On the Relationship between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and Global Self-Esteem among Male and Female Students at Different Educational Levels

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Abstract

This study attempted to investigate the relationship between EFL learners' Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and their Global Self-esteem (GSE) with regard to gender and educational level.

The participants were 123 students studying English at Shiraz University. The data were gathered through two questionnaires: the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) and the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).

To determine the relationship between FLCA and GSE correlational analysis was employed and to test the significance of the mean differences between males and females, the two-way ANOVA was used. The findings revealed a significant negative relationship between FLCA and GSE among females altogether and at each educational level separately. Among males as a whole, significant negative relationship existed between FLCA and GSE, but educational level was not a determining factor. This relationship was much stronger for the females than the males and the strongest relationship existed among the female juniors

Key Terms: anxiety, classroom anxiety, self-esteem, FLCA, GSE, gender

Introduction

The affective domain in foreign language (FL) learning was long neglected due to a heavy emphasis on cognitive variables. In recent years, however, there has been a growing interest in affectivity and its relationship to FL learning. Hilgard (1963 cited in Brown, 2000, p. 142) stated that "purely cognitive theories of learning will be rejected unless a role is assigned to affectivity". This explains the recent concern for the affective domain and accounts for the fact that affective variables are now considered as part and parcel of every effective language teaching/learning process. The critical role of affective factors is increasingly emphasized by scholars in the field. For example, Samimy (1994) states that researchers in L2 acquisition"… seem to agree that the complex process of second language acquisition can not be adequately explained solely by cognitive or non-affective factors" (p. 30). Of all the affective variables that can influence language learning, classroom anxiety and global self-esteem are concerns of the present study.

Self-esteem can be regarded as a crucial factor in every successful achievement. It refers to a person's evaluation of their own self. In other words, self-esteem is "the evaluative dimension of the self and is a conscious experience which is accessible to introspection." (Michie, Glachan, & Bray, 2001, p. 458). However, "This may also involve unconscious processes, which may reflect an individual's inner psychic structure" (Michie *et al.*, 2001, p. 458). According to Willoughby, King, and Polatajko (1996), self-esteem is "the overall value that one places on oneself as a person" (para. 4). In their opinion there is a distinction between self-esteem and self-concept and the latter is referred to as "the body of self-knowledge that individuals possess about themselves" (Willoughby *et al.*, 1996, para. 4). Thus, self-esteem is an evaluative term whereas self-concept is descriptive.

Maslow (1968, as cited in Benetti & Kambouropoulos, 2006) described self-esteem in his hierarchy of needs. He postulated that in order to reach

self-actualization (the highest level), the preceding needs including self-esteem have to be met first. This is indicative of the importance of self-esteem as a determining factor in one's success and development.

Self-efficacy is also a construct that should be distinguished from self-esteem. Self-efficacy refers to "One's estimation of how well one can execute the actions necessary to deal with life events," (Willoughby *et al.*, 1996, para. 5) and based on the type of the life event one encounters, one may form different perceptions of self-efficacy. None the less, "self-esteem is a relatively stable way in which we view ourselves that is established early on in life." (*Ibid*).

Anxiety is another affective concept which stands out as an influential factor in FL learning. Among the first scholars to define anxiety specific to language learning contexts were Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986). In their seminal article, they sought to describe and define Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (hereafter, FLCA). They defined FLCA as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz, *et al.*, 1986, p. 128).

Perspectives in Anxiety Research

In retrospect, the FL anxiety literature reveals that the research in this area is not conclusive and thus what is assumed to be confirmed is not well-grounded. Young (1991) states:

In the past, research in the area of anxiety as it relates to second or foreign language learning and performance was scattered. … While some of this research suggested that a relationship between anxiety and foreign or second language performance existed, other findings suggested no relationship between anxiety and performance. (p. 426)

This inconsistency can be attributed to the inherent variability of the nature of anxiety. There are different views that look at anxiety from different perspectives. A frequently-stated dichotomy of anxiety consists of debilitating and facilitating anxiety. "Facilitating anxiety is considered to be an asset to performance…. Debilitating anxiety, which is the more common interpretation of *anxiety,* is considered to be detrimental to performance" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, p. 252). Mathews (1996) argues that to attain optimal performance, some degree of negative affect (anxiety) is to be considered necessary. Scovel (1991) also states:

Facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to 'fight' the new learning task; it gears the learner emotionally for approach behavior. Debilitating anxiety, in contrast, motivates the learner to 'flee' the new learning task; it stimulates the individual emotionality to adopt avoidance behavior. (p. 139).

Apart from the dichotomy mentioned above, two other types of anxiety – trait and state anxiety – are also frequently mentioned in the literature. Trait anxiety is more permanent whereas state anxiety is defined with respect to a particular situation or context (Brown, 2000). Trait anxiety is defined as "an individual's likelihood of becoming anxious in any situation. … A person with high trait anxiety would be likely to become apprehensive in a number of different situations." (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 87). State anxiety, on the other hand, refers to the anxiety experienced at a particular time.

This traditional dichotomy was "proved fairly irrelevant for understanding tension ... [resulting from the] interaction between individual expectations and the perceived reality of a situation" (Spielmann & Radnofsky, 2001, p. 273). Thus, an increasing attention has been paid to situation-specific anxieties which examine "the specific forms of anxiety that occur consistently over time within a given situation" (MacIntyre & Gardner 1991, p. 87). Situation-specific studies are considered very important in that they can provide us with a better understanding of anxiety

"because the respondents are queried about various aspects of the situation" (MacIntyre & Gardner 1991, p. 91).

Principles of Self-esteem Formation

"The essence of FL anxiety according to Horwitz *et al.* is the threat to an individual's self-concept caused by the inherent limitations of communicating in an imperfectly mastered second language" (Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999, p. 202). Thus, FL anxiety is assumed to have a threatening impact on an individual's self-esteem.

What all theories of self-esteem have in common is that self-esteem is a global desire for enhancing one's self-regard or positive attitude towards oneself. Three major principles of self-esteem formation have been stated in the literature. They are *reflected appraisals, social comparison,* and *self-attribution.*

According to the principle of *reflected appraisals*, "people's feelings about themselves are strongly influenced by their judgments of what others think of them" (Rosenberg, Schooler, & Schoenbach, 1989, p. 1005). In other words, self-esteem is a product of social interaction and the picture we form of ourselves has a significant relationship with how we think others perceive us. This may have an impact on FL anxiety in that students are usually worried about their teacher's attitude towards them and their peers' judgment of them.

The second principle is *social comparison* proposed by Festinger (1954 cited in Rosenberg, *et al.*, 1989). It holds that people's judgment about themselves is based on the comparisons that they make when objective information is not available. Students might compare their own abilities with those of their classmates. This issue might affect their FL anxiety in that comparisons made by students might affect their apprehension in one way or another.

The principle of *Self-attribution* holds that people's attribution of intentions to themselves takes place on the basis of their self-observation, i.e., their observation of their own actions (Rosenberg, 1986). Inefficient performance of students might worry them. This is the case with those students who make a judgment on the basis of their own performance.

Research on Anxiety

The contradictory findings reported in the literature on anxiety are all indicative of the inherent complexity of the trait. Some of the studies carried out in this respect are reviewed below.

A study was conducted by Gardner, Smythe, and Brunet (1977) to examine changes in a group of students' attitudes, motivation and French achievement. The results of the study showed that the increase in proficiency level consistently led to the decline in anxiety.

In a study by Chapelle and Roberts (1986), it was found that there existed no significant relationship between English class anxiety and beginning of semester proficiency. However, a negative relationship was found between class anxiety and end of semester proficiency.

Horwitz (1986) sought to validate the FLCAS. The results of her study showed that about 25% of the variance in final grades was accounted for by the FL anxiety. The study suggested that a strong correlation might exist between FL anxiety and language proficiency.

MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) examined the relationship between language anxiety and other types of anxiety. It was found that FL anxiety was distinct from general anxiety. In their view, this could possibly explain the poor relationship between general anxiety and L2 proficiency. Furthermore, there existed a relationship between performance and FL anxiety scales and state anxiety. No correlations were found between

production measures and scales of test anxiety, audience sensitivity, trait anxiety and other types of anxiety.

Aida (1994) used the model of FL anxiety as proposed by Horwitz *et al*. (1986) to investigate anxiety in relation to Japanese language learning. The results of this study indicated that speech anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, negative attitudes towards the Japanese class and fear of failing the FL class affected students' FL anxiety.

Pite (1996) examined the relationship between achievement in oral English and Japanese EFL students' anxiety. No correlation was found between oral English performance and anxiety.

Saito and Samimy (1996) examined the role of language learner anxiety in relation to students' language performance. Their findings indicated that as educational level increases, anxiety plays a more important role.

Casado and Dereshiwsky (2001) investigated the perceived levels of anxiety among beginning foreign language students. The findings showed that the anxiety of beginner students did not change as their educational level increased.

Zhang (2001) examined the variability in language anxiety in two groups of the People's Republic of China. The results of the study suggested that the variability in ESL students' language anxiety could be attributed to factors such as age of the language learner, learning and epistemological experiences and other socio-economic variables.

Abu-Rabia (2004) examined the relationship between FL anxiety and language achievement. The participants of the study were 67 seventh-grade students. Anxiety was found to have a negative and significant relationship with FL achievement. The only significant predictors of FL anxiety were gender and teachers' attitudes. The researcher also offered some recommendations to ease anxiety observed in FL students.

In a study by Chen and Chang (2004), the possible causal links between anxiety and language learning difficulties were investigated. They used the FLCAS to measure anxiety and the FLSI-C (The Foreign Language Screening Instrument for Colleges) to examine learning difficulty variables. Factor analysis, correlation analysis and stepwise multiple regression analyses were done on the data collected from 1,187 EFL students in Taiwan. The results revealed that some anxious EFL learners have a history of learning problems, suffer difficulties in their classroom learning and exhibit poor performance with respect to developing language skills.

Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) designed a study to develop a typology of strategies used by students to cope with their English class anxiety. The impact of anxiety level on strategy use was also taken into consideration in this study. Seventy basic tactics were found that students used to cope with language anxiety. These were categorized into five types: preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation. Three types of strategies, i.e., cognitive, affective and behavioral types were found to be evident. Language anxiety and frequencies of strategy use were found to have no significant relationship.

Matsuda and Gobel (2004) investigated the possible relationship between general foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA), foreign language reading anxiety (FLRA), gender, extended overseas experience, and classroom performance. Two-hundred and fifty-two students from a Japanese university took part in this study. The results of the study revealed that "the factor related to self-confidence in speaking English seemed to be significantly affected by overseas experience" (p. 21). Regarding the predictors of success in English classes, it was found that "self-confidence in speaking English, gender and proficiency played an important role in classroom performance of first-year students" (p. 21).

In a study by Elkhafaifi (2005), the effect of general FL learning anxiety on achievement in an Arabic course and the influence of listening

anxiety on students' listening comprehension were examined. The results of the study revealed that FL anxiety and listening anxiety negatively correlated with achievement. Significant negative correlations were found between FL learning anxiety and listening anxiety. It was concluded that reducing students' anxiety and tension helps to improve students' listening comprehension proficiency and their overall course performance.

Frantzen and Magnan (2005) conducted a study on true beginners and false beginners in first-semester university French and Spanish classes. Their purpose was to find out whether there were any significant differences between true beginners and false beginners concerning their anxiety, grades, and plan to continue their language study. They also sought to identify those factors which increase anxiety or comfort. The FLCAS was used in this study as an instrument for data collection to measure the anxiety students experience in their language classes. It was found that true beginners were significantly more anxious than false beginners although none of them were highly anxious. It was also found that more true beginners planned to continue language study as opposed to false beginners.

Gregersen (2005) investigated the nonverbal behavior of anxious and non-anxious FL learners during a videotaped oral exam. It was found that anxious learners showed limited facial activity and maintained less eye contact with their language teacher. It was also found that although anxious students self-touched and manipulated objects more than their non-anxious counterparts, their use of illustrative and regulatory gestures were fewer.

Meihua (2006) conducted a study on anxiety in Chinese undergraduate students who were non-English majors at three proficiency levels. The findings showed that when speaking English in class, a considerable number of participants at each proficiency level felt anxious. The highest level of anxiety was felt when the students were responding to their teacher and the least level of anxiety when they were doing pair work. Less anxiety was also

observed among more proficient students. Also, as students' exposure to oral English increased, they felt less anxious about using English orally.

In a study by Mills, Pajares, & Herron. (2006), the relationship among anxiety, self-efficacy, and French proficiency in reading and listening skills was examined. It was found that students' reading self-efficacy in French had a positive relationship with their reading proficiency, whereas reading anxiety was not a determining factor. Listening anxiety was found to have a positive relationship with listening proficiency of both male and female students.

Research on the Relationship between Anxiety and Self-esteem

Many and Many (1975) investigated the relationship between two measures of self-esteem and each of the two measures of general anxiety and test anxiety. Negative correlations were found between each of the measures of general anxiety and test anxiety and the measure of self-esteem.

In a study by Hensely (1977), the relationship between self-esteem and communication anxiety was sought. The results of the study showed that an inverse relationship existed between communication anxiety and self-esteem in the majority of cases. However, this was not true with respect to a substantial number of individuals. These findings suggested that the relationship between self-esteem and communication anxiety is much more complex than it was formerly thought.

Cheng and Page (1989) conducted a study to determine the relationship between anxiety and self-esteem. They found a negative correlation between students' anxiety level and their self-esteem. No significant relationship between anxiety and gender was found. However, the males in this study were found to have higher self-esteem than the females.

Newbegin and Owens (1996) also examined the relationship between self-esteem, anxiety and academic achievement. An inverse relationship between self-esteem and anxiety was found in this study. In other words, those students who were more anxious exhibited lower self-esteem.

Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley. (1999) conducted a study to examine the predictive factors of FL anxiety. To measure the FLCA, they used the FLCAS developed by Horwitz *et al*. (1986). Their study revealed that the lowest levels of FL anxiety were exhibited by the freshmen and sophomores. A linear increase in the level of anxiety was found in relation to year of study. This study also emphasized the role of self-esteem as a predictor of FL anxiety. It was concluded that self-concept and self-esteem affected levels of FL anxiety.

Byrne (2000) examined the relationship between anxiety, fear, self-esteem and coping strategies. The findings of the study showed that the levels of self-esteem for girls were consistently lower. It was also found that boys were more successful in reducing their anxiety. An inverse relationship between self-esteem and anxiety was also found.

El-Anzi (2005) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between academic achievement and the variables including anxiety, self-esteem, optimism and pessimism. The participants of the study were 400 male and female students. The scale designed by Rosenberg was used to measure self-esteem. Significant positive correlation was found between academic achievement and both self-esteem and optimism. However, the relationship between academic achievement and both anxiety and pessimism was found to be negative. It was concluded that "anxiety may be one of the obstacles blocking high academic achievement in adolescence, since anxiety plays a role in reducing some factors that help to increase academic achievement" (p. 100).

In a study by Benetti and Kambouropoulos (2006) the effect of trait resilience and trait anxiety on self-esteem was examined. They also took the role of positive and negative affect into consideration. To measure self-esteem, the researchers used the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale. What they proposed was that trait resilience and trait anxiety may indirectly influence self-esteem through positive and negative affect respectively. The final sample consisted of 240 participants. It was found that trait anxiety and trait resilience have significant indirect effects on self-esteem via negative and positive affect. The conclusion was that this impact might be due to the effects of trait anxiety and trait resilience on "regulating affective experiences which in turn may be more proximal predictors of individual feelings of self-worth" (p. 341).

The Study

Research questions

The present study intended to investigate the relationship between EFL learners' FLCA and their Global Self-Esteem (GSE). Furthermore, educational level and gender were also considered as other variables. Thus, the study sought the answers to the following questions:

1. Is there a relationship between FLCA and GSE in EFL learners?

2. Does gender affect the level of FLCA and GSE and their relationship in EFL learners?

3. Does educational level affect FLCA and GSE and their relationship in EFL learners?

Methodology

This section introduces the participants, the instruments and their related issues of validity and reliability, the data analysis, discussion and finally conclusion.

Participants

The participants of this study were 123 undergraduate students majoring in English at Shiraz University. All sophomore, junior and senior students registered at the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics were asked to take part in the study. The freshmen were excluded from the study because the FLCAS included certain items on communication apprehension which would not be applicable to them. Moreover, as the questionnaires were used in their original form in English, they were considered to be linguistically unsuitable for the freshmen.

Out of a total of 146 students who received the questionnaires, 123 completed both of them. Of these, twenty-nine (23.58%) were males and ninety-four (76.42%) were females. As for their educational levels, the participants consisted of 36 sophomores (29.27 %), 30 juniors (24.39 %), and 57 seniors (46.34%).

Instruments

Two questionnaires were used in this study. One of them was the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz *et al*. (1986) (see Appendix A). The FLCAS consists of 33 items following a 5-point Likert scale. The total possible score on the scale ranges from 33 to 165. Higher scores on the FLCAS indicate higher levels of anxiety.

The other instrument used to assess the global self-esteem was the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) (see Appendix B). This scale is widely used for measuring GSE and consists of 10 items with a 4-point Likert scale. Since this scale measures the global self-esteem and does not address specific attributes, it is not culture-bound and thus can be used as a content-free measure and serves the purpose of the study.

Issues of Reliability and Validity

As for the FLCAS, its validity has been confirmed "… via significant correlations with communication apprehension … and with test anxiety" (Onwuegbuzie *et al*., 1999 p. 223). Horwitz, *et al*. (1986) also found that the FLCAS showed satisfactory reliability, internal consistency, construct validity and test-retest reliability. The FLCAS achieved an "alpha coefficient of .93 with all items producing significant corrected item-total scale correlations" (p. 129). The test-retest reliability index over eight weeks was found to be = .83 (p < .001).

A number of studies have been carried out to investigate the validity and reliability of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (See www.mhsip.org/_reportcard/rosenberg.pdf). Some studies have shown that this is a unidimensional scale while some others have found that it consists of two factors. The unidimensionality of this scale was supported by studies with high school or college students. A positive relationship was found between scores on the RSES and scores on some other scales including the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Demo, 1985; cited in Michie, *et al*., 2001).

In order to ensure the reliability of these scales, the whole data were subjected to alpha reliability analysis. The FLCAS and the RSES achieved an alpha coefficient of .93 and .77 respectively. This suggests that the items of the FLCAS are internally consistent.

The test-retest method was also used. The questionnaires were given twice to 11 EFL learners selected randomly from the same population over a one-week interval. The correlation between the two performances indicated an acceptable index of reliability for both measures at the level of 0.01. This index was found to be .78 for the FLCAS and .79 for the RSES.

Data Collecion

The questionnaires were distributed by the first researcher among undergraduate students at their classroom hour during the spring term of 2003. They were required to select a choice, which best fitted their characteristics in their view. In order to ensure the participants' understanding of the questionnaires, a brief glossary was provided at the end of each questionnaire. Some terms which were considered to be difficult for the students were explained using the definitions provided in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 2000) and Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary (Manser, 1998). Moreover, if the students had any questions concerning the items in the questionnaires, the researcher was ready to answer them and help them understand the items.

Findings and Discussion

First, the descriptive statistics were obtained of the data. The results are reported in Table 1 below.

Table 1

	Max.	Min.	Mean	SD	N
FLCA	135	43	93.36	20.33	123
GSE	40	20	29.18	4.53	123

FLCA and GSE Relationship

In order to find out about the relationship between FLCA and GSE, correlational analyses were carried out across different genders and educational levels, and for the whole participants. Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2
Correlation between FLCA and GSE

Level Gender	Sophomore		Junior		Senior		Total	
	No.	r.	No.	r.	No.	r.	No.	r.
Male	8	-.44	7	-.68	14	-.29	29	-.48[**]
Female	28	-.67[**]	23	-.85[**]	43	-.70[**]	94	-.76[**]
Total	36	-.66[**]	30	-.83[**]	57	-.62[**]	123	-.71[**]

** = p < .0

The total correlation between FLCA and GSE was found to be -.71, irrespective of gender and educational level. Significant at .01 level, this correlation coefficient shows that FLCA and GSE are negatively correlated. This means that high self-esteem is associated with low classroom anxiety and is in line with the findings of some of the studies mentioned earlier including Many & Many (1975), Cheng and Page (1989), Newbegin & Owens (1996), Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, & Daley (2000) and Byrne (2000). An important point is that most of these studies do not particularly address FL anxiety and global self-esteem.

The correlations between FLCA and GSE were found to be significant (p <.01) for males and for females (-.48 and -.76 respectively).

This shows that the FLCA and GSE are negatively correlated for both genders; however, the relationship is much stronger for the females than for the males.

The correlations between FLCA and GSE in this study were found to be -.44, -.68 and -.29 for the male sophomores, juniors, and seniors, which were not significant at .01 level. However, they were -.67, -.85, and -.70 for their female counterparts and significant. It seems that gender modifies the relationship between FLCA and GSE. However, the low number of the male participants makes it difficult to draw this conclusion without caution. The relationship between the above-mentioned variables is negative and significant (p <.01) for the females at each educational level, and it is strongest for the female juniors.

The total correlations between FLCA and GSE in this study were found to be -.66, -.83 and -.62 for the sophomores, juniors and seniors respectively. This shows that FLCA and GSE are negatively correlated at each level. It also indicates that this relationship is the strongest for the juniors among the three educational levels investigated.

Gender and Educational level

A two-way ANOVA was run on the scores of FLCAS to see whether classroom anxiety would change with gender and educational level. The results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3
ANOVA results on FLCAS scores

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Gender	56.49	1	56.49	.140	.709
Level	246.81	2	123.40	.304	.738
Gender * Level	1234.16	2	617.08	1.521	
Within groups	47480.62	117	405.82		.223
Total	50430.54	122			

The analysis of variance reveals that the obtained F-values are not significant at the level of .05. No interaction effects between the above-mentioned variables are observed either. This finding suggests that gender does not influence anxiety. Cheng and Page (1989) and Pappamihiel (2001) also found that no significant relationship existed between anxiety and gender.

No significant relationship was found between anxiety and educational level. This is in line with the findings of Pite (1996), who observed no correlation between oral English performance and anxiety and the findings of Casado and Dereshiwsky (2001), who reported that the anxiety of beginner students did not change as their level of education increased. However, Gardner *et al*. (1977), Chapelle and Roberts (1986) found that proficiency and anxiety were negatively correlated.

In order to see if gender and educational level would have an influence on GSE, another two-way ANOVA was run. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
ANOVA results on GSES scores

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Gender	21.61	1	21.61	1.072	.303
Level	4.52	2	2.26	.112	.894
Gender *Level	92.12	2	46.06	2.285	.106
Within groups	2358.30	117	20.16		
Total	2504.06	122			

The F value is not significant for gender or level. Nor is the interaction between the two variables significant. This means that in the

group of students who took part in this study gender and level of education did not modify self-esteem. In other words, boys and girls did not differ in terms of self-esteem and the increase in proficiency did not alter this picture. These findings are in line with the findings of Blackman and Funder (1996) who reported similar self-esteem between men and women. However, the findings contrast with those of a study carried out by Francis and James (1998) who reported a higher mean score for males than females. Similarly, in Quatman and Watson's (2001) study, the boys' global self-esteem scores were slightly higher than those of the girls. However, the present study did not confirm this difference.

Conclusion

With respect to the relationship between FLCA and GSE in EFL learners, a negative and significant correlation (-.71) was found in this study. It can be concluded that there is a negative relationship between EFL learners' FLCA and their GSE. This answers the first research question of the study.

Whether gender affects the level of FLCA and GSE in EFL learners is the second question. The findings indicate that gender does not play a significant role. Regarding the role of gender, the total correlations for the females and the males were found to be significant [-.76 and -.48 respectively]. This reveals that the relationship is negative and much stronger for the females than the males.

As for the role of educational level, the correlations for the sophomores, juniors, and seniors were found to be significant [-.66, -.83, and -.62 respectively]. This reveals that the negative relationship is much stronger for the juniors among the three educational levels.

Based on the results of the study one may also conclude that affective factors seem to play a more important role in the performance of females

than males. The findings reveal a stronger relationship between FLCA and GSE for females while this relationship is much weaker for males.

Limitations of the Study

The present study suffers from some limitations. One drawback, already mentioned here, relates to the limited number of the male participants. This was due to the small number of the male EFL students registered at Shiraz University. Further studies might be needed to explore this issue with a larger sample.

Another drawback relates to the statistical analysis. The study utilized correlational analyses which do not determine the causal relationship between variables. As a result, it was not specified whether anxiety or self-esteem is the cause. Other studies need to be conducted to further investigate this issue.

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APPENDIX A: FLCAS

IN THE NAME OF GOD

Sex: Male ☐   **Female** ☐

Dear student,

Statements 1 through 33 refer to how you feel about learning a foreign language. For each statement, please indicate whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree by placing a check mark in the appropriate box. Please give your first reaction to each statement and mark an answer for every statement. Thank you for your cooperation!

		SA 1	A 2	N 3	D 4	SD 5
*1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.					
+2	I don't worry about making mistakes in my language class.					
*3	I tremble[1] when I know that I'm going to be called on in the language class.					
*4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language					
5	It wouldn't bother[2] me at all to take more foreign language classes.					
*6	During the language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.					
*7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.					
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.					
*9	I start to panic[3] when I have to speak without preparation in the language class.					
*10	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.					
11	I don't understand why some people get too upset over foreign language classes.					
*12	In the language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.					
*13	It embarrasses[4] me to volunteer answers in my language class.					

		SA 1	A 2	N 3	D 4	SD 5
14	I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.					
*15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.					
*16	Even if I am well prepared for the language class, I feel anxious about it.					
*17	I often feel like[5] not going to my language class.					
18	I feel confident when I speak in my foreign language class.					
*19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.					
*20	I can feel my heart pounding[6] when I'm going to be called on in the language class.					
*21	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.					
22	I *don't* feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.					
*23	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.					
*24	I feel very self-conscious[7] about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.					
*25	Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.					
*26	I feel more tense[8] and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.					
*27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.					
28	When I'm on my way to the language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.					
*29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.					
*30	I feel overwhelmed[9] by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.					
*31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.					
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.					
*33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.					

Glossary:

Tremble: to shake uncontrollably from fear, nervousness, etc.

Bother: to annoy

Panic: to feel sudden uncontrollable feeling of great fear

Embarrass: to make somebody feel shy, awkward or ashamed

Feel like (doing) something: want (to do) something

Pound: (of somebody's heart) beat heavily

Self-conscious: nervous or embarrassed because one is aware of being watched by others

Tense: (of a person) nervous or worried, and unable to relax

Overwhelm: cause (somebody) to feel helpless or embarrassed

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* The items marked with an asterisk were reversely scored. The asterisks were not included in the form given to the participants.

APPENDIX B: RSES

Dear student,

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. For each statement, please indicate whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, or (4) strongly disagree by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

Thank you for your cooperation!

		SA 1	A 2	D 3	SD 4
1.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane[1] with others.				
2.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.				
3.	All in all[2], I am inclined[3] to feel that I am a failure[4].				
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.				
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.				
6.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.				
7.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.				
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.				
9.	I certainly feel useless at times.				
0.	At times I think I am no good at all.				

Glossary:

1. Plane: a level of thought, existence, etc.

2. All in all: when everything is considered

3. Inclined: having a tendency to do something

4. Failure: person that fails

> * The items marked with an asterisk were reversely scored. The asterisks were not included in the form given to the participants.