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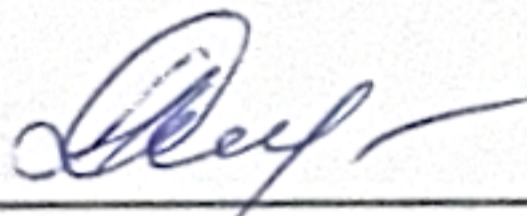
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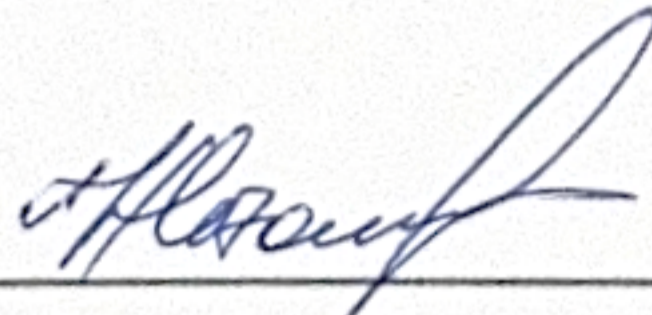
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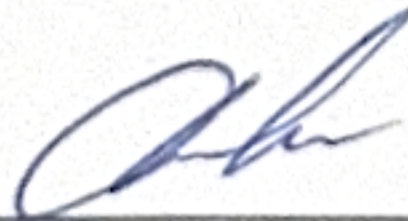
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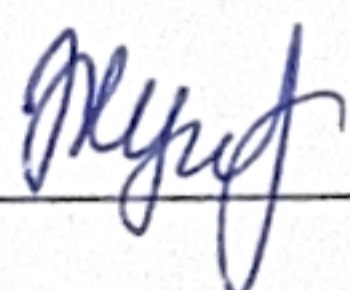


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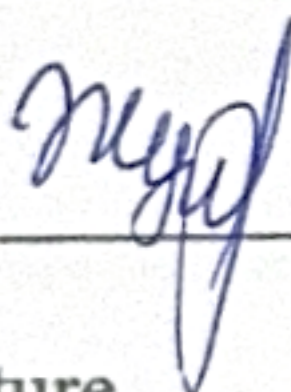
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**The Relationship Between Foreign Language Anxiety and Academic Achievement in an EFL
Context**

Zhuldyz Khassen

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education and Humanities
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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Department of Language Teacher Education

June, 2025

Thesis Advisor:

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The Relationship Between Foreign Language Anxiety and Academic Achievement in an EFL

Context

Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between foreign language anxiety (FLA) and academic achievement, measured by GPA, among first-year university students in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context in Kazakhstan. Although previous research works have established that high levels of FLA can hinder language performance, its effect on overall academic achievement remains inconclusive, especially in under-researched regions such as Kazakhstan. Grounded in Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, Tobias's cognitive processing model, and Horwitz et al. 's theory of FLA, the study utilized the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to collect data from 87 first-year students. Quantitative methods were employed to analyze descriptive statistics and the correlation between FLA and students' self-reported GPA scores. The findings revealed that the mean anxiety score was 94.33, suggesting moderate to high anxiety levels. However, the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.032$, $p = 0.766$) indicated no statistically significant relationship between students' FLA and their GPA. This implies that while FLA is prevalent, it does not necessarily predict academic success in a broader educational context. The study contributes to the existing literature by offering original data from Kazakhstani learners and suggests that emotional support in EFL classrooms remains important, even when anxiety does not directly impact GPA.

Keywords: foreign language anxiety, academic achievement, GPA, EFL context, FLCAS.

Ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретінде (EFL) үйренудегі мазасыздық пен академиялық үлгерім арасындағы байланыс

Аңдатпа

Бұл зерттеу шет тілін үйренуге байланысты мазасыздықтың (FLA) және академиялық үлгерімнің (GPA арқылы өлшенеді) арасындағы байланысын анықтауға бағытталған. Зерттеу Қазақстандағы ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретінде (EFL) оқитын бірінші курс студенттері арасында жүргізілді. Бұрынғы зерттеулер FLA-ның тілдік жетістіктерге теріс әсер етуі мүмкін екенін көрсетті, алайда оның жалпы академиялық көрсеткішке әсері нақты анықталмаған, әсіресе Қазақстан жағдайында. Зерттеу Крашеннің аффективті фильтр гипотезасы, Тобиастың когнитивті өңдеу үлгісі және Хорвиц пен әріптестерінің шет тілдік мазасыздық теориясы негізінде жүргізілді. Мәліметтерді жинау үшін FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) сауалнамасы қолданылды. Зерттеуге 87 бірінші курс студенті қатысты. Статистикалық өңдеу сипаттамалық талдау мен Pearson корреляция коэффициентіне негізделді. Нәтижелер бойынша студенттердің орташа мазасыздық ұпайы 94.33 болды, бұл орташа немесе жоғары деңгей екенін білдіреді. Алайда Pearson корреляция коэффициенті ($r = 0.032$, $p = 0.766$) FLA мен GPA арасында статистикалық мәнді байланыс жоқ екенін көрсетті. Демек, жоғары мазасыздық әрдайым төмен үлгерімге алып келмейді. Бұл жұмыс Қазақстан контекстіндегі жаңа деректерге негізделген және шет тілді оқытуда студенттерге эмоционалды қолдау көрсетудің маңыздылығын атап көрсетеді.

Кілт сөздер: мазасыздық, шет тілі, академиялық үлгерім, GPA, EFL.

Взаимосвязь между тревожностью при изучении иностранного языка и академической успеваемостью в контексте изучения английского языка как иностранного (EFL)

Аннотация

В данном исследовании рассматривается взаимосвязь между тревожностью при изучении иностранного языка (FLA) и академической успеваемостью, измеряемой по среднему баллу (GPA), среди студентов первого курса в контексте изучения английского языка как иностранного (EFL) в Казахстане. Несмотря на то, что предыдущие исследования указывают на негативное влияние FLA на языковую успеваемость, его влияние на общую академическую успеваемость остается неясным, особенно в Казахстанском контексте. Исследование опирается на гипотезу аффективного фильтра Крашена, модель когнитивной обработки Тобиаса и теорию FLA Хорвиц и соавторов. Для сбора данных использовалась анкета FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale), которую заполнили 87 студентов первого курса. Количественные методы включали описательную статистику и корреляционный анализ между уровнем тревожности и GPA. Результаты показали, что средний балл по тревожности составил 94.33, что свидетельствует о среднем или высоком уровне FLA. Однако коэффициент корреляции Пирсона ($r = 0.032$, $p = 0.766$) показал отсутствие статистически значимой связи между FLA и GPA. Это означает, что хотя тревожность и присутствует, она не обязательно влияет на академические достижения студентов. Это исследование вносит вклад в литературу, предоставляя оригинальные данные из казахстанского контекста, и подчеркивает важность создания эмоционально поддерживающей атмосферы в EFL-классах.

Ключевые слова: тревожность, иностранный язык, академическая успеваемость, GPA, EFL.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The increasing interest in learning a foreign language makes people all over the world pursue their goals of mastering language. In particular, the English language is gaining popularity among language learners and emerging as a global lingua franca, meaning being a tool for communication between people who do not share a native language. The language was mostly introduced during the British colonial expansion in the late 16th century, however, only solidified in the 20th century after World War II (Bischoff, 1961). Furthermore, the development of technology and globalization have contributed to English's status to be predominant in the present days (Alfarhan, 2016; Jadhav, 2018; Mohammed, 2020;; Steger, 2013; Sharma, 2023). Students learn English as a second language (ESL) (India, Singapore, Malaysia), where they are immersed in an English speaking environment and acquire the language faster. Also, learn as a foreign language (EFL) (Japan, Russia, Kazakhstan), where the language is not used widely and usually learned for academic and professional purposes. Language learners of an EFL context primarily focus on grammar, have limited opportunities for real-life interaction thus may lead to slow acquisition. In an EFL context, the English learning process is only limited to classrooms.

A language learning process is challenging as it requires time and effort from a student (Horwitz, Tallon & Luo, 2010). It is quite complex and can be an uneasy process even for a devotee (Lam, 2009). Gardner and MacIntyre (1992) defined a variety of factors in terms of learning a language such as cognitive, sociocultural, and affective. Cognitive factors refer to a student's mental abilities, for instance, intelligence, memory, and aptitude. Carroll (1990) highlighted the importance of cognitive skills as it may define how well students can acquire a foreign language. Further, sociocultural factors comprise external factors such as age, cultural background, and exposure to a language. Lastly, affective factors include students' emotions, feelings, motivation, anxiety, self-esteem, and attitudes. They are relevant to the process of acquiring a foreign language as well. However, among these factors, anxiety plays one of the

most significant roles and it was suggested that it can be both beneficial and detrimental (Al-Shboul, Ahmad, Nordin, & Rahman, 2013). Anxiety has been differentiated as facilitating and debilitating (Scovel, 1978). Foreign language anxiety (FLA) has been ranked as one of the most crucial challenges for a language learner. Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986) believed that an excessive level of FLA can undermine the process of foreign language learning. It was considered to be a main obstacle in learning the English language (Alrabai, 2014; Wu, 2010). As it is a state of uneasiness, fear, and apprehension linked to the acquisition of a foreign language (Hashemi, 2011). Feelings such as anxiousness and nervousness develop during the learning process and performing skills publicly. Researchers emphasized the importance of investigating, grasping, and addressing the issue of anxiety in a learning process.

Gardner & MacIntyre (1992) investigated the relationship between cognitive and affective factors, namely cognitive processing and anxiety. It was found that if a student has anxiety, it can interfere with working memory and limit language performance. Also, relationships between affective and sociocultural factors play a significant role as well, because cultural background and exposure to language (social interactions) may help shape learners' emotions and attitudes toward a foreign language. For example, a friendly and calm classroom environment can reduce anxiety and increase motivation (Noels, 2001). Moreover, engaging in meaningful social interactions strengthen better cognitive skills (Krashen, 1982). Accordingly, all these three factors are deeply interconnected, thus, it is vital to take all these factors into account when teaching and learning a language.

1.1 Problem Statement

Numerous studies have studied critical points of FLA affecting a student's academic achievement, as FLA can hinder a student's performance if the level of FLA is excessive or high. The results depicted that FLA can negatively influence a student's academic achievement (Aida, 1994; Alsowat, 2016; Alrabai, 2015; Horwitz, 1986; Young, 1986; Zheng&Cheng, 2018). Anxiety can display as a filter that prevents

information from getting into the cognitive process, so make the language acquisition process slower. Moreover, students who have anxiety do not tend to participate in activities, and are less willing to communicate, thus leading to lower academic achievement. Such a negative affective factor can consequently affect the emotional state of a learner as well. Moreover, such an excessive level of anxiety can further impede rational thinking, reasoning, and long- and short-term memories of a student (Hembree, 1988). When students lack those skills, the loss of motivation to learn a foreign language might appear. Anxious students with no motivation do not attempt to acquire a language, because the results and achievement are seen to be low. However, it is not always the case, for instance, some results concluded that the students with high levels of anxiety resulted in good performances, using their anxiety as a driving force (Spielmann, et al., 2001; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999; Teimouri et al., 2019). Still for the last 40 years of investigating these two variables, most of the researchers concluded that anxiety can detrimentally affect a student's academic performance and achievement (Horwitz et al., 1986; Macintyre and Gardner, 1991; Marcos-Llinás et al., 2009).

In terms of first-year students who just started their path in learning the English language deeply can experience English learning in a negative way. Moreover, in the countries where English is taught as foreign language (EFL context) English is used as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), meaning that most of the subjects(academic) are conducted only in English. EMI refers to the learning of the subject itself in the English language which focuses on the content of the subject. It does not teach English explicitly and for students who have lower proficiency compared to others can largely tend to have anxiety (Suzuki, 2013; Tsui et al., 2022; Tsui et al., 2025). EMI was firstly conducted in Anglophones countries, where English language is the official and primary language. Further it was widely practiced among countries where English is second and foreign (Suzuki, 2013). Most countries, namely Japan, in order to broaden and globalize in a vast scope, including economy, medicine, education, all the universities have implemented EMI (Suzuki, 2013). While this implementation advantaged in numerous

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the relationship between FLA and academic achievement in an EFL context in one Kazakhstani university among first-year students. In Kazakhstan, where English is taught in an EFL context, the valuable information between FLA and students' achievements can be gathered in that exact context. The results of this study will be beneficial to EFL teachers, since they play a crucial role and their perceptions are vital in students' FLA (Ohata, 2005). A teacher is the person in the classroom who can regulate the atmosphere, search for the signs of anxiety and help students overcome it. By understanding the impact of FLA, it will provide educators insights that might assist to create a more effective language-learning environment. Significance of this study lies on several reasons, including students who will be aware of their anxiety level and develop coping strategies. Educators will have chances to adjust their teaching methods to create a more supportive classroom environment.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study involve specific stages in order to achieve the purpose of this research work. To make the study measurable and achievable as much as it possible the next stages have been followed:

1. To obtain ethical consideration from the private university where the research will be conducted;
2. To distribute consent letters to participants who are exceptionally over 18 years old and who are 1st year students;
3. To prepare the scale in Google forms and design it to the participants make sure that they will be aware of the research study, purposes, procedures;
4. To distribute questionnaires online to the teachers who have access to those 1st year students and send the link to the questionnaires;

5. To analyze all the results and data through Excel application using mean, standard deviation, and pearson coefficient;
6. To analyze the relationship between two variables: FLA and their academic achievement (students grade average point GPA).

1.4 Hypotheses:

Current work has several possible hypotheses to be considered. As this study's main purpose is to investigate the correlation between students' FLA and GPA, results can be concluded in different ways. Participants survey results may show that their FLAs' is high and GPAs' high as well, depicting that the more students anxious, the more they probably tend to study hard and do their best in terms of academic performance. On the other hand, results may show high anxiety levels but with low GPA, meaning that their anxiety prevents them from being academically successful and it negatively affects their grades. In this case, if it proves to be so, it is going to align with previous research works, showing that FLA is a detrimental factor for students to study and learn a foreign language. However, results will be depicted as students having moderate or low FLA, at the same time having high GPA scores, meaning that students do not face such an obstacle. On the contrary, with low FLA and low GPA scores, it could be proven that students' academic performances do not even connect with this affective variable, such as anxiety.

H0: There is no relationship between foreign language anxiety and academic achievement in an EFL Context.

H1: There is a positive relationship between foreign language anxiety and academic achievement in an EFL Context.

H2: There is a negative relationship between foreign language anxiety and academic achievement in an EFL Context.

1.5 Research Questions

To clearly identify the relationship between FLA and GPA of 1st year students, following questions have been asked. These research questions are directly linked to the aims and objectives of the study and will assist in gathering data with appropriate data collection tools and making analysis. Relevant research questions have been asked as affective elements such as anxiety can detrimentally affect a student educational success. To make it more focused and researchable the research questions are followed by:

1. What is the level of FLA among first year students in an EFL context?
2. How does FLA correlate with students' academic achievement?

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Since the 1980s, FLA has been widely investigated by scholars (Dewaele, 2017; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, et al., 1991; Scovel, 1978; Young, 1991; Xiong et al., 2024). The scholars have defined the concept of FLA in various ways. For instance, Horwitz et al. (1986) identified FLA 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". Further, FLA has been explained as "the worry and negative emotional reactions associated with learning or using a second/foreign language" focusing on the cognitive processes of a language learner (MacIntyre et al., 1991). Also, there was a point that FLA can be seen as a determinant of success or failure. There is facilitating anxiety, a mild level of anxiety that pushes a student to study and stay focused, while debilitating anxiety, on the contrary, a state of a high level of anxiety that causes isolation and avoidance (Scovel, 1978).

Whether a student will have problems with learning a foreign language or not could be predicted by the factor of how the student acquired its mother tongue (Sparks et al., 1995). If students have problems with phonological, syntactic, and semantic, it can affect the way they will learn a foreign language as well. It is connected with the ability to code a language. From the perspective of linguistics, language coding is the ability to encode meaning including grammar, syntax, morphology, pragmatics and semantic meanings. In an EFL context, students should be able to decode and code meanings. On the other hand, from the point of view of psycholinguistics, coding language requires cognitive processing. Understanding how a target language encodes meaning is essential for language learners, especially when the linguistic systems differ significantly from the learners' native language, potentially adding cognitive strain and contributing to FLA (Sparks et al. 1991, 1993). Sparks and Ganschow introduced the idea as the Linguistic Coding Deficit Hypothesis, which later refined it as the Linguistic Coding Differences

Hypothesis (LCDH). According to the LCDH, learners who have challenges with foreign languages often have difficulties coding the structural and formal aspects of their native language, such as phonological processing or syntactic knowledge. These deficits, often subtle and undiagnosed, make it harder for learners to learn a new language. As a result of these struggles, anxiety and low motivation may develop after repeated failure, not before. LCDH was inspired by findings from Vellutino & Scanlon, who showed that poor readers struggle with recognizing and processing the structural elements of words (spoken and written) (1986). If a student has difficulties with speaking and learning its native language, further it can form difficulties with learning a second/foreign language as well.

In order to successfully master a foreign language, one should be good at learning its own mother tongue. Horwitz noted that learning a second/foreign language is directly derived from the experience of learning a first language (1990). When a student enrolls a foreign language class, he/she has preconceived beliefs about a language. These beliefs further can remarkably influence the academic outcomes of the language which is learnt. In addition, Ganschow et al. proposed that students who have negative experiences and beliefs regarding the language, in most cases due to the deficit knowledge of a mother tongue (1994). Because of this, students can develop negative self-concepts, have low motivation, and heighten anxiety, reinforcing a cycle of poor performance and avoidance.

2.2 Anxiety and Language Anxiety

Anxiety, in general, depends on a student's emotional response towards situations and FLA precisely refers to the emotional response to language acquisition. It is highly critical, as it can have an effect on the language learning process and academic achievement. Numerous studies have shown that FLA affects academic achievement, hindering students' engagement and lowering grades (Aida, 1994; Arabai, 2015; Mohamed, 2020; Teimouri et al., 2019). Aida (1994) reported that FLA can reduce student participation in language classrooms, students have fear of making mistakes, and students with high levels of anxiety scored lower scores on oral tests and exams. When it comes to learning, anxious students feel

pressure, consequently, it poorly affects their performance (Mohamed, 2020). Moreover, it was found that students with high levels of anxiety had difficulties in learning language, including pronunciation, learning and understanding new words (Alaleh, 2018). The ability to learn a language is not limited to a student's intellectual ability (IQ) but involves emotional intelligence (EQ). EQ comprises emotions, feelings, and ability to control them. Negative emotions, such as anxiety, fear, anger, and worry might hinder learners' potential and impact detrimentally their ability to learn (Ran et al., 2022). On the other hand, positive emotions, such as enjoyment and motivation can help students better understand, prepare for lessons, and create a positive mindset. Emotional response to the learning process plays a vital role as it is one of the predictors of successful language acquisition. Dewaele et al. outlined that students with high levels of EQ could better manage their negative emotions during lessons and were more confident in their abilities (2008). As a result, there is a need to address students' emotional response while learning a language. Since, EQ also can predict a student's academic achievement, for example, studies showed that EQ positively affects academic success (Li, 2020). Students were self-confident, performed well, and were very optimistic about their English only in the case of being emotionally competent.

Furthermore, from the psychological aspect, anxiety has been divided into two categories: trait and state anxiety. Spielberger (1983) differentiated them as trait anxiety is a stable personality state, while state anxiety is triggered by external stimuli, for example, public performance or exam. It is similar to MacIntyre and Gardner's points of view, sharing similarities as trait and situation-specific anxieties. The latter is defined by particular triggering situations such as anxiety arising from a lack of knowledge, fear of public speaking or when students are required to complete an activity in a language in which they are not proficient (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Hasanzadeh et al., 2023). Another side of anxiety that should be considered is the age at which students start learning a foreign language. It was concluded among participants that those who began English at a later age than others had to some extent a higher level of FLA (Dewaele, 2010). Additionally, the context in which the language was acquired played another

significant role, for instance, in conventional classroom settings students tend to have FLA. The overall conclusion from this study can be drawn as classroom context and age may contribute to the probability of having anxiety or not.

2.3 Academic achievement

Academic achievement is one of the most studied outcomes in the field of education, often measured through indicators such as Grade Point Average (GPA), standardized test scores, and classroom performance. According to Wentzel et al. (2009) it reflects not only students' cognitive abilities but also their motivation, emotional well-being, learning environment, and socio-cultural background. Early theories of academic achievement, such as Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, emphasized cognitive development and mastery learning. Later research expanded this view, recognizing the influence of non-cognitive factors, including emotional regulation, self-efficacy, and metacognitive strategies (Zimmerman, 2002). These findings highlighted that students' ability to plan, monitor, and regulate their learning plays a critical role in academic outcomes, often more so than raw intelligence alone.

Motivation theories such as Expectancy-Value theory (Eccles et al., 2002) and Self-Determination theory (Deci et al., 1985) further supported the idea that students are more likely to achieve academically when they find value in their studies and feel autonomous and competent. High academic achievement is typically associated with strong intrinsic motivation, goal-setting behavior, and positive academic self-concept. Emotional and psychological factors have also gained prominence in discussions of academic achievement. Research shows that stress, anxiety, and low self-esteem can impair concentration, memory, and classroom participation (Eysenck et al., 2007), all of which contribute to academic performance. However, some studies have indicated that a manageable level of stress or anxiety can act as a motivator, encouraging students to prepare more thoroughly and stay engaged (Alpert & Haber, 1960).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

FLA is based on several theoretical frameworks, including Krashen's theory (1976), Tobias Model (1979), and theory of FLA proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986). As the learning process is strongly connected with cognitive processes, Krashen (1982) has identified five hypotheses dedicated to language acquisition and learning. His Affective filter theory was fundamental to the language learning process. It was explained that anxiety, which is an affective filter, can prevent any knowledge entering into a student's brain (input process), emerging as a "gate". Students who experience anxiety, do not fully grasp the theme/topic, consequently, it affects their performance and overall educational success. For instance, when the effective filter is high, students feel anxiety, tension, and fear that hinders the input process. On the other hand, when the affective filter is low, students easily understand language.

Next, Tobias (1979) has described how anxiety can interfere with the language learning process. He introduced the model of three stages of cognitive processing: input, processing, and output. Each stage is responsible for processing and understanding a material. In the input stage, students perceive information (listening to audio, teacher, reading a text). If there is a presence of anxiety, it distracts students, making it harder to concentrate and comprehend input. In the processing stage, students store, organize, and analyze the information that they have perceived. In order to complete this, memory is required, but anxiety can conquer it, interfering with the ability to encode and process information deeply. Lastly, the output stage, the stage where students have to produce and use the information (speaking, writing, answering questions). Here, anxiety can block students' ability to perform a task leading to speech hesitation, forgetting words, or freezing during tasks. Tobias's model (1979) analyzed broader cognitive processes and explained how anxiety can be a problem. Because even though a student can prosperously understand, analyze, and master a topic, anxiety can challenge the student to recall this knowledge due to the anxiety.

Distinguished scholars Horwitz et al. (1986) shed light on the theme of FLA, explaining that anxiety occurs from the uniqueness of language learning process. In their research they proved that language anxiety differs from other academic anxieties. Thirty language learners' results showed that their anxiety referred only to language learning, while other academic subjects' results were good. Further, this theory was proved and validated by other researchers, such as MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) who found that general anxiety did not have in common with language anxiety and FLA was related only to students' language proficiency. They concluded that FLA is more closely associated with learners' self-perceived language proficiency than with general anxiety. This perspective was also supported by Chen and Chang (2004) investigated that FLA was a unique type of anxiety. E. Horwitz and D. Young (1991) highlighted that there are two explanations of the identification of language anxiety: 1) general anxiety which is derived from manifestation of personal anxiety (exams); 2) linguistic anxiety that appears in the context of language learning and does not affect students' other academic disciplines.

Horwitz et al. (1986) were the first pioneers in the theme of FLA and they described FLA as a complex of feelings, self-perceptions, and beliefs related to language learning process in a classroom. These complexes are derived from exams, fear of making mistakes and judgement, public performance or lack of confidence. Their theoretical framework suggested three main interconnected elements: 1) communication apprehension is a form of fear during communication; 2) fear of negative evaluation involves uneasiness regarding how others perceive; 3) test anxiety is a type of anxiety appeared by fear of failure in assessment situations (Horwitz et al., 1986). Another significant contribution of this theory was Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to measure student's FLA anxiety scale. This instrument consists of 33-items which assess a student's level of language anxiety. The items of the self-report questionnaire are rated on a 5-point Likert scale numbered from 1 to 5, which range from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This tool has been used by various language researchers, to measure anxiety levels of different foreign languages, including English, Japanese, Chinese, German (Aida, 1994; Liu,

2006; Mak, 2011; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Phillips, 1992; Saito et al., 1999; Young, 1986). Its consistent use across studies confirms its reliability and validity in identifying FLA among language learners from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Generally, anxiety affected several educational fields, within foreign languages including mathematics and science as well (Hembree, 1990; Mallow, 2006). To better evaluate language anxiety, another scale by Macintyre and Dewaele was developed, named Foreign language classroom scale (2014). They were curious about how anxiety alongside enjoyment and boredom might impact a student's anxiety while learning a foreign language in the classroom. Furthermore, these emotions also have been investigated by other scholars, showing that teacher's positive emotions during lessons, patience, and sense of humour affected positively the way students learn a foreign language, while no feedback from a teacher, too easy or difficult tasks were the reason to arise boredom among students making the language learning a burden (Botes et al., 2020; Dewaele, 2019; Li et al., 2021). Such affective emotions can negatively and positively impact the acquisition of a foreign language. Macintyre's scale (2014) was adapted from Horwitz et al. scale's, ranging anxiety with eight-items. This was a shortened form of the initial scale, advantageous for researchers to save time of participants. Moreover, recently most researchers preferred to use this very scale as the ready results can be calculated with ease (Botes et al. 2020; Moskowitz et al., 2020).

FLCA scale was used among researchers to attempt finding out how anxiety could affect students' classroom performances (Khodadady et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2008; Teimouri et al., 2019; Zhang 2019). Teimouri et al. (2019) concluded that there was a strong negative correlation between FLA and students' achievements. But the importance of adapting these tools related to students' cultural and demographic backgrounds, teaching methods, and also personal factors should be taken into account. It can be difficult in reality, as usage of the ready-made tools much more simplify conducting this kind of matter of fact research. However, there are some examples of studies, where researchers developed the scales according

to their countries' peculiarities. Al-Saraj (2011) created an Arabic version of an FLCAS scale. The work tried to investigate the level of anxiety among female students at a college. Before this research, there was no valuable investigation on this topic, as it was believed that the questionnaire was not culturally appropriate. Now Arab countries have a possibility to find out their students' anxiety levels, as it has its own place in a research world, named Arabic Foreign Language Anxiety Questionnaire (AFLAQ), which was culturally adapted to accommodate students from Saudi Arabia, based on the FLCAS.

2.5 FLA in Kazakhstani context

One's success in terms of academic achievement is connected with one's cognitive and affective abilities. When a student faces challenges with poor memory, difficulties with attention and understanding, it can affect their academic performance and achievement. Several studies have been conducted on the theme of the relationship between FLA and academic achievement (Aida, 1994; Alrabai, 2014; Liu & Huang, 2011). Results of these studies depicted a negative relationship between these two variables. Learners who report higher levels of FLA tend to have lower academic outcomes, particularly in language-related assessments such as oral presentations, listening comprehension, and grammar or vocabulary tests. These findings suggest that managing emotional factors like anxiety is just as essential as developing cognitive skills for achieving success in foreign language learning.

In the Kazakhstani context, few researchers have explored the relationship between FLA and academic achievement, focusing on various educational contexts. For instance, Suleimenova investigated speaking anxiety among Kazakhstani students learning English, revealing that many students experience significant anxiety during speaking activities, which negatively affects their language performance (2013). Building on this foundation, Kadyrbayeva (2022) explored anxiety during speaking activities among EFL learners in Kazakhstan. The findings revealed that communication apprehension was a central cause of anxiety, emphasizing that emotional discomfort during speaking tasks can hinder language development. However, similar to previous research, the study focused more on students' classroom experiences rather

than on measurable academic outcomes such as GPA. In addition, Plyushko examined FLA levels among middle school students at a specialized school for gifted children in Northern Kazakhstan, finding that even gifted students experience language anxiety, which can influence their academic performance (2018).

In the context of online education, Seidikenova and Malshy (2022) investigated causes of FLA during remote learning in Kazakhstan. Their study found that technical difficulties, limited interaction, and fear of negative evaluation in virtual classrooms contributed to heightened anxiety levels. Although the shift to online learning intensified emotional challenges, the study similarly focused on causes rather than correlating anxiety with academic success. They reported moderate to high levels of anxiety and linked its causes to cultural expectations, perfectionism, and teacher-student interaction styles. Despite these insights, their research also did not directly address how anxiety might influence academic performance indicators. These studies contribute to a growing body of research highlighting the impact of FLA on students' academic performance in Kazakhstan, emphasizing the need for strategies to mitigate anxiety in language learning contexts.

2.6 Strategies for reducing FLA among students

According to research studies, having an FLA is a widespread problem among students that can be a detrimental obstacle in pursuing to learn a foreign language (MacIntyre, 1989; Horwitz, 1986). This anxiety may worsen the process of learning English in the broad perspective, affecting the quality of learning and academic success of a learner (Alrabai, 2015; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). To tackle this obstacle, several researchers have suggested strategies and coping mechanisms on reducing FLA (Aida, 1994, Alcalá, 2002, Benamara et al., 2022; Cakici, 2016; Horwitz et al, 1991; Opfer et al., 2011; Paradowski et al., 2015; Samad et al., 2020). It was highlighted that strategies for reducing FLA might not only assist in having outstanding academic achievement and performance but also increase learners' motivation to learn a language.

Analyzing numerous works related to how a teacher can reduce students FLA, common strategies obtained from English teachers have been discovered. These strategies can play an important role in effective language teaching, making the learning process dynamic, achievable, and interesting at the same time. It can shed light into insightful and helpful FLA strategies for teachers. Atifnigar simply depicted the strategies in the form of a diagram, representing effective ones on how to remove FLA among EFL students (2024). In his diagram he showed major themes so that both teachers and students could cope with anxiety and deal with it. Starting with teachers' role, by implementing student-centered approach, giving clear instructions during lessons, using digital technology, and also making the classroom environment positive and friendly can hugely eliminate students' FLA (Alrabai, 2015; Atifnigar et al., 2022; Kao et al., 2013; Nagahashi, 2007).

A relaxed, friendly, and positive classroom setting is essential in mitigating FLA. Classroom design, seating arrangements, and peer support structures all contribute to a learning atmosphere where students feel secure and valued (Joan, 1993; Koba et al., 2020). Young (1990) suggested teachers should be encouraged to foster environments where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process rather than failures, thus resilience and a growth mindset can be developed among language learners. Moreover, in the digitized world, the usage of technology, especially digital platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle and social media, has emerged as a powerful tool in lowering language anxiety. Teachers can use tools like Wordwall, Kahoot, Bamboozle and voice recording apps that allow students practice in low-stakes, asynchronous environments (Ghounane, 2020; Tripp & Rich, 2012). These approaches allow students to study hard and make improvement almost without having worries and avoid having such a negative affective emotion of anxiety.

From the educators' side, providing clear instructions is a base in a classroom. Tanveer (2007) stressed the significance of explaining clearly all the tasks for learners, as it might eliminate anxiety.

Moreover, giving structured feedback and discussing students' mistakes within the classroom can reduce anxiety, namely the fear of being negatively evaluated. One great technique that can be extremely helpful for teachers while working with students with anxiety is implementing a habit of calling each student by their names. The practice can also assist in increasing students' self-esteem (Paradowski et al., 2015). As a teacher plays different roles within the classroom, including facilitator, moderator, and guide, it also implies being a psychologist. It is evident that psychological factors also play a crucial role for both teachers and students. Teachers who use psychological elements effectively, for instance, motivating students, diminishing exam anxiety, being understandable, showing empathy, standing with a student to practice the language together, correcting mistakes in a positive manner, calling students in a predictable and prearranged manner, and implementing cooperative learning by pair-group work may decrease students' anxiety levels (Boroujeni et al., 2015; Na, 2007; Turula, 2002; Williams et al., 2008; Young, 1990).

2.7 Previous results of the relationship between FLA and academic achievement

Exploring FLA became an often researched topic. The FLCAS questionnaire made it easy to calculate students' anxiety. However, fewer research works have been conducted on finding the impact of anxiety levels on students' performance and achievement. If in most cases studies revealed a strong negative relationship between FLA and academic achievement, there were also results depicting no and positive relationships as well (Abuelfadl, 2015; Aida, 1994; Awan et al., 2010; Azzahra et al., 2023; Chen & Lin, 2009; Dheifallah, 2023; Di et al., 2025; Ellis, 2008; Nurul et al., 2022; Liu, 2021; Ozer, 2020; Subekti 2018). The practice of having negative relationships among these two variables is also called a "vicious circle" (Cheng et al., 1999). For example, Di et al. (2025) researched the relationship between FLA and academic accomplishments of different students who were studying different foreign languages, including English, Korean, Japanese, Spanish, and French at one university in China. Research study also considered the sex of participants, concluding that the students had moderate level of FLA and results of

male and female were insignificant. In terms of academic accomplishments, the relationship between FLA and students' achievement was negative, resulting in low academic achievement was associated with high anxiety. Even though students showed a moderate level of anxiety, its impact on students' communication apprehension, tests, and language confidence was negative. Similar conclusions were made in other research studies, for example, a study conducted in Saudi Arabia, Tabuk (Dheifallah, 2023). Two types of scales have been used, FLCAS to measure students anxiety levels and Achievement emotions questionnaire (AEQ) to measure emotional responses related to academic success. 80 undergraduate students showed high anxiety levels and their academic achievement was detrimentally affected by their anxiety. The study also concluded that there was no difference in gender. Anxiety stood as a major obstacle for the students to do their best in an academic term, affecting their emotions negatively as well. Implications suggested in order to reduce anxiety teachers' awareness of such phenomenon and implementation of a positive classroom environment could much more reduce anxiety among students.

Another study disclosed no significant relationships between FLA and students' achievements. According to the Yerkes-Dodson law, individuals who have moderate or moderately low arousal, in this case anxiety, tend to perform better academically (Robert et al., 1908). They suggested that arousal level can be seen differently in various types of task. For example, difficult tasks might require a lower level of arousal (to facilitate concentration), whereas tasks demanding persistence may be performed better with higher levels of arousal (to increase motivation). In the Indonesian case, Azzahra et al. (2023) investigated how anxiety could influence students' performances who studied English literature. 43 students from the Faculty of English exhibited a moderately low level of FLA, showing no significant relationship. Even though a few students resulted in a high level of anxiety, it did not affect academic achievement of the essence. Similarly, Matsuda et al. (2004) research work showed results with low levels of anxiety among students. Students with more self-confidence did not tend to have anxiety. However, in terms of gender, females experienced much more anxiety level than male and overseas students. Conclusions and

implications suggested that self-confidence in students is one of the critical factors in learning and gender differences might exist in anxiety levels so it should be taken into account. On the contrary, in the Kuwait context, the relationship between FLA and academic achievement found to be positive (Abuelfadl, 2015). The study also aligned with the previous study results in terms of gender, that females tend to be more anxious than males. However, the higher level of FLA the participants had, the higher and better their academic achievement was. It was explained by the possible motivating force that pushed students to study harder. For further study, researchers suggested finding out how harmful and helpful anxieties can be identified.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative approach to explore the phenomenon of FLA among first-year university students in Almaty. The quantitative component of the study was conducted using the FLCAS developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). The questionnaire was distributed to first-year students from one of the universities in Almaty. Prior to participation, all students were provided with a consent letter outlining the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and assurances of anonymity and confidentiality. Only students aged 18 and above were eligible to participate. Participants were required to answer all 33 items of the FLCAS, which were presented using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Additionally, participants were asked to report their Grade Point Average (GPA) from the previous semester to investigate any potential relationship between academic performance and levels of foreign language anxiety. Data collected from the FLCAS responses were quantitatively analyzed to determine overall anxiety levels and explore possible correlations with GPA, faculty affiliation, and demographic variables such as age.

3.2 Participants

The study involved 87 first-year university students enrolled in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses at a private university in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure they represented the target population of early-stage EFL learners in a Kazakhstani higher education setting. All participants had completed at least one semester of English instruction and voluntarily provided their GPA scores for analysis.

3.3 Data Collection Tools & Analysis Procedure

The primary instrument used was the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). This 33-item questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale to measure students' anxiety in language classrooms across three dimensions:

1. Communication apprehension,
2. Fear of negative evaluation, and
3. Test anxiety.

The FLCAS has demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging between 0.88 and 0.93 in various international studies. Participants were also asked to self-report their GPA from the previous semester, which was used as a measure of academic achievement. The procedure of the study was set by several steps following as:

1. The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms in March–April 2025.
2. Data was automatically exported into Excel for statistical analysis.
3. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency) were used to summarize FLA and GPA data.
4. To examine the relationship between FLA and academic achievement, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted.
5. Visualization techniques were used to further explore patterns across anxiety levels and GPA groups.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, the study received approval from the SDU University Research Ethics Committee. All participants were provided with an informed consent letter explaining the study's purpose,

procedures, and their rights, including anonymity and the voluntary nature of participation. Participants explicitly consented to the use of their GPA data for research purposes. No identifying personal information was collected, and all responses were treated with full confidentiality. The consent letters were distributed and obtained online via Google forms. Only participants who were over 18 continued to further participate in this study by rating their FLA through FLCAS scale.

CHAPTER 4

Results

This section presents the quantitative findings of the study, which aimed to examine the relationship between FLA and academic achievement (GPA) among first-year EFL students. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis. *Table 1* presents the demographic characteristics of the participants (N = 87). The sample consisted entirely of students over the age of 18, reflecting the typical age range of first-year university learners.

Table 1

Demographic information of participants (N=87)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Faculty	Education and Humanities	58	66.6%
	Engineering and Natural Sciences	19	21.8%
	Business School	8	9.1%
	Multidisciplinary Education	2	2.5%
Age	Over 18	87	100%

In terms of faculty distribution, the majority of participants (66.6%, $n = 58$) were enrolled in the Faculty of Education and Humanities. This was followed by Engineering and Natural Sciences with 21.8% ($n = 19$), the Business School with 9.1% ($n = 8$), and Multidisciplinary Education with 2.5% ($n = 2$). This distribution indicates that the sample was predominantly composed of students from education-related majors, which may reflect higher English course requirements or participation rates in language studies.

Participants' responses to the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) revealed a range of anxiety scores from 45 to 165. The mean score was 94.33, indicating moderate to high anxiety levels across the sample (see Table 2). This variability suggests diverse emotional experiences among the learners.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for FLCAS

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Standard deviation
FLCAS Total score	87	45	165	94.33	20.71
GPA score	87	1.89	3.76	3.10	

To further classify anxiety levels, students were grouped into three categories based on their total FLCAS scores:

- Low Anxiety (score range: 33–70)

- Moderate Anxiety (71–120)
- High Anxiety (121–165)

Out of 87 participants, 24 students (27.6%) fell into the low anxiety group, 50 students (57.5%) into the moderate anxiety group, and 13 students (14.9%) into the high anxiety group.

GPA Distribution. Participants' self-reported GPAs ranged from 1.89 to 3.76. The mean GPA was 3.10 with a standard deviation of 0.44, indicating moderate variation in academic achievement. To better understand achievement trends, GPA scores were categorized into three groups:

- Low GPA (1.89–2.33)
- Moderate GPA (2.34–3.33)
- High GPA (3.34–3.76)

The majority of students (49 out of 87; 56.3%) had moderate GPAs, followed by 32 students (36.8%) with high GPAs, and 6 students (6.9%) in the low GPA group.

Relationship Between FLA and GPA. To determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between students' FLA and GPA, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed. The analysis revealed a correlation of $r = 0.032$, $p = .766$, indicating a very weak positive relationship that is not statistically significant (see Table 3).

Table 3

Pearson Correlation Analysis between FLA and GPA

Variables	r	p-value
FLA level and GPA	0.032	0.766

This means that students with higher anxiety scores did not necessarily have lower or higher GPAs, and the observed correlation may be due to random variation. Given that the p-value exceeds the significance threshold ($p > 0.05$), the result fails to reject the null hypothesis (H_0), which stated that there is no significant relationship between foreign language anxiety and academic achievement in an EFL context. Therefore, within the scope of this study, students with higher or lower levels of language anxiety did not consistently achieve significantly higher or lower GPAs. The lack of a significant correlation suggests that other variables, such as motivation, learning strategies, or prior language experience, may play more substantial roles in influencing academic performance.

On average, students mostly had moderate levels of anxiety showing good academic accomplishments with +3.0 GPA scores. However, there were students who had lower and higher levels of anxiety. For instance, *Table 4* depicts that low anxious students had higher GPA scores. Dewaele et al. (2014) concluded that extremely low anxiety levels do not always mean that a student could perform well but in general low anxiety and enjoyment can predict better performance among language learners. To some extent, some anxiety can improve focus and maintain attention during tasks (Eysenck et al., 2007).

Table 4

Low anxiety levels and its parallels

Anxiety score	Anxiety level	GPA score
45	low	2.7
53	low	3.48
54	low	3.11
62	low	3.1

64	low	3.41
65	low	3.2

Further, students who had moderate levels of anxiety strongly only represented high GPA scores. Interestingly, these students had the highest GPA scores in this study (see Table 5). This pattern may reflect what psychological theories, such as the Yerkes-Dodson Law (Robert, 1908), described as the performance-enhancing effect of moderate arousal (anxiety). Students in this group may experience just enough anxiety to stay focused and motivated without becoming discouraged. Rather than being a purely negative force, moderate FLA might indicate a healthy level of academic concern that drives effort and preparation. These findings highlight that anxiety, when managed, can play a complex but sometimes productive role in students' learning journeys.

Table 5

Moderate anxiety levels and its parallels

Anxiety score	Anxiety level	GPA score
80	moderate	3.48
80	moderate	3.47
84	moderate	3
90	moderate	3.51
102	moderate	3.76
111	moderate	3.46

Similarly, students with higher anxiety levels also showed good GPA scores (see Table 6). It is evident that despite having a high anxiety level, students probably were motivated or disciplined enough to have higher GPA scores. Horwitz et al. (2002) in their research found out that occasionally some students can be seen as perfectionists, performing well even when they are highly anxious. Also, Liu et al. (2008) concluded that students with high anxiety tend to perform well academically. It is hard to generalize these results widely, however, some students' anxiety levels do not affect their academic achievements. Even high anxiety can play a role as a driving force and cope with anxiety using positive learning strategies (Macintyre, 1995).

Table 6

High anxiety levels and its parallels

Anxiety score	Anxiety level	GPA score
124	high	3.5
128	high	3.1
132	high	3
133	high	3.35
148	high	3.18
165	high	2.76

Students with moderate levels of anxiety showed no significant relationships with GPA scores, as low and high anxiety levels did not intertwine and affect GPA scores of first-year students. It cannot be assured that GPA scores can be determined strongly by the level of FLA, as it can depend on students abilities such as robust cognitive skills, high level of EQ, motivation and persistence, and probably

implemented strategies that help to cope with anxiety levels. However, the cases where anxious students had lower GPA were also recorded. In Table 7 there are results of high anxiety and self-reported low GPAs'. Even though there were only 4 participants with such results, it is worth mentioning. It is a concerning case, as these students might face difficulties with coping anxiety and their GPA is already being affected by their FLA.

Table 7

High anxiety levels and and low GPA

Anxiety score	Anxiety level	GPA score
127	high	2.4
135	high	2
164	high	2.13
165	high	1.89

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between FLA and academic achievement among first-year EFL students at one private Kazakhstani university. Specifically, it explored whether students' levels of anxiety, as measured by the FLCAS, were associated with their self-reported GPA scores. While the results confirmed that many students experienced moderate to high levels of anxiety, no statistically important correlation between FLA and GPA was observed.

5.1 Interpretation of Key Findings

These results imply that even though most of the participants experienced moderate levels of FLA, the academic achievement, their GPA scores remained satisfactory, showing above +3.0. This very sample did not show the negative or positive correlations between these two variables as it was investigated before. The results can align with previous research works, depicting that anxiety level is not a strong predictor of one's achievement (Azzahra et al., 2023; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). In addition, this study can contribute to the existing research works as evidence that anxiety does not inevitably lead to poorer academic achievement, even though it is a common emotional experience among EFL learners.

5.2 Comparing with Prior Studies

This finding is consistent with the results of Matsuda and Gobel (2004) and Azzahra et al. (2023), who also reported non-significant correlations between FLA and academic performance in similar EFL contexts. These results suggest that although anxiety may be present, it does not necessarily hinder academic performance measured by GPA. It is not clear, whether coping strategies of learners or implementation of necessary strategies by a teacher, such as usage of technology, positive classroom

environment, could mitigate students' anxiety level, but it can be seen as one of the reasons for showing such results.

The participants of this study were first-year students, studying in an EFL context and using an English language in an EMI instruction. Research hypothesized that freshman students could have anxiety in foreign language learning as at this private university almost all the subjects are being taught in English. As after school, students are immediately immersed in the English language, their anxiety in terms of foreign language could impact their achievements detrimentally. The majority of the research studies proved that not knowing English at a proficient level was the main cause for such a negative affective element as anxiety (Aida, 1994; Awan et al., 2010; Ozer, 2020); Subekti, 2018). However, there are some subjects that are learnt in students' native language (Kazakh) such as Kazakh History, for Physical Education(PE) there is no need to know the English language. As their GPA shows the overall score during the semester period, it can be reflected as a broad achievement including those subjects. Moreover, there is a possibility that anxiety can affect specific language skills (speaking, reading, listening, writing), it might not affect other academic areas that contribute to the GPA. So, anxiety can select which area and skill will interfere with the input, processing, and output phases of a task, depending on the nature of the task.

Furthermore, although Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis emphasizes the role of anxiety in blocking language acquisition, it may be more applicable to language-specific performance than to general academic achievement. In the current study, the inclusion of students from various faculties and academic specializations likely contributed to the GPA reflecting a broader range of skills beyond language proficiency alone. Overall, these results highlight the importance of addressing students' emotional well-being not purely for the sake of improving grades, but to enhance their overall classroom experience, motivation, and confidence in using the foreign language.

The absence of a strong correlation may also reflect individual differences, such as: students' resilience or prior experience in language learning, use of effective learning strategies, supportive classroom environments, and influence of external academic or social pressures. Interestingly, students with high anxiety reported slightly higher GPA on average, contrary to traditional expectations. This may suggest the presence of facilitative anxiety, where mild stress pushes students to perform better (Scovel, 1978), or it may simply indicate statistical variability within a small subgroup. Furthermore, since GPA is a global academic indicator, it might not precisely capture language-specific struggles, as students may compensate in other subjects. Therefore, a more targeted measure, such as English course grades or proficiency test results, might reveal stronger links with FLA.

Even though FLA was not found to significantly impact GPA, its presence among a large portion of students should not be overlooked. High levels of anxiety, particularly test anxiety and communication apprehension, may still affect students' classroom participation, confidence, and language development. As such, language instructors should continue to foster emotionally supportive environments and implement anxiety-reducing strategies, especially during speaking activities and assessments.

Educators should also be aware of the emotional and psychological challenges that come with learning a foreign language in an EFL context where exposure to the language is limited to the classroom (Siyanova-Chanturia & Webb, 2016). Integrating more authentic interaction, encouraging peer support, and reducing the emphasis on performance-based evaluation may help reduce FLA in these settings.

5.3 Limitations and Further Recommendations

This study has several limitations. First, the reliance on self-reported GPA may introduce bias or inaccuracies. Second, the sample was drawn from a single private university, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Third, FLA was treated as a single composite score, without analyzing its three subcomponents (communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation)

separately. Future research should explore FLA's impact on academic achievement in Kazakhstani context to see if the results of this align with other research works. Longitudinal studies and mixed-method designs incorporating interviews or observations could also provide deeper insights into how anxiety manifests in different classroom situations.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

This study explored the relationship between FLA and academic achievement among freshmen university students in an EFL context in Kazakhstan. Using the FLCAS questionnaire and self-reported GPA scores of participants, the research aimed to determine whether anxiety levels could negatively impact students' academic achievements. Academic achievement was measured by students' GPA scores voluntarily. The results depicted that while a majority of students experienced moderate to high levels of FLA, there was no statistically significant correlation between FLA and GPA ($r = 0.032$, $p = .766$). These results signify that anxiety level, while emotionally present, did not from the nature of the case hinder students' overall academic success, at least when measured by GPA. These results align with previous studies that report similarly weak or non-significant relationships between FLA and general academic performance (Azzahra et al., 2023; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004).

The study attempted to promote the growing body of research on affective factors in language learning by offering valuable data from a Kazakhstani EFL context, which remains very few in the literature. Despite the insignificant statistical relationship, well-being of students remains as a crucial consideration for language educators. The presence of anxiety in general demands attention. Teachers are encouraged to adopt anxiety-reducing strategies, promote positive classroom environments, and consider students' emotional needs alongside cognitive and linguistic goals.

Future research may benefit from exploring FLA's effect on specific performance tasks, such as oral exams, listening comprehension, or classroom participation, where anxiety may have a more pronounced effect than on general academic outcomes. Expanding this line of inquiry through qualitative methods and diverse student populations will further clarify how anxiety shapes the EFL learning experience.

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Appendix A

SDU University Research Ethics Committee

Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled "**The relationship between foreign language anxiety and academic achievement in an EFL context**"

Research Purpose and Procedures:

Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study that aims to explore the relationship between foreign language anxiety and academic achievement among first-year students. This survey consists of 33 questions and will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. This study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of how anxiety affects language learning and academic success, ultimately helping to create a more supportive learning environment for EFL students.

Possible risks and discomfort related to participation in this research:

There are minimal risks associated with participating in this study. However, some questions related to foreign language anxiety may prompt reflection on past experiences, which could cause slight emotional discomfort. Participants must answer all questions to ensure the validity of the research.

You were selected to participate as a possible participant in this study because of your learning experience and it is believed that you could help for successful completion. Your participation strongly voluntarily and would be greatly appreciated.

Possible advantages of participation:

This study aims to assess foreign language anxiety among first-year students. Your responses will help us better understand the challenges students face when learning a foreign language. This survey is anonymous, and all responses will be kept strictly confidential.

You will be asked to provide your previous semester's GPA, which will only be used for research purposes.

Confidentiality & Privacy. Within reason, any personal information obtained as a result of participation will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible.

Contacts for additional information:

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact me.

Zhuldyz Khassen (Master's student, Two Foreign Languages program)

231302006@sdu.edu.kz; telephone number: 87086597257.

Supervisor: PhD, Assistant Professor Tulepova Saule

Email: saule.tulepova@sdu.edu.kz

For any ethical concerns, you may contact the **SDU University Research Ethics Committee (IREC)**

Voluntary Nature of the Study. It is strictly voluntary as to whether to participate in this study or not. You have a right to withdraw your agreement to participate at any time.

Estimated duration of the research: February-March 2025

Statement of Consent.

I, _____, agree to participate in this study voluntarily.

I have been made aware of the research purpose and objectives and clearly understand what is expected from me.

I know that it is voluntary to participate in this study and I have complete freedom to withdraw my consent at any time without providing any reasons and in this case there will be no negative consequences to me.

I understand that any personal information obtained in this study will be kept confidential.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

Horwitz, E.K., Horwitz, M.B., & Cope, J. (1986)

33 Items – 5-point Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)

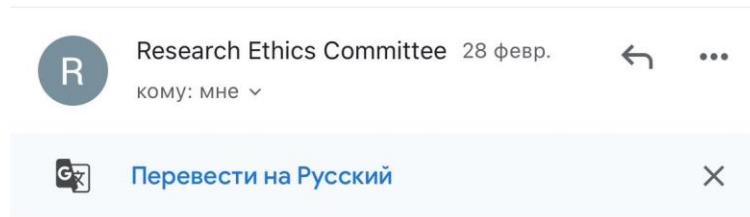
Cronbach's alpha = .93

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 language class.
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in 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 me at all to take more foreign language classes.
6. During 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 when I have to speak without preparation in language class.
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language class.
12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.
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 language class, I feel anxious about it
17. I often feel like not going to my language class.
18. I feel confident when I speak in 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 when I'm going to be called on in 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 about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.
25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.
28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.
33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

Appendix C

Research Ethics Committee



Dear Zhuldyz Khassen,

Please review the feedback provided by REC:

DISCUSSION:

9. The research conducted by Zhuldyz Khassen, a master's student in the Two Foreign Languages program at the Faculty of Education and Humanities, was reviewed. The following points were noted for clarification and improvement:

- clarify the number of students for interview;

DECISION:

9. The research work of Zhuldyz Khassen, «The relationship between foreign language anxiety and academic achievement in an EFL context» is conditionally approved but based on addressing those comments;

Kind regards,

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