; Ohata, 1995; Yang, Tsao, Lay, Chen, & Liou, 2008). Open-ended interview questions may gather pertinent non-numerical data not readily available via closed-ended survey items (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). Some of the advantages of using interviews to triangulate data have also been discussed in the literature (Kopinak, 1999).

Adult ESL Learners

Anxiety may stem from a variety of causes, from academic, emotional, financial, or sociocultural, which may hinder L2 progress (Bifuh-Ambe, 2009). Age, coupled with anxiety, may also hinder successful L2 acquisition (Argamon & Abu-Rabia, 2002; Bifuh-Ambe, 2009; Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004). A recent study by Ay (2010) found that L2 anxiety may be linked to receptive skills such as listening and reading at earlier stages of L2 development while anxious feelings tend to develop later regarding productive skills such as speaking and writing. According to Starr (2001), pronunciation as well as American idioms and slang used by

instructors in the classroom may confuse adult ESL learners. Experiencing a sustained state of confusion while attempting to learn the target L2 may lead to perennial feelings of apprehension and distress.

L2 anxiety has also been found to influence motivation and lower achievement levels (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008). Physical, social, and psychological variables may also differ for adult ESL students, who, compared with younger learners, may feel “physically uncomfortable, emotionally distressed, and generally unhappy in the classroom” (Hedge, 1984, p. 4). Adult ESL students may also have considerable life experiences and come from a variety of backgrounds; drawing upon these experiences may make the classroom “more relevant and meaningful, thus providing a good environment for acquisition to occur” (Hedge, 1984, p. 5).

Over a period of six months, Miles (2009) interacted via interviews and e-mail with four ESL students at a large computer software company to determine the most challenging tasks for these students. Students were asked about their daily routines, how tasks may differ in the host as compared with native countries, and areas they felt they needed to improve. Not being able to respond to native English-speaking colleagues or express themselves to native-speaking peers was found to be a considerable source of anxiety and frustration (Myles, 2009). Horwitz (2001) also concluded that ELLs may perceive their actual proficiency levels as lower than they truly are, which may heighten L2 anxiety.

While error correction is typically associated with being a cause of L2 anxiety, *not* having error correction has also been identified as a possible cause of L2 anxiety in this study and in the literature (Katayama, 2006; Koch & Terrell, 1991). Motivated Spanish-speaking adult ESL students may want to have their errors corrected to improve their competency while

preparing for specific academic or professional fields. Not having their errors corrected while communicating in the target language may be a cause of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students.

Adult ESL learners differ from children or adolescents in that they may withdraw from classes if they feel too anxious or uncomfortable (Baitinger, 2005). Since the adult ESL learners in this study have relocated to improve their English language abilities, they take their education seriously. Instructors may want to discuss learner expectations (Baitinger, 2005) and state course goals (Oxford, 1999) at the outset.

Doubt in test validity could increase L2 anxiety if adult ESL students worry that they will be rated at lower proficiency levels than their actual proficiency levels (Oh, 1992). In a study by Oh (1992), subjects were 18 first-year Korean premedical students, and all students had similar English language proficiency levels. The purpose of the study was to determine if anxiety would change if different L2 reading assessment methods were used. The null hypothesis was there would be no difference in anxiety levels using a variety of assessment methods (Oh, 1992).

Oh (1992) used three separate reading assessment methods, a comprehension and recall task, a cloze test a week later and a think-aloud task two weeks after beginning the study. The comprehension and recall task consisted of “two English tests each followed by several comprehension and sentence-verification questions and a written recall task” (Oh, 1992, p. 173). All 18 subjects were instructed to complete a modified version of Sarason’s (1978) Cognitive Interference Questionnaire (CIQ) three times, each time immediately after students had completed each task.

To assess the data, the author used a repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) which enabled the author to determine significant differences in subjects’ anxiety levels and subsequently

reject the null hypothesis. To provide more accurate results, the author then used Benferroni Significant Difference tests with a .05 alpha level. Of the two comprehension and recall tasks, the cloze test was found to produce higher anxiety levels in participants. However, what caused the greatest overall anxiety for participants was the think-aloud task.

Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that less familiar testing assessment measures may provoke greater feelings of anxiety in students. In this study, “All subjects indicated that they had absolutely no previous experience with cloze and think-aloud procedures. Thus, it is not surprising that the cloze test and the think-aloud task aroused task-irrelevant worry cognitions more frequently” (Oh, 1992, p. 175).

The author then suggested that students’ doubt in test validity increased anxiety. Doubt in validity on assessment measures, according to the author, led students to worry that they would be rated at lower proficiency levels than their actual proficiency levels. Finally, the difficulty of the assessment task was thought to provoke higher anxiety levels.

According to Oh (1992), comprehension and recall tasks, cloze tests and think-aloud tasks as well as other assessment measures may create higher levels of anxiety; therefore, some assessments may not provide entirely accurate measures of adult ESL students’ actual proficiency levels and communicative abilities. Discussing these and other assessment measures in detail with adult ESL students may lower overall anxiety levels and produce more accurate results. In addition, “Allowing students to experience success with a particular method may also help lower anxiety” (Oh, 1992, p. 176).

Creating an “academic roadmap” for adult ESL students may help to alleviate anxiety and confusion. Instructors could ensure that adult ESL students feel comfortable enough to participate while at the same time challenged by the material (Baitinger, 2005). Adult ESL learners may also feel anxious

due to fear of failure or need for perfection in the language (Baitinger, 2005; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). Thompson (2000) also suggested that the need for perfection may increase anxiety in L2 learners. “An ideal adult learning climate [therefore] has a non-threatening, non-judgmental atmosphere in which adults have permission for and are expected to share in the responsibility for their learning” (Baitinger, 2005).

A low level of anxiety may increase motivation and alertness (Brown, 2007; Richard-Amato, 2010). Some researchers (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) suggest providing input, or information, at a level slightly above students’ comprehension ability in a relaxed environment to foster improved communication. Encouraging students to keep an English journal, in which they may write in their L1 to translate key words, phrases and sentences, may also help reduce anxiety and aid in the learning process (Yang, 2005). According to Yang (2005), working in pairs or groups to engage with peers may also help release inhibitions while improving language proficiency.

In spite of ample studies that delineate the anxiety and struggles of K-12 Spanish speakers (Ek, 2008; Pappamihiel, 2002; Rosenthal, 1992; Villalba, 2003), a dearth of literature exists regarding L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL populations. Spanish-speaking adult ESL students may face hurdles to academic success at the collegiate level that include inadequate language development, financial resources, guidance and cultural knowledge while having to assimilate into the broader American culture (Oliva, 2004; Rodriguez & Cruz, 2009).

If Spanish-speaking ESL students reach the community college level, “courses are seldom taken for credit, much less transferable for credit at a 4-year institution” (Rodriguez & Cruz, 2009, 2399). In addition, Spanish-speaking ESL populations must often choose between

advanced degrees or advancing “the economic well-being of their families” (Rodriguez & Cruz, 2009, p. 2399).

Spanish-speaking ESL students may also encounter assessment difficulties, disconnected curricula, and other confounding variables while attempting to enroll in college (Oliva, 2004). Discord at the state level may then produce “governance that results in no one being held accountable for poor outcomes” (Oliva, 2004, p. 219). Spanish-speaking ESL populations are also “especially at risk from these problems given that they are already underrepresented in college and so are not likely to benefit from the college knowledge of parents or peers who have attended” (Oliva, 2004, p. 219).

Some Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enroll at a language institute to improve competency for professional purposes. One recent study on ESL English competency in the workplace and found that students who fail to comprehend American cultural references may experience anxiety or alienation (Myles, 2009). For instance, while doing internships, some adult ESL students compared themselves to native English-speaking colleagues, causing considerable anxiety (Myles, 2009).

Cultural Influences

Culture has also been found to influence L2 anxiety (Hedge, 1984; Myles, 2009). According to Thompson (2000), greater cultural difference leads to greater anxiety. While learning a foreign language, adult ESL students may not be accustomed to American culture (Hedge, 1984). ESL instructors should bear in mind that language, thought and culture may be inextricably linked (Sapir, 1994), and that English language teaching may inevitably involve the

teaching of culture (Hedge, 1984). Derogatory remarks, whether intended or not, will invariably create feelings of anxiety in adult ESL students (Hedge, 1984).

Since L2 anxiety may cross “linguistic and cultural boundaries” (Gregersen, 2006, p. 407), cultural differences may create feelings of anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students (Gregersen, 2006; Lewthwaite, 1997; Lin, Endler, & Kocovski, 2001; Yoon & Portman, 2004). ESL instructors that “familiarize themselves with their students’ cultures, histories and school systems [may identify] areas of conflict of behavior, attitude and performance” (Hedge, 1984, p. 6). Clarifying cultural differences may also help in creating a safer and more stimulating learning environment (Folse, 2006; Hedge, 1984).

Thompson (2000) studied Spanish-speaking ESL students at a Los Angeles school with nearly 80% Hispanic enrollment and found that, based on written narratives and questionnaires, students that perceived their native culture as being vastly different from American culture were more anxious. As a result, she posited that the amount of cultural difference perceived between the L1 and L2 cultures may determine the amount of anxiety experienced.

Ek (2008) and Rodriguez & Cruz (2009) found that both immediate and extended family and close friends formed social networks that played an important role in scaffolding learning in Spanish-speaking populations. Classroom environments tend to be more familial in Spanish speakers’ home countries (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Losey, 1997); in addition, Spanish-speaking students were found to feel more relaxed working in collaborative groups than by themselves (Shoebottom, 2001). As a result, Spanish-speaking students tend to work more collaboratively in their native countries (Losey, 1997).

Summary

In closing, this literature review defines different types of anxiety, including L2 anxiety, and possible causes. The literature also provides survey instruments for measuring this anxiety and draws plausible conclusions. L2 anxiety is often associated with listening and speaking tasks (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Williams & Andrade, 2008). Two possible causes of L2 anxiety also identified were the classroom environment (Richard-Amato, 2010; Young, 1991) and individual teaching methodologies (Young, 1991).

The literature discussed also suggests that L2 anxiety in adults may derive from emotional, sociocultural, financial or academic factors (Bifuh-Ambe, 2009). Other variables may include age (Argamon & Abu-Rabia, 2002; Bifuh-Ambe, 2009; Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004) identity (Stroud & Wee, 2006), culture (Baitinger, 2005; Starr, 2001) and motivation (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008). Further research is needed, however, to help determine what may cause L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL populations and what role culture might play in causing L2 anxiety in these students.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute. This study further explored the role that culture might play in causing L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students.

The Participants

A total of 10 Spanish-speaking adult ESL students between the ages of 18 to 30 were interviewed over a period of five days. A total of 3 men and 7 women participated. Of these students, 7 out of 10 were from Venezuela, 2 were from Colombia, and 1 was from Ecuador. Students were assessed for language proficiency prior to enrolling and 7 out of 10 were at intermediate, high-intermediate or advanced placement levels.

Of the participants, 1 Spanish-speaking adult ESL student was a beginner and 2 were at a low-intermediate proficiency level. Although all students that had agreed to participate in this study came from Latin American countries, each student provided unique, thoughtful responses to interview questions; in light of what the author had predicted based on the literature, some responses were unexpected. Pseudonyms were used to ensure that the school and participants in this study remain anonymous.

Advanced English Language Institute (AELI)

Advanced English Language Institute (AELI) (a pseudonym) prepares international students to enter universities and colleges in the United States and, as a result of improved communicative abilities, increases their chances for employment. Three 14-week sessions of

intensive English are offered at beginning, intermediate, high intermediate, and advanced levels. Students study for 23 hours per week, from Monday through Friday. Students may also opt to participate in additional activities to improve their English communication skills in real-world contexts. The institute has a multimedia lab and a writing lab to complement classroom instruction. Classes are limited to no more than 15 students to provide intensive, focused instruction. The majority of AELI instructors hold a master's degree in ESL teaching, and two hold doctorate degrees. AELI is situated on a four-year, fully-accredited, coeducational university that is a member of the State University System of Florida. Over 50,000 students are currently enrolled at the university, which boasts a modern campus on over a thousand acres of land.

Instruction at AELI is skills-based, and core courses include grammar, listening, reading, speaking, and writing. AELI also offers additional courses in Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) preparation, oral presentations, and business English. Students take a placement test at the beginning of each term. Once placed at the appropriate level, instructors use a communicative approach to give students ample opportunities to practice in English. Students from over seventy countries have participated since its establishment in 1987. Many AELI students have gone on to graduate from university academic programs.

Principle Measuring Instruments

This study researched 10 Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at AELI, an English language institute located on a large public Florida university. The measuring instrument used in this study was the FLCAS, an instrument designed specifically to measure anxiety found in a foreign language setting (Horwitz et al., 1986). Face-to-face interviews were

then used with all 10 participants to provide a rich set of data, and from this data emergent themes and findings were provided.

The FLCAS

The FLCAS is an in-depth survey that contains 33 questions related to anxiety. The Spanish version of the FLCAS used in this study had been translated by two native Spanish speakers and approved by a faculty member fluent in the language. He has taught for the past 10 years and is ranked superior on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency scale in Spanish. He has also done translations for many years and has been involved in numerous bilingual projects.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY SCALE (FLCAS)

(Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986)

check one:

male female

check one:

age 18 age 19-23 age 24 +

5= Strongly agree

4= Agree

3= Neither agree nor disagree

2= Disagree

1= Strongly disagree

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking English in class. _____
1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

2. I *don't* worry about making mistakes speaking English in class. _____
1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on to speak English in class. _____
1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English. _____
1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes. _____
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
6. During English language class, I find myself thinking about things that have _____
 nothing to do with the course.
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
7. I keep thinking that the other students speak English better than I can. _____
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
8. I am usually at ease during tests in English. _____
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
9. I start to panic when I have to speak English without preparation in class. _____
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my English language class. _____
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over English language classes. _____
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
12. In English language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know. _____
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in English in class. _____
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
14. I would *not* be nervous speaking the English language with native speakers. _____
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting. _____
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
16. Even if I am well prepared for English language class, I feel anxious about it. _____
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
17. I often feel like not going to my English language class. _____
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
18. I feel confident when I speak in English in class. _____
 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)
19. I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on to speak in English. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

21. The more I study for an English language test, the more confused I get. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

22. I *don't* feel pressure to prepare very well for English language class. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

23. I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the English language in front of others. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

25. English language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

26. I feel more tense and nervous in my English language class than in my other classes. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English in class. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

28. When I'm on my way to English language class, I feel very sure and relaxed. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English language teacher says. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak in English. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

32. I would probably feel comfortable around native English speakers. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

33. I get nervous when the English language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance. _____

1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

Note. From “Foreign language classroom anxiety,” Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). *Modern Language Journal*, 70, 125-132. Permission was obtained by Dr. Elaine K. Horwitz to use the FLCAS instrument she had authored.

The FLCAS includes mostly standard (positive), as well as some reverse-scored (negative), items. Items 2, 5, 11, 14, 22, 28 and 32 could be considered reverse rather than standard items. Psychometricians have generally favored the use of both “standard (positive) and reverse-scored (negative) items...in applied research instruments so as to control for response biases” (Eisenbach & Schriesheim, 1995, p. 1177). For instance, Item 22 states, “I *don't* feel pressure to prepare very well for English language class.” A “low” response of “1 = Strongly disagree” or “2 = Disagree” indicated that the Spanish-speaking adult ESL student *did* have a strong general feeling of anxiety in having to prepare for English language class.

Similarly, Item 32 states, “I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the English language.” Again, “low” responses “1 = Strongly disagree” or “2 = Disagree” indicated that the Spanish-speaking adult ESL student felt a *high* general feeling of anxiety around native English speakers. Students chose to respond to either the English or Spanish version of the FLCAS. Of these 10, 4 students chose to complete the English version of the FLCAS while 6 preferred the Spanish version. The interview questions used in this study appear below. The Consent Forms (both English and Spanish versions) appear in Appendices.

The FLCAS uses a Likert-type scale with five possible responses: 5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 2 = Disagree, or 1 = Strongly disagree. Students responded to each of the 33 questions by choosing a number along this continuum depending on the level of anxiety they felt associated with the information in each item.

Interviews

The principle researcher believed that Spanish-speaking adult ESL students at intermediate or higher levels of English language proficiency were capable of conducting interviews in English. Since 7 out of 10 participants were placed at an intermediate proficiency level or higher, 7 interviews were conducted in English. The 3 students at lower proficiency levels were then interviewed in Spanish by a native Spanish-speaking graduate student. Interview responses in Spanish were translated and documented for analysis immediately thereafter.

Since the first 3 students that had agreed to participate in this study expressed reservations if recording equipment were used, responses were typed out on a laptop computer and verified after responses were given rather than recorded using audio or video recording devices. Interview responses in Spanish were written down by the native Spanish-speaking interviewer and later translated into English to the principle researcher, who was present during these 3 interviews.

Interview questions were formed after a thorough examination of the FLCAS and literature. Interviews were used to record demographic information not recorded by the FLCAS, ensure that participants understood the questions in the FLCAS, and account for possible cultural influences on L2 anxiety. Interviews started with 3 basic warm-up questions to relax the participants. These 3 warm-up questions were similar to those found on standardized tests to relax and prepare students for further questions. After the warm-up, 20 questions followed.

Questions 11, 19 and 22 were related to communication apprehension, question 20 was related to fear of negative evaluation, and questions 15, 16, 17, 18, and 21 measured general

feeling of anxiety. Some questions (6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 23) were designed to account for possible cultural influences. Questions were influenced by information contained in the FLCAS but were not based on any previously published interviews. Face-to-face interviews were then used to provide a rich set of data. From this data, emergent themes and findings were provided. The actual interview used with the Spanish-speaking adult ESL students in this study appears here:

Hello, my name is Scott Freiburger and I'm a graduate student at the University of Central Florida (UCF). I'm conducting this interview as part of my UCF master's thesis, "L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL populations: Possible causes and cultural influences." Thank you for your participation. All information and responses will be kept anonymous so no one should be able to identify you. Let's begin.

1. What is your name? (record sex: M or F) (warm-up question)
2. How's the weather today? (warm-up question)
3. What are your plans for the rest of the day? (warm-up question)
4. How old are you?
5. How many people are there in your family? (possible cultural influences)
6. What country is your family from? (possible cultural influences)
7. When did you arrive in the United States? (to determine if earlier arrival influences L2 anxiety)
8. How different are English words and grammar from Spanish? (possible cultural influences)
9. How different are American teachers from teachers in your native country? (possible cultural influences)
10. What are the main differences between school here and school in your native country? (individual versus cooperative learning environment) (possible cultural influences)
11. What is hardest about learning English? (grammar, reading, sentence structure, speaking, writing) (communication apprehension)

12. How do you feel about American culture and ideas? How does American culture compare with your native country's culture? (familiar vs. foreign to me) (possible cultural influences)
13. How do you feel about American lifestyle? How does life here compare with the lifestyle in your native country? (familiar vs. foreign to me) (possible cultural influences)
14. What are your schoolmates like? How do you feel being an ESL student? (to see how self-perception may influence L2 anxiety) (fear of negative evaluation, possible cultural influences)
15. What do your parents think about life here? How about other family members, how do they feel? (See if parents and/or family may influence L2 anxiety) (general feeling of anxiety)
16. How do you feel about school? What makes you anxious at school? How do you feel about individual versus group work? (communication apprehension, general feeling of anxiety, possible cultural influences)
17. What subjects are you studying now? What are your goals? (general feeling of anxiety)
18. What do you like best at school? What do you like least at school? (ask about raising hands, presentations, speaking English, exams, writing English, oral class participation, teacher-centered [lecture style] classroom, and reading aloud in class) (communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, general feeling of anxiety, possible cultural influences)
19. How do you feel about speaking in class? How much time do you prepare for class? How do you feel when you prepare in advance? (to determine if preparation time may influence L2 anxiety) (communication apprehension)
20. How does your English level compare with your classmates? (self-perception) (fear of negative evaluation)
21. What do you think about tests? How easy or hard are they in English? (general feeling of anxiety)
22. How do you feel about asking for help? (show feelings versus hide anxiety) (communication apprehension)
23. What else would you like to say before we finish? (communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, general feeling of anxiety, possible cultural influences)

Thank you very much for your participation. You may return to class.

Data Collection Procedures

The director of AELI was first contacted and asked for permission to distribute the Consent Forms, FLCAS surveys, and for interviews to be conducted with Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled for the explicit purpose of conducting research for a master's thesis. The director was also informed of both the research purpose and topic and that the FLCAS and Consent Form had been translated into Spanish to offer students an alternate, more familiar language choice.

After approval from the director was granted, Consent Forms were then distributed in both English and Spanish to the entire population of 25 Spanish-speaking adult ESL students at the ELI during breaks between classes and immediately after classes had ended. A total of 17 students were from Venezuela, 4 were from Colombia, 2 were from Ecuador, 1 was from Panama, and 1 was from Puerto Rico. Of this entire population, nearly half, or 10 students, indicated that they were willing to participate. Students were informed that participation was entirely voluntary and had ample time to review the Consent Forms. They were also informed of the purpose of the study and that responses would be used in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, and that pseudonyms would be used to ensure confidentiality.

Students had the option to choose to participate in the surveys but not in the face-to-face interviews (all students were given the choice of declining to be interviewed individually). After collecting the signed Consent Forms it was determined that all 10 students who had elected to fill

out the FLCAS survey questionnaires had also agreed to follow-up interviews. Dates and times were then arranged that would be convenient for all 10 students to participate.

FLCAS survey questionnaires were administered to all 10 participants in either English or Spanish, depending on students' preferences, in a conference room in a building adjacent to the ELI or in a courtyard behind the ELI when no other students were present. However, all 10 students had access to both versions during administration to check items for accuracy. The only individuals present during survey administration and the follow-up interview were the principle researcher, the participant (Spanish-speaking adult ESL student), and on one day, a native Spanish-speaking interviewer, as well.

After the surveys were administered, 7 students at intermediate or advanced levels had brief 15-minute interviews in English with the principle researcher. The remaining 3 students at beginner or low-intermediate levels then had interviews in Spanish with a native Spanish-speaking graduate student with the principle researcher present. Questions in Spanish had been translated by two native-speaking professionals and approved by a faculty member fluent in the language. Spanish responses were then translated into English for analysis. All 10 participants had access to both English and Spanish versions of the Consent Forms, FLCAS during survey administration, and questions during the interviews.

Since privacy was a concern for many students, all 25 students who had received the Consent Forms were informed that pseudonyms would be used to ensure privacy. Before survey administration, the 10 willing participants were explained the instructions and again reminded that pseudonyms would be used for all survey and subsequent interview responses. The FLCAS was distributed to a population of 10 Spanish-speaking ESL adult students at AELI, an English

language institute in Florida, during the winter of 2010. Follow-up interviews took place with participants soon thereafter.

Data Analysis

Anxiety scores were calculated for each student by using scores for all 33 items based on a five-point Likert scale. Responses to statements on the FLCAS that were negatively worded (Items 2, 5, 11, 14, 22, 28 and 32 are reverse rather than standard) demonstrated that low scores may be equated with high anxiety (Goshi, 2005). All students that participated in this study were expected to experience some levels of anxiety. FLCAS results appear in Chapter 4: Findings.

As explained in Chapter 1, this research study is concerned mainly with the perceptions of respondents. Scores were calculated based on the survey point system. For instance, “5 (Strongly agree)” on the survey questionnaire was scored as 5 points while “1 (Strongly disagree)” received 1 point. Scored responses to the FLCAS provided data that corresponded with interview responses to provide emergent themes and help strengthen the findings.

Establishing Trustworthiness

Credibility, or confidence in the findings, “is essentially the believability of the results for a qualitative study” (Brown & Rodgers, 2002, p. 242). Credibility was established by staying at the research site over a sustained period of time to observe the 25 prospective participants in class, during breaks between classes and after school had ended prior to the start of this study. According to Brown & Rodgers (2002), triangulation involves understanding researcher biases and having more than one researcher examine the data. Other professionals in the field checked

and commented on the FLCAS, interview questions, emerging themes and findings and clarified potential researcher biases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

By providing a rich, detailed description of the research, it is hoped that data collected in this study may be transferable to other studies. This study may also be considered dependable (results can be trusted) since the findings were reviewed by other professionals in the field. The findings of this study may also be confirmable in that they were not determined by the interests and motivation of the principle researcher.

Ethical Considerations

This study was reviewed and approved by the University of Central Florida's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the principle researcher embarked on this study. Prior to meeting with UCF IRB approval, the researcher had to complete a four-hour exam on ethical considerations before conducting research could commence. Approval was also sought in the form of written correspondence from a thesis advisor, department chair, and the director of AELI. After approval was granted, Spanish-speaking adult ESL students received both English and Spanish versions of the Consent Form and chose one to review and sign. Signatures were required to ensure that students understood the purpose, had ample time to consider whether or not to participate, and had agreed to participate at their own volition.

Any information obtained remains strictly confidential, in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home to prevent unauthorized access. After three years, all data will be shredded and erased. There were minimal physical, psychological, social, and legal risks to the Spanish-speaking adult ESL students involved, and the principle researcher is grateful for their participation.

Summary

In closing, Chapter 3 discussed the study design, research questions, population to be studied, FLCAS survey instrument and how data was collected and analyzed. This study used interviews and questionnaires. AELI, a language institute located at a large public Florida university, was selected based on its measurable Spanish-speaking adult ESL student enrollment. This study identified possible causes of L2 anxiety and how culture may influence this anxiety.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the purpose of this study was to determine possible causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL populations. This study also aimed at determining what role culture might play in causing L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students. This study researched 10 Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at AELI, an English language institute located on a large public Florida university. Pseudonyms were used for the school and participants. This chapter presents the findings from the FLCAS survey questionnaires and subsequent interviews. Participants' responses to the FLCAS indicated communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and general feeling of anxiety, and levels of L2 anxiety in each category were identified by calculating participants' mean scores. For 9 out of 10 participants, interview responses were found to match most of the FLCAS data.

Data was collected over a period of five days. As outlined in Chapter 3, all students first received an English and Spanish version of the Consent Form and had ample time to review the forms prior to signing and returning one. Those willing to participate were then contacted and a suitable day was arranged for taking the FLCAS survey questionnaire. Fortunately, all 10 respondents that agreed to complete the survey questionnaires also agreed to participate in follow-up face-to-face interviews. Interviews were then used to further enhance the data. A table containing participant information, detailed descriptions of the participants as well as FLCAS and interview results are provided below.

Table 1. Participant Information

Name	Age	Country of Origin	Length of Stay	Proficiency	FLCAS	Interview
Emily	27	Venezuela	9 months	Advanced	English	English
Cindy	24	Venezuela	12 months	Intermediate	Spanish	English
Susan	30	Venezuela	3 months	Intermediate	Spanish	English
Amy	25	Colombia	3 months	High-Intermediate	English	English
Diane	19	Ecuador	7 months	Intermediate	Spanish	English
Miguel	25	Venezuela	1 month	Beginner	Spanish	Spanish
Zena	25	Venezuela	7 months	Intermediate	Spanish	English
Duke	18	Colombia	2 months	Intermediate	English	English
Patricia	25	Venezuela	1 month	Low-Intermediate	English	Spanish
Burt	21	Venezuela	6 months	Low-Intermediate	Spanish	Spanish

FLCAS Results

Using mean scores enabled the researcher to use one number, 3, to determine whether participants had high or low L2 anxiety for each of the three categories (Communication Apprehension, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and General Feeling of Anxiety). Mean scores below 3 are considered “low” while mean scores above 3 are considered “high.” Since the FLCAS did not contain a cultural component, some interview questions were designed specifically to account for possible cultural influences on L2 anxiety.

The range of the scale was 1-5 with a midpoint of 3. Scores with a mean below 3 indicated low L2 anxiety in that category. Scores with a mean above 3 indicated a high level of L2 anxiety in that category. L2 anxiety levels were calculated for each student by using scores for all 33 items based on a 5-point Likert scale. As expected, all students that participated in this study experienced some levels of anxiety, and all forms of anxiety influence L2 learning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994b).

The FLCAS survey was administered first. Items on the FLCAS that deal specifically with public speaking, being asked to speak without preparing in advance and communicating with native English speakers were considered “communication apprehension.” Items on the FLCAS that deal specifically with feelings of low self-confidence in relation to classmates and fear of being mocked were considered “fear of negative evaluation.” Items on the FLCAS that relate to consequences of failing, feeling overwhelmed learning English and general feelings of nervousness while in English class were considered “general feeling of anxiety.” Answers to negatively-reversed responses (Items 2, 5, 11, 14, 22, 28 and 32) were reversed so that anxiety levels were correctly represented (Goshi, 2005).

Table 2. Three Components of L2 Anxiety

Communication Apprehension (CA)	(Items 1, 3, 4, 9, 13, 14, 18, 20, 24, 27, 29, 33)
Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE)	(Items 2, 7, 8, 15, 19, 23, 31)
General Feeling of Anxiety (GFA)	(Items 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 22, 25, 26, 28, 30, 32)

Source: Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004, p. 28

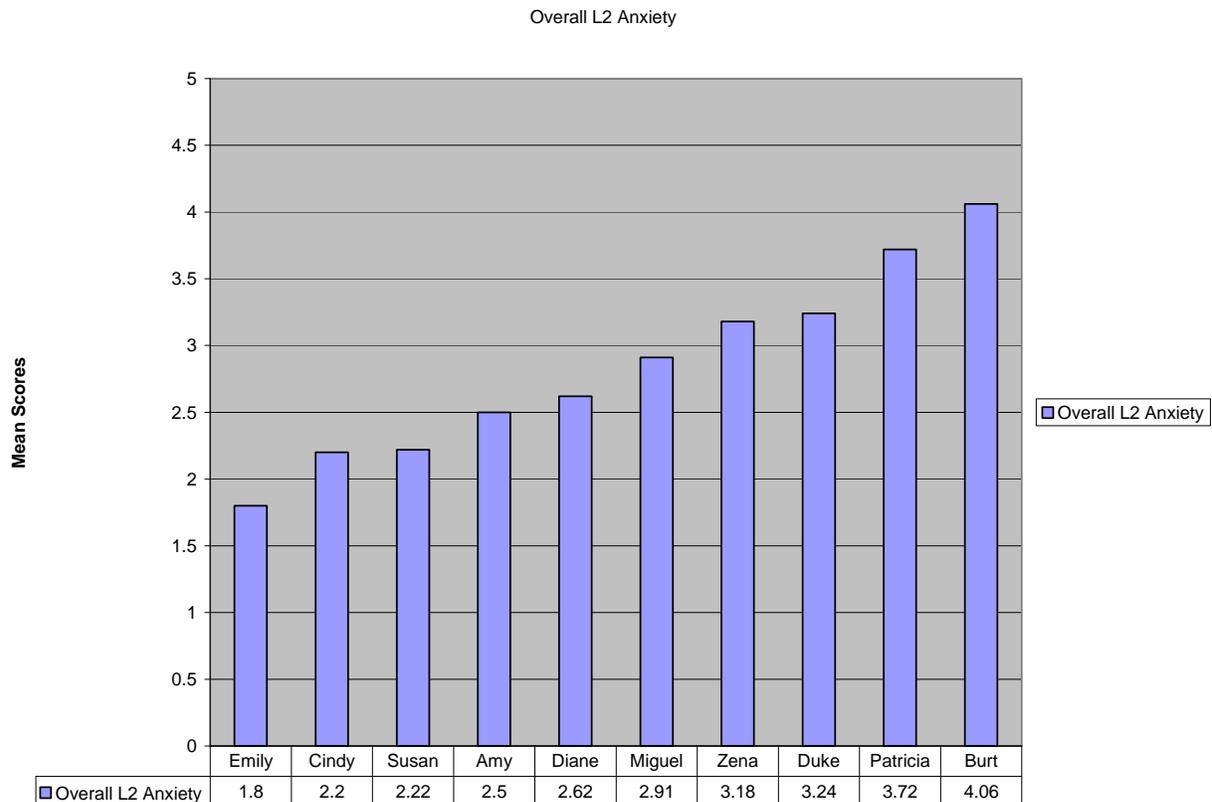


Figure 1. FLCAS Overall Mean Scores

The principle researcher used mean scores to determine L2 anxiety levels from the FLCAS. Means were calculated by finding the average score for all 33 items on the FLCAS for all 10 participants. Results show that Emily had the lowest mean (1.8) and overall L2 anxiety, followed by Cindy (2.2), Susan (2.22), Amy (2.5), Diane (2.62), and Miguel (2.91). Spanish-speaking adult ESL students with the highest overall means were Zena (3.18), Duke (3.24), Patricia (3.72), and Burt (4.06). Results for each of the three categories, Communication Apprehension (CA), Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), and General Feeling of Anxiety (GFA), were as follows:

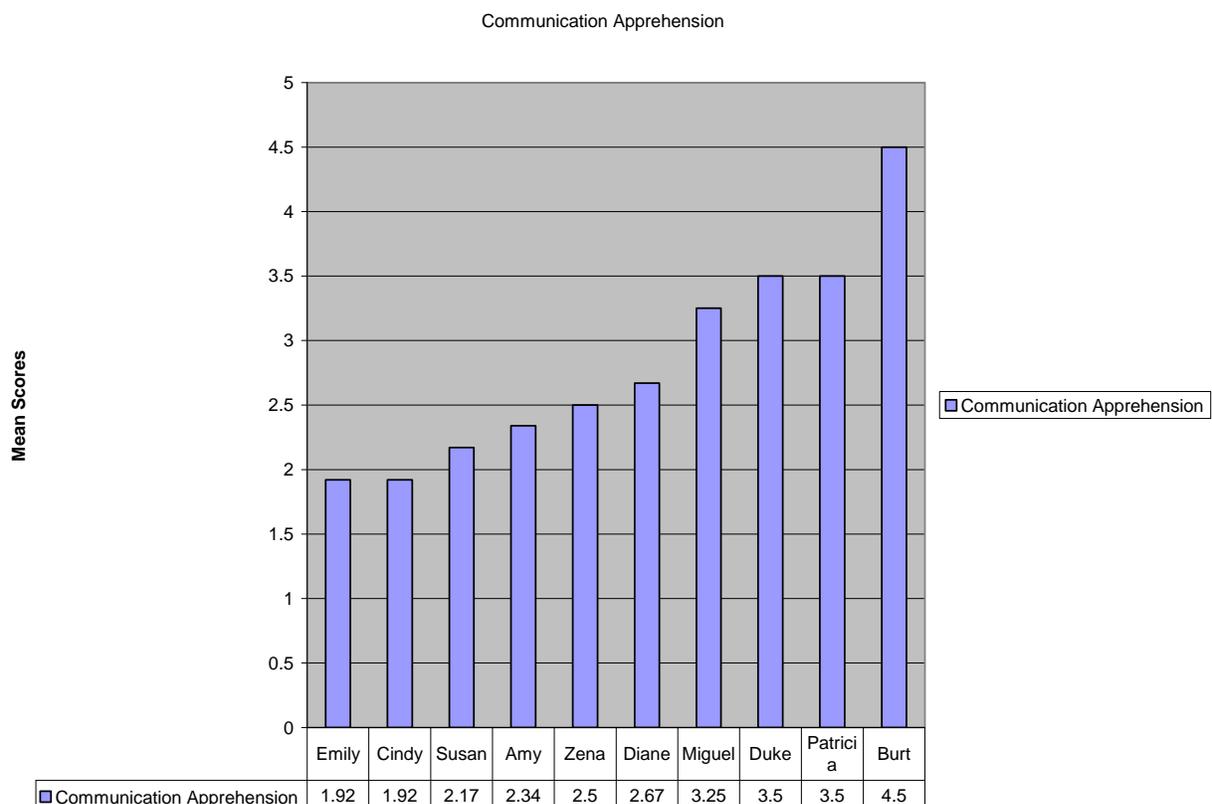


Figure 2. Communication Apprehension Mean Scores

Results in this category indicated that both Emily and Cindy had relatively low communication apprehension, and each had the same low mean (1.92). Susan (2.17), Amy (2.33), and Zena (2.5) also indicated low communication apprehension. These students felt assured about speaking English in front of other students and participating in class. Miguel (3.25) and Duke (3.25) had the same high level of communication apprehension. The two participants with the highest levels of communication apprehension were Patricia (3.5) followed by Burt (4.5). Both of these two participants felt considerable stress speaking English in front of others, remained silent in class even if they knew the answers, and did not ask the teacher for help even if they did not understand the material.

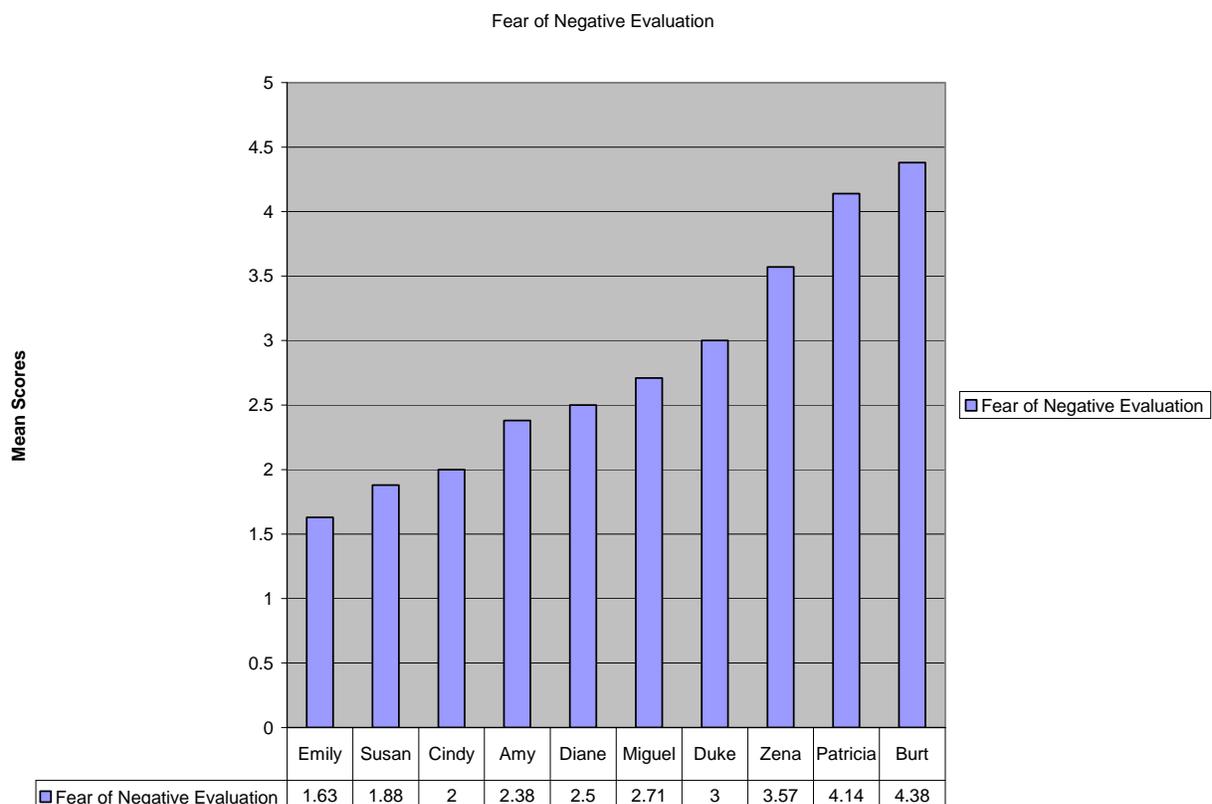


Figure 3. Fear of Negative Evaluation Mean Scores

In this category, Emily again had the lowest mean (1.63), which indicated a very low fear of negative evaluation. Second-lowest was Susan (1.88), followed by Cindy (2), Amy (2.38), Diane (2.5), and Miguel (2.71). Duke indicated neither excessive anxiety nor composure in this category with his moderate mean (3). Zena (3.57), Patricia (4.14) and Burt (4.38) had the three highest means, which indicated the highest fear of negative evaluation. Students with a high fear of negative evaluation believed that their classmates had better English proficiency and were anxious about being perceived as incompetent by their peers and teachers. Students with a low fear of negative evaluation perceived themselves as being on the same level as their classmates. Most FLCAS results were not surprising considering participants' later interview responses.

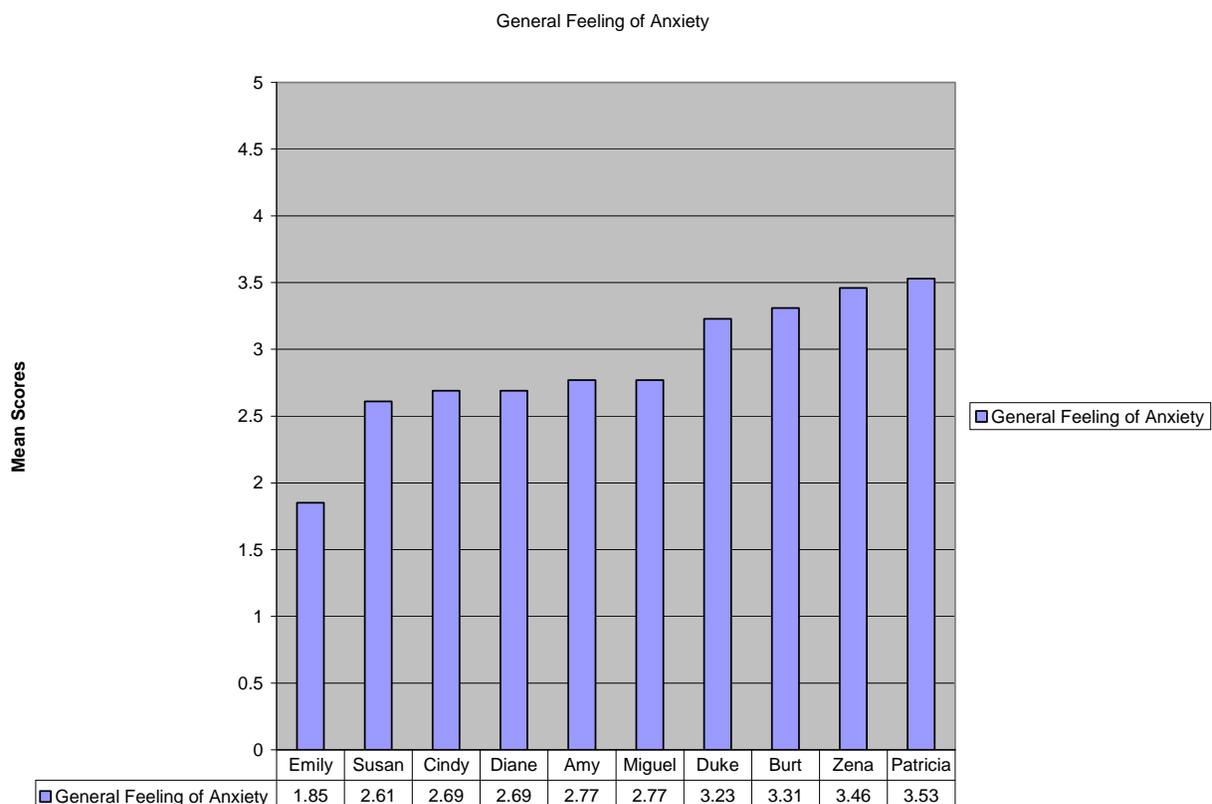


Figure 4. General Feeling of Anxiety Mean Scores

As indicated by the mean scores of all 10 participants, Emily once again had the lowest mean (1.85) and lowest general feeling of anxiety. Susan had the second-lowest mean (2.61). Cindy (2.69) and Diane (2.69), two close friends at the ELI, each had the same low mean in this category, followed by Amy (2.77). These students generally enjoyed being in the United States, studying at the ELI, American culture, and interacting with classmates from abroad. The Spanish-speaking adult ESL students in this study with the highest general feeling of anxiety were Duke (3.23), Burt (3.31), Zena (3.46) and Patricia (3.53). Aside from Duke, who later indicated during his interview that “nothing makes me anxious,” three of these four students were anxious about their English proficiency levels, viewed teachers, the L1 and L2 and two

cultures as “different” or “very different,” and related difficulty adjusting to the new learning environment.

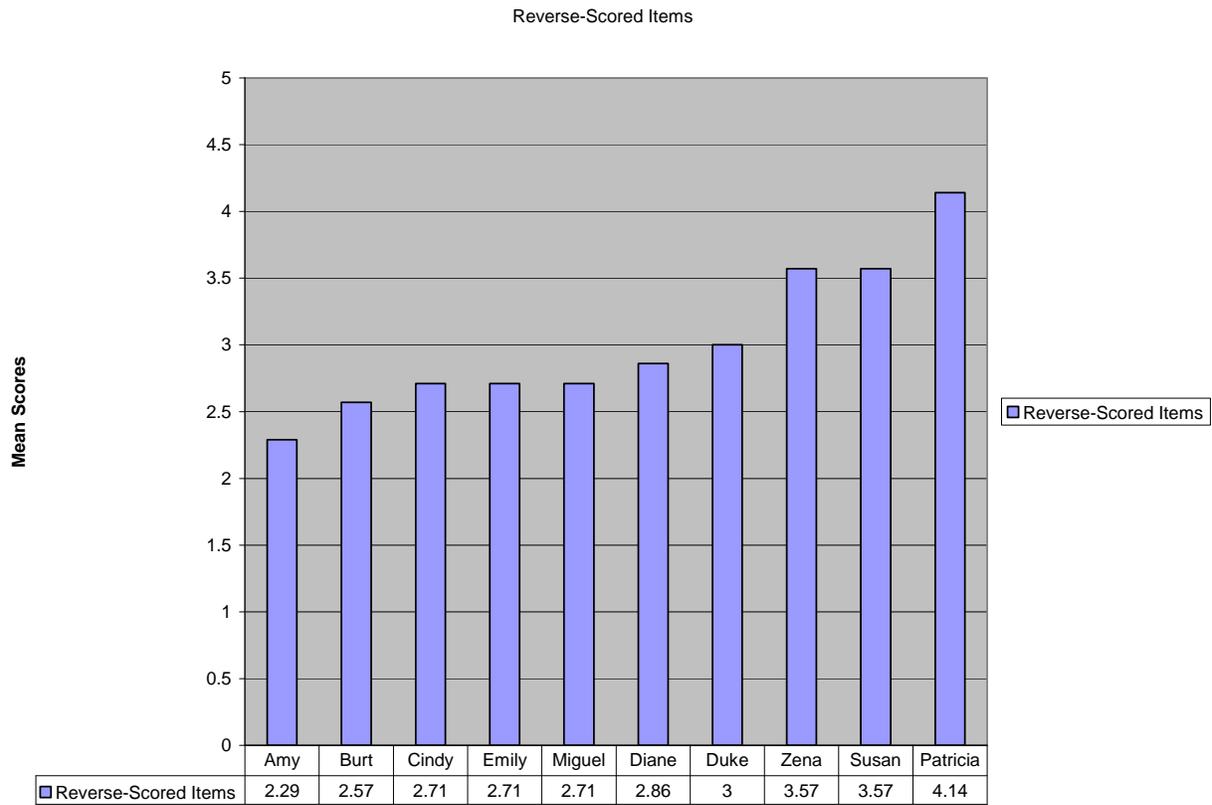


Figure 5. Reverse-Scored (Negative) Item Means

As mentioned previously in this chapter, answers to negatively-reversed responses (Items 2, 5, 11, 14, 22, 28 and 32) were reversed so that anxiety levels were correctly represented (Goshi, 2005). Surprisingly, only 3 Spanish-speaking adult ESL students in this study also answered positively to reverse-scored (negative) items, and Burt, the student with the highest overall mean, was not one of them. Positive responses to reverse-scored (negative) items were supposed to indicate that students felt a high level of anxiety around native English speakers (Goshi, 2005).

The theoretical principles behind the interview questions were to create a second measure to confirm the findings in the survey and to account for possible cultural influences on L2 anxiety. The questions further aimed at determining the causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute. Next, the interview and the survey data are discussed in relation to the two research questions of the study.

The means for items associated with each category, Communication Apprehension (CA), Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), and General Feeling of Anxiety (GFA), appear after the description of each participant. Mean scores were derived for Communication Apprehension (CA) for each participant based on scored responses to Items 1, 3, 4, 9, 13, 14, 18, 20, 24, 27, 29, and 33. Mean scores were derived for Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) for each participant based on scored responses to Items 2, 7, 8, 15, 19, 23, and 31. Finally, mean scores were calculated for General Feeling of Anxiety (GFA) for each participant based on scored responses to Items 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 22, 25, 26, 28, 30, and 32. Below, “CA” stands for “Communication Apprehension,” “FNE” stands for “Fear of Negative Evaluation” and “GFA” stands for “General Feeling of Anxiety.”

The Participants

Emily

Emily was perhaps the most confident participant. A 27 year-old from Venezuela, her communicative skills were outstanding for any ESL student. She was placed (appropriately) at an advanced proficiency level and has been in the U.S. for nine months. Not only is Emily currently enrolled in Advanced Grammar, but she is also taking a challenging course in a specific

subject area at the larger university. In response to Question 23, “What would you like to say before we finish?” she added, “This is interesting because nobody has asked how I feel about these classes before...maybe this [study] could help people that have more trouble [with English].” Emily aspires to obtain a master’s degree in a specific field and find a job to “establish myself,” but after pausing briefly related, “I don’t know if I want to stay here forever.”

Means: Emily

CA: 1.92
FNE: 1.63
GFA: 1.85

Emily had the lowest overall mean (1.8) of the 10 participants in this study. For the first research question that focused on the causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute, Emily’s FLCAS scores closely matched her interview responses. She had a very low Communication Apprehension mean (1.92) on the FLCAS and related during her interview that, regarding the L1 (Spanish) and L2 (English), “The two languages are very similar.” She also often participated in class and asked teachers for help. She related, “I like asking for help. I’m asking for help all the time. Usually I look for a word in the dictionary and if I don’t know I’ll ask my teachers.”

Her low mean (1.63) in the Fear of Negative Evaluation category on the FLCAS also matched her interview response that she perceived her classmates as being at the same proficiency level: “Right now we’re pretty much on the same level.” Emily also had the lowest General Feeling of Anxiety mean (1.85) of the 10 Spanish-speaking adult ESL students in this study. During her follow-up interview she disclosed that she has wanted to be an ESL student in the U.S. “since I was little.” However, she also disclosed that she was “very disappointed” that

the language institute did not offer any language courses relevant to her target profession. To improve her English competency in her chosen field she had enrolled in a challenging course at the larger university.

She also revealed that what made her anxious was “when I make mistakes and no one can correct me.” She related in another instance that not having her errors corrected caused her to feel anxious: “I don’t feel comfortable when I think I may be speaking incorrectly. I get nervous... [But] I get the chance to be corrected when I’m wrong.” However, in spite of her apprehension she relished opportunities to practice speaking the L2 outside of school.

Since Emily was at an advanced English proficiency level and aspired to obtain a master’s degree, she also discussed her fear of having an insufficient vocabulary in professional settings (“...it’s hard when I have to talk to people and I don’t know technical terms”). She also conveyed fear of not being able to communicate effectively in the workplace. Her final comment regarding speaking in professional contexts was, “I’m afraid of failing in the language.”

For the second research question that considered the role culture might play in causing L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students, Emily preferred group work over working alone (“I’m a big believer in teamwork”). She found that the education system in Venezuela and the U.S. were “very similar,” but regarding her L1 culture and the new L2 culture related, “Everything is different here, we’re more familial [family-oriented]. Here everyone is more independent, you [Americans] get to be independent when you’re younger. For example, I have cousins that are thirty and still living with their parents, but people here leave homes at eighteen to go to college. It’s a different way of life.” She also said that people in the two countries were

“very different” and used the words “closed” and “cold” to describe Americans. “One of my professors has been living in his neighborhood for fifteen years and doesn’t know his neighbors. For us [native Spanish speakers] that’s very weird.”

Cindy

As a 24 year-old Spanish-speaking adult ESL student from Venezuela, Cindy does not appear anxious studying English far removed from her family of six. She had arrived a year ago and relates that the U.S. offers “more degrees, schools, students, teachers and career opportunities” compared with her native country. Her goal is to obtain a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree, so perhaps as a result Cindy is able to convey her ideas fairly well. She was placed at an intermediate proficiency level, had the most difficulty using past tense and infinitives, and seemed comfortable studying at AELI.

Means: Cindy

CA: 1.92
FNE: 2
GFA: 2.69

Cindy had the second-lowest overall mean (2.2) of the 10 participants in this study, and her FLCAS scores also closely matched her later interview responses. Regarding the first research question, Cindy may not have experienced a high level of communication apprehension because she was comfortable asking for help. She also often asked her teachers to clarify material she didn’t understand: “I feel okay asking for help. I ask the teachers for help a lot.”

She had a low Fear of Negative Evaluation mean (2) on the FLCAS and reported during her follow-up interview that she perceived classmates as being “at the same level” proficiency-wise (“if we are together in the same classes then we are at the same level”). Cindy also had a low mean (2.69) for General Feeling of Anxiety. She later related that she liked the language institute and was “never anxious” at school. She also said that since she had been in the U.S. for a year prior to this study she felt “comfortable” in an ELI environment.

Regarding the second research question, she preferred group work because it gave her “more security.” She also found her L1 and the L2 “similar. A lot of words are similar.” Like Emily, Cindy also noted that American people seemed “cold” compared with people in her country: “In my country all people are friendly, but in my neighborhood [in Florida] there are American people that never say ‘Hello’ or ask, ‘How are you?’” She also viewed American lifestyle as “harder” (“in my country it’s different, we don’t have to spend all day and night working”).

Susan

Susan, a 30 year-old Spanish-speaking adult ESL student from Venezuela, lives in Florida with her parents, sister and son. She recently divorced and arrived in the U.S. only 3 months ago. She was placed at an intermediate proficiency level. Unlike many of her classmates, Susan had obtained a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in business administration and had considerable life and work experience prior to enrolling. She seemed particularly upset that AELI administration is unconcerned about her country’s turbulent political situation. As a result, she and several classmates are having difficulties obtaining documentation and paying bills within tight deadlines (Susan returned to this topic several times, even in unrelated questions).

She is enrolled in Listening, Grammar, Reading, Speaking, and Writing classes, and aspires to obtain an MBA.

Means: Susan

CA: 2.17

FNE: 1.88

GFA: 2.61

Susan had the third-lowest overall mean (2.22), and her FLCAS scores closely matched her interview responses. The first research question aimed to determine the causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute. A lack of motivation was not a cause of L2 anxiety for Susan: “I study every day and like to come prepared to class to get the most out of it. I study for about 3 hours a day. I feel like I get more out of the classes when I study.”

On the FLCAS, Susan had a low Communication Apprehension mean (2.17). This matched her later responses of feeling “okay” speaking aloud in class and asking for assistance: “Some teachers are more available than others, but for the most part I can go to them. I ask for help if I need it.” She also looked for opportunities to practice speaking the L2 outside of school. However, she related that not knowing when she made errors while communicating in the L2 made her feel “nervous.”

For Fear of Negative Evaluation, Susan had a low mean (1.88) on the FLCAS. This matched her later response of, “I’m not worried that my classmates have an easier time [learning English]. We’re on the same level.” Susan also had a low FLCAS mean (2.61) for General Feeling of Anxiety, and her later interview responses indicated that she was not overly concerned with homework or difficulty of material at the ELI.

Susan also said she felt “relieved” that English teachers at the ELI could also communicate in Spanish: “It helps that the teachers [here] all know my native language.” She did point out, though, that she felt “anxious” when tested on material that wasn’t covered in class: “One of the most frustrating things is when the teacher gives a test and I don’t have enough information on it, for instance, when the teacher gives a test on information that hasn’t been taught yet. This has happened several times. I feel frustrated and anxious [when this occurs].”

Financial issues also clearly affect Susan. Due to her country’s current unstable political situation, her family (and many like hers) has been “having a lot of issues getting the money out of Venezuela. Because we’re not able to pay right away, [AELI] should have a little more sympathy, but it seems they don’t care. Sometimes I’ve been so worried about getting the money that I’ve been unable to concentrate in class.”

In response to Question 18, “What do you like best at school? What do you like least at school?” Susan responded that she liked her classes and “for the most part, teachers are very good. However, the school is not very sympathetic to our country situation. I feel like they don’t really care. All they want is money. They don’t care about the political situation overseas.”

Regarding the second research question, Susan had no preference regarding group versus individual work. She noted that her L1 and the target L2 were “very similar,” noted “some similarities” between teachers in Venezuela and in the U.S. She also said that she liked U.S. culture and lifestyle, felt Americans were “very responsible,” prompt, and recognized and rewarded people for their contributions. She remarked, “In Venezuela people don’t follow the law and effort isn’t valued as much. Here everything has a value, everything costs money,

makes it more accountable. If people have to pay for something they're likely to value it more.” Susan felt that “things in my country are very unfair” and appreciated that people in the U.S. were treated with more dignity and respect.

Amy

Amy is an affable 25 year-old ESL student from Colombia. Diligent and focused, she had graduated from a well-known university and worked as a professional in her community for two years prior to relocating overseas and enrolling at AELI. There are 4 people in her family, and aside from a distant relative that lives in Chicago, no one in her family, including her parents, was supportive of her decision to study abroad. Regardless, she traveled to the U.S. determined to improve her communicative skills and professional marketability.

Although in the U.S. for only 3 months, Amy is at a high-intermediate English proficiency level. She is enrolled in Grammar, Reading, Writing, Vocabulary and TOEFL courses and appears confident. Amy appreciates American culture and ideals such as “hard work...liberty, democracy and market freedom” and is particularly fond of her professors. When asked, “What do you like best at school?” she responded, “There are some professors who have PhD degrees, I love them and I love the classes.”

Means: Amy

CA: mean 2.34
FNE: mean 2.38
GFA: mean 2.77

Amy had the fourth-lowest overall mean (2.5). For the first research question that focused on the causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a

language institute, Amy's FLCAS scores closely matched her interview responses. She had a low mean (2.34) in the Communication Apprehension category on the FLCAS and related during her interview that she viewed her L1 and target language as "similar in many ways." Although she did not like "presentations," she participated often in class and felt "good" asking teachers for help. However, Amy noted that she becomes anxious speaking with professionals rather than students.

Her low mean (2.38) in the FLCAS Fear of Negative Evaluation category also matched her interview response that she perceived her classmates as being at the same proficiency level ("I think we are equal"). Amy also had a relatively low mean (2.77) for General Feeling of Anxiety. She viewed the L1 and L2 as, "Very similar, pronunciation is a bit different but construction is very similar," and liked the ELI ("I feel comfortable studying here). She also felt that students had "more pressure" to work harder to receive good grades in Colombia: "We have a stronger scale, more pressure. We had to spend more time at school. I had to study more there than here." She also noted that she liked tests because "It's a good way to learn." She found the ones given at the ELI "easy."

The researcher was surprised that Amy had a low General Feeling of Anxiety, however, considering no one in her immediate family wanted her to study in the U.S. ("Nobody wants me to be here. I have an aunt that lives in Chicago, she was the only one that was supporting me.")

The decidedly intense TOEFL focus at the ELI frustrated Amy since she sought language improvement in a specific career area. "Maybe they should focus on people who want to speak English for professions and not only the people who want to get into the university, because I feel that here the professors are only preparing us for the TOEFL," she said. "I want to speak

very good English in [a particular career area]. I don't feel they're preparing me for that. They're only focusing on students who are going to get into [the university]."

For the second research question that considered the role culture might play in causing L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students, Amy commented, "I concentrate better when I work alone." She appreciated American culture, ideas, and "these ideals, liberty and democracy, that you have here." She also related, "[The] Economies are similar, the way countries implement rules are similar, freedom of markets, supply and demand, market freedom." However, she noted that Colombia offers "more convenience." "I think that in my country it's a more comfortable life, lifestyle, than here, we have better [public] transportation and many commodities, more commodities than here."

Diane

Young and effervescent, 19 year-old Diane comes from a family of four in Ecuador. She had arrived in the U.S. seven months ago and, while placed at an intermediate proficiency level, struggled more with oral communication than her older classmate and close friend Cindy. In response to the second part of Question 14, "How do you feel being an ESL student?" she responded, "I feel nervous. My goal is only to learn English and then go back to my country. I feel disappointed to learn English [in Ecuador] so I'm here, I am trying."

Means: Diane

CA: 2.67

FNE: 2.5

GFA: 2.69

Diane had the fifth-lowest overall mean (2.62) of these 10 participants. For the first research question, Diane's FLCAS scores closely matched her interview responses. She had a low Communication Apprehension FLCAS mean (2.67) and related during her interview that she thought her L1 and the target L2 were "similar." She also often participated often in class and asked teachers if she did not understand material ("I ask for help in the classroom always"). While she did not have a high level of communication apprehension, however, she believed that other classmates had better English than she did and sometimes had "difficulty with pronunciation." Perhaps as a result, her Communication Apprehension (CA) mean was higher than other participants with low CA means such as her close friend Cindy (1.92) as well as other participants like Susan (2.17) and Amy (2.34).

Her low mean (2.5) in the Fear of Negative Evaluation category on the FLCAS did not match her interview response that she perceived her classmates as having better English proficiency than she did. Diane also had a low FLCAS General Feeling of Anxiety mean (2.69). She related that she was motivated to learn English in the U.S. because she felt "disappointed" in her progress in Ecuador.

For the second research question that considered the role culture might play in causing L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students, Diane strongly preferred individual over group work because she felt her peers did not take group work seriously. Diane believed that the education system in Ecuador and the U.S. were "similar." However, she noted that teachers in the U.S. were more "cold" and that schools in Ecuador required students to wear uniforms while students in the U.S. had more "freedom." Diane also related vast differences in people ("cold" Americans), customs, culture ("the family here is like the second plan, [but] in my country the

family is first”), and lifestyle (“In the U.S., it’s a harder way of life.”) “For us it’s like...I don’t know, very strange, I used to be with my family always, all of the time, but here, no, the family has to work, they don’t spend time [together] always, so it’s hard.”

Diane also made several comments about having a social support network back home where “family and close friends” played an important role. She first said, “If we [Spanish-speaking adult ESL students] didn’t have social activities at school I’d be more nervous.” She later commented, “The events [at the ELI] give me a chance to meet other [Spanish-speaking adult ESL] people. I miss my family and close friends. Without the [ELI] events I would feel more anxious and alone.”

Miguel

With little experience using English, 25 year-old Miguel comes from a family of four in Venezuela. Miguel is bilingual in Spanish and Portuguese; while he is fluent in Spanish, his native tongue is Portuguese since his parents immigrated to Venezuela from Portugal. He has been in the U.S. for a little over a month and was placed at a beginner proficiency level. Miguel is currently enrolled in Grammar, Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing courses, and aspires to “learn English perfectly.” He finds “reading and speaking” hardest about learning English and appreciates that some of his teachers could converse in Spanish; he confides that if AELI teachers could “use more Spanish to explain the material, it would help me to learn English better.”

Means: Miguel

CA: 3.25

FNE: 2.71

GFA: 2.77

Miguel's low overall mean (2.91) demonstrated low L2 anxiety. This was not expected considering he had been in the U.S. for only a month and was at a beginner proficiency level. For the first research question that focused on the causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute, Miguel's FLCAS scores matched his interview responses. He had a high mean (3.25) in the FLCAS Communication Apprehension category and said during his interview that he perceived his L1 and L2 as "very different."

Miguel also related that he had difficulty with "reading and speaking" and commented, "I don't like to speak in class...I'll only raise my hand if I'm sure. If I'm not sure I'll wait for others to raise their hands." After pausing briefly Miguel said, "It's bad if another person speaks English and I don't understand. I'm having some difficulty. It's difficult not understanding English."

His low mean (2.71) in the Fear of Negative Evaluation category also matched his interview response that he perceived his classmates as being at the same proficiency level ("My friends are more sure but we are equal"). Miguel also had a low General Feeling of Anxiety mean (2.77). Although he found the L1 culture and L2 culture "totally different," he later related that he enjoyed his stay in the U.S. and appreciated his new friends and interacting with different cultures.

For the second research question that considered the role culture might play in causing L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students, Miguel preferred group over individual work

because it was easier for him to ask for assistance. He commented that teachers are “very different” in the U.S. (“The teachers here are cold, not really interested in their students, people are not as important.”) He also viewed the L1 and L2 cultures as “totally different” and said that American culture, lifestyle and ideas differed significantly from Venezuela.” Miguel was glad to be in the U.S., however, because his country was “very dangerous. In my country there are more weapons, more guns, there’s more violence, it’s not clean. It’s very different [than Florida].”

Zena

Zena is an energetic 25 year-old ESL student from Venezuela. Although placed at an intermediate proficiency level Zena related, “I feel nervous to speak [English] with native speakers.” Her background is unique in that she had been to the U.S. previously on a tourist visa and returned with her husband seven months ago as his dependent. She currently holds an F-2 visa since her husband, also a native Spanish-speaker from Venezuela, is a university PhD student and an F-1 visa holder. As a result, Zena is unable to work or take more than three classes at a time, which she finds “very frustrating.”

Unfortunately, Zena’s father passed away only a week after she had arrived in the U.S. Zena and her family are happy that she is studying in the U.S. due to the current unstable political situation in her country. She misses her mother terribly and the two speak “nearly every day.” Zena graduated with a degree in journalism in Venezuela and had worked in radio production prior to relocating overseas to enroll at AELI. She currently studies Writing, Grammar and TOEFL and aspires to obtain a master’s degree in journalism to continue to work in radio.

Means: Zena

CA: 2.5

FNE: 3.57

GFA: 3.46

Zena had a high overall L2 anxiety mean (3.18). For the first research question, Zena's FLCAS scores closely matched her interview responses. She had a low Communication Apprehension FLCAS mean (2.5) and related during her interview that she thought her L1 and L2 were "similar." She also felt "comfortable" participating in class and "sometimes" asked teachers for help if she did not understand material. Zena also found the ELI material manageable and the homework and tests relatively easy. While she did not have a high level of communication apprehension, however, she had trouble with "speaking and vocabulary." Perhaps as a result, her mean (2.5) in this category was higher than other participants such as Cindy (1.92), Susan (2.17), and Amy (2.34).

Her high Fear of Negative Evaluation mean (3.57) also matched her interview response, "My classmates are better at English than I am." Zena also had a very high mean (3.46) for General Feeling of Anxiety. She noted several issues such as the passing of her father a week after she had arrived in the U.S. and allergy medication that made her "drowsy every day" in class. She also pointed out that she did not have many opportunities to practice communicating in the L2 outside of class: "When my husband and I go out with his friends, I [finally] have a chance to practice [speaking English]."

Her visa situation also caused increased anxiety. She could not enroll in more than three classes at one time because she was "an F2 student, dependent on F1, my husband. I find this very frustrating. My husband has the student visa." She mentioned that when she had originally

arrived in the U.S. in August on a tourist visa, she “didn’t know English, couldn’t study, [and] couldn’t enroll in classes. I felt like I was in prison at the apartment.”

For the second research question that considered the role culture might play in causing L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students, Zena said she would rather work alone than in groups because aggressive students did not provide opportunities for “more shy” students like her to speak. She commented that there were “big differences” between the U.S. and Venezuela school systems and also pointed out that teachers in the U.S. were “very different” from teachers back home. Zena also mentioned that she felt nervous because her “family and close friends are in a country that is very dangerous now. There’s a lot of kidnapping and stealing. I feel very insecure.”

Duke

Duke, an 18 year-old from Colombia in the U.S. for 2 months and assessed at an intermediate proficiency level, is the youngest of the Spanish-speaking adult ESL students that participated in this study. Since Duke provided terse, overwhelmingly positive responses to most questions, he may be experiencing what Oberg (1954) referred to as the early “honeymoon phase” of culture shock. His enthusiastic response to Question 12, “How do you feel about American culture and ideas? How does American culture compare with your native country’s culture?” summed up his fresh outlook: “Everything is fine!”

When asked how he felt being an ESL student Duke responded, “I feel very good. Nothing makes me anxious.” Surprisingly, Duke’s earlier FLCAS responses revealed far more anxiety than he had conveyed during his interview. Duke is enrolled in Communication Skills,

Listening, Reading, Writing, and TOEFL courses. While older classmates aspire to attain advanced degrees and possibly professional careers in the U.S., Duke related that his goal was “to prove to my parents that I could learn English.”

Means: Duke

CA: 3.5

FNE: 3

GFA: 3.23

Duke had a high overall L2 anxiety mean (3.24) on the FLCAS and high means for Communication Anxiety (3.5) and General Feeling of Anxiety (3.23), which did not match his later interview responses. Regarding the first research question, Duke said, “Everything is fine!” followed by, “I feel okay and don’t feel nervous.” However, he had a very high mean (3.5) in this category. This may be because Duke said, “I don’t usually ask for help. I prefer not to.” He also commented that he was concerned about “speaking and using the wrong verb tenses. Sometimes I use the present [tense] when I have to use the past.” While he said he did not speak the L2 much at school, “I practice [speaking] English where I live. Students live there. It’s like a hotel. My neighbors are all students. That’s where I get to practice. I prefer not to speak in class.”

Duke had an average Fear of Negative Evaluation mean (3) that indicated neither anxiety nor lack thereof; his interview comments matched the anxiety level for this category. Regarding proficiency level, he thought his classmates and he were, “About the same, some participate more than others but [that] doesn’t mean they understand more, just that they’re more outspoken. Some will participate more. It’s difficult to judge.”

Duke also had a high General Feeling of Anxiety mean (3.23). This was unexpected considering Duke said he liked the language institute and was “never anxious.” He also said that he liked “everything” about the ELI and had “no problems.” While he commented, “I don’t feel like I have any major difficulties,” he added, “I’ve never lived alone before. Living alone has been a challenge.” As indicated by his FLCAS scores, his seemingly carefree attitude may have masked a lot of insecurity.

Regarding the second research question, Duke did not have a preference regarding individual versus group work. He remarked, “I like both individual and group work, and I have done both here [at AELI].” However, when later asked what he liked best at school Duke said, “I like to spend time by myself at the computer lab. I like to work by myself.”

Duke found that “some things are different” regarding his L1 and the target L2 and noted that teachers in the U.S. were “very different.” (“Here they require more [from students] and they also assign a lot more homework.”) He also commented that America has a “hard-working” culture compared with Colombia and felt “people are more concerned with work here.”

Patricia

Patricia, 25, arrived in the U.S. along with Miguel on January 31, 2010. The two started dating in Venezuela and decided to study English together at AELI. Patricia comes from a family of five. In Venezuela she had lived with her three brothers and her mother (unfortunately, her father recently passed away). She is a low-intermediate speaker and noted that grammar and speaking, in particular, made her “nervous.” Native English speakers would probably never suspect that Patricia had run a successful business in Venezuela prior to enrolling at AELI.

Means: Patricia

CA: mean 3.5

FNE: mean 4.14

GFE: mean 3.53

Patricia, a low-intermediate student in the U.S. for only a month at the time of this study, had the second-highest overall mean (3.72) of the 10 participants, indicating the second-highest L2 anxiety. For the first research question that focused on the causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute, Patricia's FLCAS scores closely matched her interview responses. She had a high Communication Apprehension mean (3.5) and did not often participate in class because she felt her vocabulary was insufficient: "I'm very nervous when I try to speak because I don't know some words. I try to speak and I don't know how I can translate the words I need to say." She later added, "I feel nervous when I speak. Sometimes I can't speak because I need more vocabulary development." Even though she had difficulty with "grammar and speaking," she related, "I feel afraid asking for help."

Her high Fear of Negative Evaluation mean (4.14) also matched her later interview response that she perceived her classmates as being better at English. Patricia also had a high mean (3.53) for General Feeling of Anxiety. During her interview, Patricia commented that the school was giving her considerable pressure to produce documents and make payments that were difficult considering her country's current political situation: "I want to continue and keep going but they [administration] make it hard."

She also appeared to be having difficulty because teachers did not explain material in enough detail and felt that classes were "too short." Her father had also passed away just prior to her departing for the U.S., and she alluded to uncertainty about her future: "I don't know what

I'm going to do. Here the university doesn't have a [professional field] school. In Gainesville they have a program, so maybe I will go to Gainesville for a master's degree." Political and economic problems at home also distracted Patricia and apparently contributed to her L2 anxiety. She noted, "It's hard to focus sometimes because of what's going on in Venezuela."

For the second research question that considered the role culture might play in causing L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students, Patricia strongly favored working alone. Like Burt, she pointed out that she was not able to improve in the L2 working in groups, and as such strongly disliked it: "I like individual work best. Students don't take group work seriously. I can't get to the next [English] level in groups. I don't like it."

Patricia believed, "There's a lot of difference between English and Spanish." She later added, "They're very different. Not alike at all." She pointed out vast differences in educational systems, customs, regulations, and culture: "The food is different, the music is different. Everything is different. The rules are very different. In my country, for example, you don't have to use a seatbelt, but here you must. There are a lot more rules here."

Burt

Burt immediately stands out because he appears visibly distracted and anxious. A native of Venezuela, 21 year-old Burt arrived in the U.S. 6 months ago and currently lives with his parents and brother (another brother remains in Venezuela). Placed at a low-intermediate proficiency level, his response to the first two parts of Question 16, "How do you feel about school? What makes you anxious at school?" offered telling insight: "I feel anxious all the time.

Speaking, tests, presentations... I'm always nervous." In response to the first part of Question 19, "How do you feel about speaking in class?" Burt responded, "Very nervous."

Means: Burt

CA: 4.5

FNE: 4.38

GFA: 3.31

Burt, perhaps the most anxious individual the principle researcher has ever encountered, had the highest overall FLCAS mean (4.06) of these 10 participants. For the first research question, Burt's FLCAS scores closely matched his interview responses. He had a very high Communication Apprehension mean (4.5) and related during his interview difficulty with "grammar and speaking." He said he felt "very nervous," did not like to speak in class and, "Even if I don't know the answers, I prefer not to ask for help."

His high Fear of Negative Evaluation mean (4.38) closely matched his later interview response, "I feel my classmates have better English ability. I think about this all the time." Burt also had a high mean (3.31) for General Feeling of Anxiety. Aside from one brother, his immediate family had relocated to the U.S. from Venezuela, his mother was "very unhappy" and he was under considerable pressure to improve his English "as fast as possible." He noted that he felt anxious during tests even though they were "easy."

For the second research question that considered the role culture might play in causing L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students, Burt strongly preferred individual rather than group work because students typically communicated in their L1 with one another. This, according to Burt, did not provide opportunities for improvement in the L2.

Burt indicated during his interview that English and Spanish are “very different” and that American people, customs, and lifestyle are also “very different.” Regarding American culture he said, “It’s very different. I feel, you know, no good because it’s different. Sometimes it’s strange.” He also mentioned that American people “are very cold” (“I miss my country because American people are sometimes very cold people. I miss the warmth of home country people”). He also noted that, “Compared with my country, the [American] professors here are far more punctual and strict.”

Summary

The first research question central to this study was:

- What are the causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute?

Communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and general feeling of anxiety were measured using the FLCAS. Follow-up interview responses that related to items on the FLCAS included test anxiety, fear of speaking English and participating in class, perception of peer proficiency, and anxiety speaking English with native speakers. A total of 14 possible causes of L2 anxiety were identified. Of these 14, 4 causes were identified from the FLCAS and follow-up interviews: test anxiety, fear of L2 classroom communication, perception of peer proficiency, and anxiety speaking English with native speakers. An additional 5 possible causes not related to the FLCAS were incompatible goals, opportunities to practice, using English in professional contexts, the native country, and the need for error correction.

The second question central to this research study was:

- What role might culture play in causing L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students?

The influence of culture on L2 anxiety is not identified on the FLCAS, so findings were related to responses given during interviews. The 5 cultural influences of L2 anxiety identified in this study were not asking for assistance, cultural differences (i.e., “cold” American people), the perception of stark language differences, a lack of traditional support, and collaborative group work.

The literature proposed that Spanish-speakers are accustomed to familial relationships in classrooms in their native countries, so consequently these students should have preferred to work collaboratively in groups. However, the opposite was found in this study. Since the students interviewed were motivated to improve English communicative abilities, 5 out of 10 participants (Amy, Diane, Burt, Zena, and Patricia) felt that working in groups provided *fewer* rather than more opportunities to improve in the target language.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Possible Causes of L2 Anxiety in Spanish-Speaking Adult ESL Students Enrolled at a Language Institute

The first research question central to this study was:

- What are the causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute?

This study identified 14 possible causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute. Of these 14, 4 causes were identified from the FLCAS and follow-up interviews: test anxiety, fear of L2 classroom communication, perception of peer proficiency, and anxiety speaking English with native speakers. An additional 5 possible causes not related to the FLCAS were incompatible goals, opportunities to practice, using English in professional contexts, the native country, and the need for error correction.

Test Anxiety

All 10 students had responded on the FLCAS that they did not feel anxious preparing for English tests. In addition, 9 out of 10 conveyed during follow-up interviews that tests at the ELI were “easy.” However, 4 students (Susan, Miguel, Patricia, and Burt) later related high test anxiety during interviews.

Susan related that she felt “frustrated and anxious” when tested on material that had not been covered by ESL instructors at the language institute, and that incidences of this had happened several times. This was surprising considering Susan had only been enrolled for 3 months during this study. Since Susan is the only student in this study who had mentioned this

issue, it is possible that she did not understand what material would be covered on exams due to listening comprehension issues. Otherwise, the material on the syllabus should have been clarified by ESL instructors in her classes prior to exam administrations.

Miguel's response that tests in English were "difficult" was not surprising considering he was at a beginner proficiency level and had been in the U.S. for only a month at the time of this study. However, responses from Susan and Patricia that "easy" tests caused L2 anxiety were not expected.

Patricia had reported that she was "normally at ease" during English tests on the FLCAS. This response did not match her later interview response that she felt "anxious" during English tests. Since she had been in the U.S. for only a month at the time of this study, it is possible that Patricia misunderstood the context, even with a Spanish version of the FLCAS to translate the items. She (and other Spanish-speaking adult ESL students) may have thought that this FLCAS item referred to English tests in her native country as opposed to English tests at the ELI.

Aside from Miguel, who felt that English tests at the ELI were "difficult," Patricia was among the 9 students who had said they were "easy." The principle researcher was therefore surprised that she related high anxiety while taking these "easy" tests. It is also possible that Patricia had not yet adjusted to the new learning environment. As such, even "easy" tests may have made her and the other new students in this study feel anxious.

Burt related tremendous L2 anxiety throughout his interview. When asked about tests at the ELI, Burt related that they were "easy." However, he added that although they were not difficult he "still felt nervous" taking them. This response was not surprising considering Burt related very anxious feelings across all three FLCAS categories.

What was surprising, however, was that Burt, like Patricia, had indicated that he was “normally at ease” during English tests on the FLCAS. Results demonstrated that Spanish-speaking adult ESL students may not be willing to convey test anxiety during surveys or other impersonal forms of communication, but may convey this information if asked directly during face-to-face interviews. Alternatively, context may have to be explained so Spanish-speaking adult ESL students understand that all items on the survey refer to the ELI and not the home country.

Fear of L2 Classroom Communication

Of the 10 students who participated in this study, 4 (Miguel, Duke, Patricia, and Burt) indicated that they felt anxious using the L2 in class. Duke’s FLCAS scores indicated that he had difficulty communicating in the L2 in class and felt pressure to prepare for his classes. While Duke had later said, “Everything is fine!” and had responded similarly to many interview questions, he indicated that he preferred to speak English with students at the hotel-like dormitory where he lived rather than speak in class.

Perhaps not surprisingly, 3 out of 4 students (Miguel, Patricia, and Burt) who indicated apprehension using the L2 in class were at beginner and low-intermediate proficiency levels, and all 3 students mentioned “pronunciation” or “speaking” as a main area of difficulty. Students at lower proficiency levels need to practice using the L2 in safe, non-threatening contexts. New students may fear using the L2 if a safe environment has not yet been established. Lower proficiency level students may also fear being mocked for their heavy foreign accents and unique, non-native grammar accents (Folse, 2009).

Perception of Peer Proficiency

Students (Zena, Patricia, and Burt) who perceived their peers as having better English proficiency felt more fear of negative evaluation, as evidenced by their high means (3.57, 4.14, and 4.38, respectively) in this category. Zena's high mean (3.57) matched her later interview response, "My classmates are better at English than I am." Patricia's high mean (4.14) also closely matched her response that she perceived her classmates as being better at English.

Diane had also communicated that she perceived her peers as being at a higher level than she was, but this response did not match most of her earlier FLCAS scores and low mean (2.5) in this category. Duke's mean (3) in this category matched his later response, "About the same, some participate more than others but doesn't mean they understand more, just that they're more outspoken. Some will participate more. It's difficult to judge."

Results supported findings by Hembree (1988), Horwitz (2001), and Price (1991) that L2 learners may perceive their actual proficiency levels as lower than it actually are, which may heighten L2 anxiety. Burt was a case in point. On the FLCAS Burt responded that he strongly agreed that other students spoke English better than he did. He also chose "4 = Agree" for Item 31, "I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak in English."

During his interview, in response to Question 20, "How does your English level compare with your classmates?" Burt had responded, "I feel my classmates have better English ability. I think about this all the time." In her interview, Diane also expressed a greater fear of negative evaluation learning English than her close friend Cindy, offering a similar answer to Burt: "I think students are better than me, yeah, some students are better, it's not like we're on the same level." This response did not match with her low mean (2.5) in this category, however. It is

possible that in her interview response Diane had referred to other “students” of various proficiency levels at the ELI, in general, and not the students placed at the same proficiency level in her classes, specifically.

Native Speakers

Mean scores for reverse-scored (negative) items on the FLCAS were supposed to determine L2 anxiety associated with communicating with native English speakers (Goshi, 2005). Mean scores for this category are depicted in a graph on page 47. Results indicated that 6 out of 10 Spanish-speaking adult ESL students in this study (Amy, Burt, Cindy, Emily, Miguel, and Diane) did not have a high level of L2 anxiety communicating with native English speakers. Duke’s moderate mean (3) indicated neither a high level of L2 anxiety nor a lack thereof, which matched his later interview responses. Of these 10 students, 3 students (Zena, Susan, and Patricia) had high means in this category, which indicated that these 3 students had high levels of L2 anxiety communicating face-to-face with native English speakers.

If reverse-scored (negative) items do in fact measure the level of L2 anxiety associated with face-to-face native English speaker interaction, a surprising finding was that Burt, the student with the highest overall L2 anxiety mean (4.06), was not found to feel apprehensive communicating with native English speakers. This result does not match his FLCAS mean scores and interview responses.

For instance, Burt had the highest Communication Apprehension mean (4.5), the highest Fear of Negative Evaluation mean (4.38) and a high mean (3.31) for General Feeling of Anxiety. Burt had also indicated during his interview that he did not like certain aspects of American

culture because “it’s different. Sometimes it’s strange.” He also mentioned that American people “are very cold” and was not fond of his “punctual and strict” ELI instructors. His low mean (2.57) to negative-scored items, the second-lowest of the 10 participants, was therefore completely unexpected.

It is possible that Burt may have felt more comfortable interacting with native English speakers outside of school where he was not graded on his communicative ability, and therefore indicated via his reverse-scored (negative) responses less L2 anxiety. Since 3 out of 10 participants reported high levels of L2 anxiety communicating face-to-face with native English speakers, this may be one cause of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute.

Incompatible Goals

Amy and Emily moved to the U.S. to improve their English in distinct professional fields. In response to Question 18, “What do you like least at school?” Amy commented that AELI “focused too much on preparing ESL students for the TOEFL [Test of English as a Foreign Language].” She added, “I would like to improve my knowledge of a specific type of English language that isn’t offered here. I find it disappointing and upsetting.”

Emily also confided during her interview that she had enrolled in a challenging course at the larger university because the language institute did not offer a language course related to her chosen profession. “[AELI] should offer courses for students who want to improve in different career areas.” The intense TOEFL focus at the ELI indicated that many ESL students intended to enroll in undergraduate and graduate courses at U.S. colleges and universities.

Professionals who desire improvement in a specific field do not have many options to improve their English competency in a specific profession because in order to receive employment abroad they must first demonstrate competency in the language of their field. Therefore, other than enrolling and taking general language classes at a language institute, there are not many options. There are no language institutes in Florida designed specifically to train lawyers or doctors from Spanish-speaking countries in terminology they'd need to use in professional contexts, for instance. Incompatible goals may be causing an increase in frustration and anxiety for these high-intermediate and advanced Spanish-speaking adult ESL students.

Opportunities to Practice

Of the 10 students that participated in this study, 3 (Zena, Emily, and Susan) commented that they felt anxious because they did not have enough opportunities to practice speaking English outside of class. Not having opportunities to practice the target language may increase communication apprehension and a general feeling of anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students.

Zena mentioned that she only had an opportunity to practice speaking English in relaxed, non-threatening environments when she socialized with her husband and his native English-speaking friends. Many of the motivated Spanish-speaking adult ESL students in this study looked for opportunities to communicate in the target language. Duke related that he practiced at his dormitory. Amy mentioned that she spoke with professors that held PhDs after class. Not having opportunities to practice may therefore have created L2 anxiety in some of these students.

While analyzing the data, however, the principle researcher discovered that AELI offered a “conversation hour” for all ESL students enrolled at the language institute (gratis). The fact that all 10 of the students that participated in this study were unaware of this valuable service demonstrates the need to translate important information into Spanish-speaking adult ESL students’ L1. Dissemination of important information translated into the L1 may make Spanish-speaking adult ESL students feel less anxious at a language institute.

English in Professional Contexts

High-intermediate and advanced Spanish-speaking adult ESL students (Amy and Emily) may experience communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation because they do not want to make mistakes while using English in professional contexts. Amy responded that she would not be nervous speaking the English language with native speakers on the FLCAS yet indicated that she would feel very self-conscious about speaking the English language in front of professionals.

This finding may indicate that Amy, a professional, may fear embarrassment using incorrect English in professional contexts. In response to the first two parts of Question 16, “How do you feel about school? What makes you anxious at school?” Emily replied, “I’m nervous. English makes me anxious. It’s not the language [in general], it’s the technical terms.” Her final comment regarding using English in the workplace was, “I’m afraid of failing in the language.”

These responses indicate that high-intermediate and advanced Spanish-speaking adult ESL students may have different needs compared with beginner, low-intermediate and intermediate students. Students at higher proficiency levels may enroll to improve their language

competency in a specific academic or professional field. They may also not feel anxious speaking with native English speakers at an ELI, as lower proficiency students might, because they are motivated to further their careers. However, they may be more likely to feel apprehension speaking English in the workplace for fear of appearing incompetent compared with native English speakers.

The Native Country

In this study, 7 out of 10 students were from Venezuela, a country with considerable economic and political instability. Of these 7 students, 4 (Susan, Miguel, Zena, and Patricia) specifically mentioned experiencing difficulties at the ELI such as being unable to provide required documentation and pay fees within tight deadlines as a result of events transpiring in their native country. These students also said during interviews that they were concerned about their families and friends back home due to violence and unrest. As a result, they indicated that they felt substantial pressure at school. One student, Susan, returned to this topic in 7 out of 23 questions. The native country of Spanish-speaking adult ESL students should therefore be considered as a possible cause of L2 anxiety while enrolled at a language institute.

Need for Error Correction

Several participants remarked that not knowing when they were making errors was a source of communication apprehension and general feeling of anxiety. Susan commented that she wanted more help with “conversation skills and pronunciation.” She felt anxious not knowing when she was making mistakes since people didn’t point out to her what she was saying wrong: “I’m never going to improve if it’s not brought to my attention what I’m saying wrong.

Not knowing what I'm saying wrong makes me feel nervous." This may be why Susan responded on the FLCAS that she starts to panic when she has to speak English in class without having prepared.

Emily said she wanted to communicate with people that were at a higher level of proficiency because she could improve her English competency that way. She wanted to learn the technical terms for her field and did not "feel comfortable" without explicit error correction. Emily also pointed out that, in spite of apprehension to participate in class, she appreciated opportunities for error-correction: "I get nervous... [But] I get the chance to be corrected when I'm wrong."

While error correction is typically associated with being a cause of L2 anxiety, *not* having error correction has been identified as a possible cause of L2 anxiety in this study. Motivated Spanish-speaking adult ESL students, as indicated in this study, want error correction. Not having their errors corrected while communicating in the target language may therefore be a cause of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students.

Proficiency Level

The literature (Krashen, 1985) concluded that lower proficiency level ESL students tend to experience greater L2 anxiety, but results from this study indicated that this finding does not always apply. Miguel, for instance, was at a beginner proficiency level. He had only been in the U.S. for a month at the time of this study. According to the literature, Miguel should have had very high L2 anxiety, perhaps the highest of the 10 participants, as reported on the FLCAS and conveyed during his interview.

Miguel did report a slightly higher level of communication apprehension on the FLCAS via his mean score (3.25). He also conveyed a measure of communication apprehension during his interview: “I don’t like to speak in class...I’ll only raise my hand if I’m sure. If I’m not sure I’ll wait for others to raise their hands.” However, he had low means for fear of negative evaluation (2.71) and general feeling of anxiety (2.77), and his later interview comments matched these FLCAS responses. Proficiency level was therefore not found to predict L2 anxiety entirely accurately.

Duration of Stay

Duration of stay in the U.S. was also not found to predict L2 anxiety entirely accurately. Miguel, a beginner who had only been in the U.S. for a month at the time of this study, had a low overall mean (2.91) compared with Zena (3.18), Duke (3.24) and Burt (4.06). Zena had been in the U.S. for 7 months, Duke had been in the U.S. for 2 months, and Burt had been in the U.S. for 6 months at the time of this study; all 3 of these students had been in the U.S. longer than Miguel yet reported higher overall L2 anxiety. However, having arrived in the U.S. a year earlier to study at an ELI in a different state may have given Cindy more time to adjust to American culture and lifestyle compared with 8 of the other participants who had been in the U.S. for 7 months or less. This may be why culture did not seem to influence L2 anxiety in Cindy.

The second research question central to this study was:

- What role might culture play in causing L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students?

Possible cultural influences of L2 anxiety identified in this study were not asking the teacher for assistance, perception of language differences, and cultural differences that include

unfamiliarity or dislike of certain aspects of American culture. In addition, a lack of traditional social support networks may cause L2 anxiety. A preference for collaborative group work, as reported in the literature, was not found in this study. Rather, group work was found to cause L2 anxiety in 5 out of 10 Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute.

Asking for Assistance

Students (Emily, Susan, Cindy, Amy, and Diane) who said they asked for help in the classroom had low general feeling of anxiety means (1.63, 1.88, 2, 2.38, and 2.5) compared with means for those who chose not to (Duke, 3; Zena, 3.57; Patricia, 4.14; and Burt, 4.38). In response to Question 22, “How do you feel asking for help?” Zena responded, “Maybe I could be scared, yeah, it’s a big problem.” Her answer corresponds to her response of “5 = Strongly agree” to Item 10, “I worry about the consequences of failing my English language class” and “5 = Strongly agree” to Item 16, “Even If I am well prepared for English language class, I feel anxious about it.”

Burt, clearly the most anxious of all who had participated, stated, “Even if I don’t know the answers, I prefer not to ask for help.” Patricia gave a similar response during her interview. These interview responses closely matched their earlier FLCAS scores. Even though these students may not know the answers, they indicated that they were unwilling to ask for assistance. Their high FLCAS scored responses for these items and greater general feeling of anxiety reported may be a consequence.

Students that asked for assistance in this study related that they generally felt “comfortable” at the language institute. They appreciated American culture and perceived their

classmates as being at the same proficiency level. It is likely that a classroom environment of trust had been established in order for these students to feel comfortable asking for help. Students that did not ask for help reported a higher general feeling of anxiety (see results in Chapter 4 above). Not asking for assistance may therefore be a cause of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute.

Language Differences

Viewing one's native language as "different" or "very different" from the target language may increase general feelings of anxiety. Nearly half of the students interviewed (Miguel, Zena, Patricia, and Burt) responded "different" or "very different" in response to Question 8, "How different are English words and grammar from Spanish?" Compared with 5 of the other 6 participants, these students had higher means in this category (2.91, 3.18, 3.72, and 4.06, respectively; surprisingly, Miguel, a beginner, had a lower overall mean than Duke, an intermediate speaker.

Spanish-speaking adult ESL students who perceive vast differences between the grammar and structure of the two languages may feel more anxiety communicating in the L2. For instance, Burt said, "The two languages are very different. The structure, the vocabulary, they're very different." Perhaps not surprisingly, Burt had the highest General Feeling of Anxiety mean (4.06) reported earlier on the FLCAS.

Patricia also had a very high mean (3.72) in this category, and her interview responses matched her earlier FLCAS mean score: "You could say something quickly in Spanish, but in English it takes a longer time. The two languages are not alike at all." Perceiving the L1 and L2

as “different” or “very different” may have heightened L2 anxiety in these Spanish-speaking adult ESL students because they perceived greater difficulty compared with those who found the L1 and L2 “similar” or “very similar.”

In contrast, students (Emily, Cindy, Susan, Amy, Diane) who believed that English and Spanish were “similar” or “very similar” had lower general feeling of anxiety means (1.8, 2.2, 2.22, 2.5, and 2.62, respectively). These students indicated on the FLCAS and in follow-up interviews that they had less overall anxiety at the ELI. Perception of vast differences between the L1 and L2 may therefore cause L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute.

Cultural Differences

Several studies (Lewthwaite, 1997; Lin et al., 2001; Yoon & Portman, 2004) found that cultural differences led to increased anxiety. Stark differences in culture may also play a role in causing L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute. Spanish-speaking adult ESL students may not be accustomed to American lifestyle and culture while learning a new language (English) in a new environment.

The students with the highest overall FLCAS means in this study (Zena, 3.18; Duke, 3.24; Patricia, 3.72; and Burt, 4.06) stated that American teachers were “different” or “very different” from teachers in their native countries. Burt stated, “Compared with my country, the [American] professors here are far more punctual and strict.” These students responded that, compared with the culture, ideas and lifestyle of Venezuela, noticeable differences existed in the U.S., and most thought these differences were either “strange” or did not view them positively.

Unfamiliarity with the target L2 culture may increase L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students. The only outlier was Miguel (2.91), who had a relatively low overall FLCAS mean considering that he had responded similarly to this question during his interview. However, at a later point he related that he was relieved to be in Florida, an environment he deemed “safe” and “clean” as compared with his native country. This statement may account for the discrepancy between his earlier views conveyed regarding stark cultural contrasts and his overall low L2 anxiety mean.

Half (5 out of 10) of the Spanish-speaking adult ESL students that participated in this study (Emily, Cindy, Diane, Miguel, and Burt) noted that American teachers and people, in general, seem “cold” and aloof compared with people back home. These responses were unprovoked. The words “closed” and “cold” did not appear anywhere in the interview, nor did the principle researcher use these words to describe American people, in general, or teachers, in particular.

This finding means that many Spanish-speaking adult ESL students may perceive Americans as “cold” and unconcerned about the welfare of others, including their students. Perceiving instructors and people in the new L2 environment as disinterested or unconcerned may heighten feelings of anxiety for Spanish-speaking adult ESL students used to “warm” country people, a term conveyed by Burt.

Thompson (2000) suggested that cultural differences between the native and host countries may lead to L2 anxiety in ESL students. While 4 out of 5 students (Emily, Cindy, Diane, and Miguel) who had commented that Americans seemed “cold” did not have high

overall FLCAS mean scores, this perception may contribute to higher L2 anxiety levels in specific categories such as communication apprehension or general feeling of anxiety.

Lack of Traditional Support

Half (5 out of 10) of the Spanish-speaking adult ESL students in this study (Cindy, Diane, Duke, Zena, and Burt) commented that people in the U.S. spend considerably less time with their families. They mentioned this point to emphasize the importance of the family and close friends in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students' home countries. Family and close social networks, common in Spanish-speaking populations, may no longer provide traditional support measures once Spanish-speaking adult ESL students arrive in the U.S.

This may have heightened L2 anxiety in these students. Diane, for instance, had used the word "always" several times to describe the amount of time she spent with her family and close friends, and Duke had used the same word. His final comment was, "I had a lot of friends help me back home. I don't have that [traditional support network] here. I miss my friends back home because they always helped me."

When social support networks consisting of church and family members as well as close friends are no longer available to assist with everything from minor inconveniences to major life events, these students related that they felt "anxious" and "alone." Of these 5 participants, 2 (Cindy and Diane) specifically mentioned the importance of social events at the ELI to connect with other native Spanish speakers. Being far removed from traditional support networks may therefore be one cause of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute.

Preference for Individual Work

The literature concluded that Spanish-speakers are accustomed to familial relationships in classrooms in their native countries, so consequently the Spanish-speaking adult ESL students in this study should have indicated a preference to work collaboratively in groups. However, the opposite was found. Since the students interviewed were motivated to improve English communicative abilities, 5 out of 10 participants (Amy, Diane, Zena, Patricia, and Burt) felt that working in groups provided *fewer* rather than more opportunities to improve in the L2. In fact, Duke, one of two students (Duke and Susan) who said he had no preference regarding group or individual work, later commented, “I like to spend time by myself at the computer lab. I like to work by myself.”

Apparently many students at the ELI used group work opportunities to socialize rather than remain focused on the task at hand. Burt responded, “I prefer to work alone; sometimes it’s good [to work in groups] but not with other ESL students, every time we just speak Spanish.” Diane commented, “I prefer individual work because sometimes when I work by group...by [preparing for] the test I work and the other guys only talk, laugh, you know what I mean? So I prefer individual [work] because I know I can do [the work] better by myself.” Zena felt frustrated at being “shut out” by more aggressive students. She remarked, “Group projects have been easy but I get frustrated at not being able to talk.”

Implications are ESL instructors should make clear to students that they must communicate in the L2 during class activities. This does not suggest that states should pass laws outlawing the use of Spanish in the classroom; rather, since the Spanish-speaking adult ESL

students in this study felt anxious because they were not using the L2 to communicate in groups, use of the L2 should be encouraged by using various assessment measures, such as peer grading.

ESL instructors could also monitor the class (walk around during activities) to ensure that students are using the L2 and correct grammatical errors as necessary. This is because the students in this study indicated that they not only preferred but also strongly desired error correction. Students that use their L1 to communicate with peers that speak the same native language could lose points for that activity. Since Duke and Susan had said they were “fine either way” regarding individual or group work, ensuring that students use the L2 in class would mitigate L2 anxiety for half of the Spanish-speaking adult ESL students in this study.

How to Mitigate L2 Anxiety

Arnold (2000) suggested using visualization exercises to boost self-confidence, help students focus on tasks and reduce exam-related anxiety. Ariza (1999) suggested getting to know students and giving them a chance to feel successful. Giving clear directions and a clear grading policy prior to exams may help students feel less anxious (Ariza, 1999). Encouraging students to read English materials outside of class may also help to decrease anxiety and increase comprehension in the target language. Extensive reading may lead to decreased anxiety, increased vocabulary and higher test scores (Zimmerman, 1997).

An overseas “buddy” program (McClure, 2007; Sümer, Poyrazli, & Grahame, 2008) may help reduce L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students. The “buddy” may be another ESL student already enrolled in the program or a native English speaker. New students could be introduced to their “buddies” either via e-mail or Skype™. Upon arrival in the U.S., the school

could have an orientation for new Spanish-speaking adult ESL students to meet their “buddies,” new teachers and classmates before classes begin.

Future Research

In spite of a plethora of research on Spanish-speaking ESL students in K-12 populations in the United States (Ajayi, 2006; Ek, 2008; Harklau, 2000; Rodriguez & Cruz, 2009; Roswell, Sztainbok, & Blaney, 2007; Vollmer, 2000), a noticeable gap exists regarding Spanish-speaking adult ESL populations. Future studies may want to consider age, gender and countries of origin in determining possible causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students. A larger number of participants may also make results easier to generalize. Future research focusing on L2 anxiety with ELLs may provide other causes of L2 anxiety which have not been explored yet. Researchers may want to consider studying ESL students from different cultural backgrounds to determine if anxiety levels remain constant across cultures.

Finally, 7 out of 10 students that participated in this study were from Venezuela, a country with considerable political instability. Political turmoil overseas may have led to higher anxiety levels compared with Spanish-speaking adult ESL students from other countries. Future studies that use a larger population and a greater variety of participant cultural backgrounds may produce different results. In addition, longitudinal studies could determine how anxiety may change over time. Researchers may also want to consider long-term studies using more than one ethnic group.

Conclusion

Spanish-speaking adult ESL students studying abroad, far removed from traditional social support networks, often feel isolated and alone. They may have difficulty adapting to the new culture and *lingua franca*. Some may feel a pervasive sense of helplessness and seek out similar like-minded individuals. As indicated in this study, many Spanish-speaking adult ESL students do not refuse to learn English; they may simply not have enough opportunities to practice.

Possible causes of L2 anxiety related to the FLCAS include test anxiety, fear of L2 classroom communication (speaking English and participating in class), perception of peer proficiency, and speaking English with native speakers. Possible causes of L2 anxiety not related to the FLCAS but mentioned during interviews include incompatible goals, opportunities to practice, using English in professional contexts, the native country, and the need for error correction. Experiencing the initial pangs of culture shock (Oberg, 1954) may also have caused increased L2 anxiety in some students. Not being versed in the local program, school, environment, culture and foods may have led to increased L2 anxiety levels.

Proficiency level and duration of stay in the U.S. were not found to predict L2 anxiety entirely accurately. Rather, more likely causes of L2 anxiety were the native country and events transpiring outside of school. For instance, Patricia and Zena's fathers had recently passed away, Zena took allergy medication that made her "drowsy" and was particularly anxious about her F2 visa situation. Also, several students from Venezuela said they felt anxious as a result of complications at the ELI stemming from politics back home, and feared for their families and friends due to violence and social unrest.

Possible cultural influences of L2 anxiety identified in this study were not asking the teacher for assistance as well as perception of cultural and language differences. A lack of traditional support may also cause L2 anxiety. The literature concluded that Spanish-speaking ESL students prefer to work collaboratively in groups. However, 5 out of 10 students in this study did not prefer group work. Rather, in-class group activities were found to cause L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute because these activities did not provide opportunities to practice the L2 and improve.

Summary

In closing, a total of 14 possible causes of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute were identified and discussed in Chapter 5. Of these 14, 4 causes were identified from the FLCAS and follow-up interviews: test anxiety, fear of L2 classroom communication, perception of peer proficiency, and anxiety speaking English with native speakers. An additional 5 possible causes not related to the FLCAS were incompatible goals, opportunities to practice, using English in professional contexts, the native country, and the need for error correction. Proficiency level and duration of stay in the U.S. were not found to predict L2 anxiety entirely accurately in Spanish-speaking adult ESL populations.

The 5 cultural influences of L2 anxiety identified in this study were not asking for assistance, cultural differences, language differences, a lack of traditional support, and collaborative group work. The literature concluded that Spanish-speaking ESL populations strongly desired to work collaboratively in groups. However, the opposite conclusion was found.

Collaborative group work caused L2 anxiety in 5 out of 10 Spanish-speaking adult ESL students enrolled at a language institute because students felt anxious about not practicing the L2.

Most comments provided by Spanish-speaking adult ESL students during face-to-face interviews matched their previous FLCAS responses. While error correction is typically associated with being a cause of L2 anxiety, *not* having errors corrected was identified as a possible cause of L2 anxiety in this study. The motivated Spanish-speaking adult ESL students in this study wanted their errors corrected. Not having errors corrected while communicating in the target L2 may therefore be a possible cause of L2 anxiety in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students.

APPENDIX A: IRB HUMAN SUBJECTS PERMISSION LETTER



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: **Scott B. Freiburger**

Date: **February 10, 2010**

Dear Researcher:

On 2/10/2010, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination
Project Title: How Second Language Anxiety May Influence Latino ESL Adult Populations
Investigator: Scott B. Freiburger
IRIS Number: SBE-10-06699
Funding Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in IRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Joseph Bielitzki, DVM, UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 02/10/2010 12:05:26 PM EST

IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX B: ENGLISH CONSENT FORM



University of Central Florida
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
4000 Central Florida Boulevard, Orlando, Florida 32816
(407) 823-2000

INFORMED CONSENT FOR NON-MEDICAL RESEARCH

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

“L2 Anxiety in Spanish-Speaking Adult ESL Populations: Causes and Influences”

1. My name is Scott Freiberger.
2. I am asking for your participation in this research to learn about different factors associated with L2 learning with Spanish-speaking adults.
3. If you are in agreement with this study, you will be asked questions about what you think about learning English as an L2 and about the teaching of the English language at school.
4. The physical, psychological, social, and legal risks to you are minimal.
5. This study may serve as a guide for ESL teachers to learn more about the cultures of their students and as such should enable them to prepare a variety of activities that may be appropriate for students’ cultural backgrounds. The research should have no effect on your grades. There is no payment and your participation is voluntary.
6. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate.
7. If you have any questions about this study you may ask at anytime. If you have a question you can call me at (407) 608-9596.
8. Upon signing this you are agreeing to participate in this study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

You have been chosen to participate in a study about how L2 anxiety may influence Spanish-speaking adult ESL populations. The researcher, Scott Freiberger, is a student at the University of Central Florida, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, where he is studying for his master’s degree. His advisor, Dr. Florin Mihai, will supervise the research. The participants will be from Spanish-speaking families because they are from one of the largest groups of our secondary schools and institutions of higher learning (U.S. Census 2000).

This study may serve as a guide for ESL teachers to learn about the cultures of their students and thus should enable them to prepare a variety of lessons and activities that should be appropriate to students of different cultures. You will not receive any benefits for participating. Free evaluation is not considered a benefit. There is no payment to participate. Participation is voluntary. If you have any question, please speak with the researcher before signing the consent form.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to learn about the different factors associated with the learning of an L2 (English) in Spanish-speaking adult ESL students. It is also to learn how anxiety may be diminished.

PROCEDURES

You will be asked to complete a survey. In order to evaluate the results, Horwitz's (1986) "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)" will be used. This instrument gives information about the most common themes which cause the most anxiety, speaking or listening, in learning English. The questions and the survey will be translated and you will have the option of completing it in either English or in Spanish. Students will complete the survey during their English class. There are 33 questions in the survey, it should take about twenty minutes to complete. If you agree to have a brief follow-up interview, I will ask some personal information, such as the number of people in the family and about their time in the United States during the interview. I will not use your name to protect your identity. Depending on the results of the survey, I will select ten students for follow-up interviews. I will visit the school once to interview the students. The interview will take about fifteen minutes to complete. You will have the option of participating in either English or in Spanish.

POSSIBLE RISKS

Physical, social, and psychological risks should be minimal.

PAYMENT/COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not be paid for participating in this research study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether or not to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Principal Investigator: Scott Freiburger

(407) 608-9596

Faculty Sponsor: Florin Mihai, Ph.D.

UCF Department of Modern Languages and Literatures

College of Arts and Humanities

University of Central Florida

Southern Region Campus

1519 Clearlake Road,

Cocoa, FL 32922

(321) 433-7928

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the UCF Institutional Review Board, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246, (407) 823-3778.

SIGNATURE

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I give permission to participate in this study.

- I agree to take a survey related to anxiety and language learning.
- I *do not* agree to take a survey related to anxiety and language learning.
- I agree to participate in a brief 10-15 minute follow-up interview with principle researcher Scott Freiberger.
- I *do not* agree to participate in a brief 10-15 minute follow-up interview with principle researcher Scott Freiberger.

Name of Student

Date

Student's Signature

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS (If an oral translator is used)

My signature as witness certifies that the subject or his/her legal representative signed this consent form in my presence as his/her voluntary act and deed.

Name of Witness

Date

Signature of Witness

APPENDIX C: SPANISH CONSENT FORM



Universidad de Florida Central
Departamento de Lenguas y Literaturas Modernas
4000 Central Florida Boulevard, Orlando, Florida 32816
(407) 823-2000

PERMISO INFORMADO PARA PARTICIPAR EN LA INVESTIGACIÓN NO-MEDICA

PERMISO PARA PARTICIPAR EN LA INVESTIGACIÓN

“La ansiedad del segundo idioma en las poblaciones adultas de ESL habla española: Causas posibles e influencias culturales.”

1. Mi nombre es Scott Freiburger.
2. Le pedimos su participación en esta investigación para aprender los diferentes factores asociados con el aprendizaje del segundo idioma con adultos de habla española.
3. Si está de acuerdo con este estudio se le pedirá que conteste a las preguntas acerca de la investigación y lo que opina de la enseñanza del idioma inglés en la escuela.
4. Físicamente, socialmente, y psicológicamente el riesgo será mínimo para Ud.
5. Este estudio servirá de guía a los maestros de “ESL” para que aprendan la cultura de sus estudiantes y así podrán preparar una variedad de lecciones y actividades que sean apropiadas para sus estudiantes de diferentes culturas. Esta investigación no afectará sus notas. No hay pago, su participación será voluntaria.
6. Si no quiere formar parte de este estudio, no tiene que participar.
7. Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de este estudio puede hacerla o llamar al teléfono 407-608-9596.
8. Al firmar, usted afirma su participación en este estudio.

BENEFICIOS POTENCIALES A LOS SUJETOS Y / O LA SOCIEDAD

Ud. ha sido elegido(a) a participar en un estudio sobre cómo la ansiedad del segundo idioma puede influir las poblaciones de ESL de los adultos de habla española. El investigador, Scott Freiburger, es estudiante de la Universidad de la Florida Central, Departamento de Lenguas y Literaturas Modernas, donde está estudiando para la maestría. Su consejero el Dr. Florin Mihai supervisará la investigación. Los participantes serán de familias de habla española porque hemos encontrado que son uno de los grupos más grandes en nuestras secundarias y universidades (Censo de los Estados Unidos 2000).

Este estudio servirá de guía a los maestros de “ESL” para que aprendan la cultura de sus estudiantes y así podrán preparar una variedad de lecciones y actividades que sean apropiadas a sus estudiantes de diferentes culturas. Ud. no recibirá ningún beneficio para participar. No se considera como beneficio una evaluación gratis. No hay pago, la participación es voluntaria. Si tiene alguna pregunta, por favor comuníquese con el investigador antes de firmar el permiso.

Propósito Del Estudio

El propósito de esta investigación es para aprender los diferentes factores asociados con el aprendizaje del segundo idioma (inglés) con los adultos de habla española. También queremos ver como la ansiedad puede ser disminuida.

PROCEDIMIENTOS

Se le pedirá que complete una encuesta. Para evaluar los resultados se usará el Horwitz's (1986) "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)." Este instrumento da información acerca de los temas más comunes de todas las respuestas y cuales áreas causan la más ansiedad, hablar o escuchar el inglés. Las preguntas y la encuesta serán traducidas y tiene la opción de llenarla en inglés o en español.

Los estudiantes completarán la encuesta durante su clase de inglés. Hay 33 preguntas en la encuesta, les tomará 20 minutos para terminarla. Después de completar la encuesta, Ud. tendrá la opción de tener una entrevista personal conmigo. Le pediré alguna información personal tal como el número de miembros de su familia y acerca de su tiempo en los Estados Unidos durante la entrevista. No usaré su nombre para proteger su identidad. Dependiendo de los resultados de la encuesta, diez estudiantes serán elegidos para participar en una entrevista. Visitaré la escuela una vez para entrevistar a los estudiantes. La entrevista tomará unos quince minutos para completar y Ud. tendrá la opción de participar en inglés o en español.

RIESGOS POSIBLES

Físicamente, socialmente, y psicológicamente el riesgo será mínimo.

PAGO PARA PARTICIPAR

No hay pago, la participación es voluntaria.

DISCRECIÓN

Cualquier información que se obtenga en relación a este estudio que se podría identificarlo se mantendrá confidencial y sólo se descubrirá con su permiso o si es requerido por ley. Cuando se publiquen los resultados de la investigación o durante las presentaciones en conferencias, ninguna información será incluida que revele su identidad.

PARTICIPACIÓN O RETIRARSE

Usted puede escoger a participar en este estudio o no. Si Ud. decide participar, puede retirarse cuando quiera sin consecuencia. También puede negarse a contestar cualquier pregunta que no quiere contestar y todavía permanecer en el estudio.

IDENTIFICACIÓN DE INVESTIGADORES

Si hay alguna pregunta por favor comuníquese con el investigador:

Investigador principal: Scott Freiburger
(407) 608-9596

Profesor: Florin Mihai, Ph.D.

UCF Department of Modern Languages and Literatures

College of Arts and Humanities

University of Central Florida

Southern Region Campus

1519 Clearlake Road, Cocoa, FL 32922

(321) 433-7928

DERECHOS DEL PARTICIPANTE

En cualquier momento si no quiere seguir participando en la investigación se puede retirar sin consecuencia. No está renunciando ningunas demandas legales, derechos o remedios debido a su participación en esta investigación. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos por favor comuníquense con UCF Institutional Review Board, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246, (407) 823-3778.

SU FIRMA

Comprendo y estoy de acuerdo con todo lo que he leído acerca de la investigación.

Estoy de acuerdo en participar en un estudio sobre la ansiedad y el aprendizaje de idiomas.

No, no estoy de acuerdo en participar en un estudio sobre la ansiedad y el aprendizaje de idiomas.

Estoy de acuerdo en participar después en una breve entrevista de unos 10-15 minutos con el investigador Scott Freiberger.

No, no estoy de acuerdo en participar después en una breve entrevista de unos 10-15 minutos con el investigador Scott Freiberger.

Nombre del estudiante

Fecha

Firma del Estudiante

FIRMA DEL TESTIGO (Si se usa un intérprete)

Mi firma como testigo certifica que el sujeto o su representante legal ha firmado este formulario de consentimiento en mi presencia como su acto voluntario.

Nombre del Testigo

Fecha

Firma del Testigo

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